

EDUCATION & CHILDREN SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

9th MARCH 2016

Modernising Education Programme (MEP) proposal to discontinue Bancffosfelen Primary School

To consider and comment on the following issues:

1. The proposal as outlined below and 2 attached reports (including one report from Bancffosfelen Governing Body).
2. Officers to initiate formal consultation on the proposal during the summer term 2016;
3. That a report be submitted to E&C Scrutiny Committee and Executive Board at the end of the statutory consultation period.

Reasons:

- To comply with statutory procedures and guidance in relation to school re-organisation.
- To enable members to formulate views for submission to Executive Board for consideration.

To be referred to the Executive Board for decision: YES (21st March 2016)

Executive Board Member Portfolio Holder: Cllr. Gareth Jones (Education & Children)

Directorate: Education & Children Name of Head of Service: Gareth Morgans Report Author: Simon Davies	Designations: Chief Education Officer School Modernisation Manager	Tel Nos. / E-Mail Addresses: 01267 246450 edgmorgans@carmarthenshire.gov.uk 01267 246471 sidavies@carmarthenshire.gov.uk
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

EDUCATION & CHILDREN SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 9th MARCH 2016

Modernising Education Programme (MEP) proposal to discontinue Bancffosfelen Primary School

Background

The Authority has a legal responsibility to review the number and type of schools it has and whether or not it is making the best use of resources and facilities to deliver the opportunities that children deserve.

In recent years Bancffosfelen Primary School has seen a steady decline in pupil numbers. For example, from 48 pupils on roll in January 2011 to 35 pupils on roll in January 2016. This has resulted in there being 64% surplus places at the school. Welsh Government defines any schools with greater than 25% surplus places as 'significant' and advises local authorities to review any schools with greater than 10%.

Following the departure of the Headteacher in Easter 2014, there has not been a permanent Headteacher employed at the school. However, there is an informal arrangement between the Governing Body of Pontyberem and Bancffosfelen for part time cover (0.2) to be provided by the Headteacher of Pontyberem.

The culmination of these unavoidable facts presents a school model which does not represent a sound, stable educational model or best use of resources.

In addition, the Authority feels that from an educational perspective having such a small number of pupils makes it extremely difficult for the school to deliver the breadth and depth of curricular and social experiences which pupils of this age require to fully develop.

Proposal

The Authority's proposal is as follows:

- To close Bancffosfelen Primary School on the 31 August 2017;
- It is proposed from 1 September 2017 that the catchment area of Bancffosfelen re-designated and included within the existing catchment area of Pontyberem Primary School.

The details of the proposal are outlined in the attached Draft Consultation document. The Consultation Document is currently in draft format and is updated where appropriate during the informal consultation exercise.

A copy of the Draft Consultation document has been shared with the Local Member, the Chair of Governing Body of both of Bancffosfelen/Pontyberem Schools and the Headteacher of Bancffosfelen on 11 February 2016. Comments were invited by 26 February 2016.

In response to the proposal the Governing Body of Bancffosfelen has produced a detailed bilingual report with an additional option for consideration. This option is detailed in the attached report.

Observations have been received from the Chair of Governors and Headteacher of Pontyberem school.

The Director of Education & Children's Services has received 5 letters opposing this proposal.

Conclusion

In light of the low and declining pupil numbers at the school with no evidence to support the prospect of reversing this trend, it is recommended that the Authority moves to close Bancffosfelen Primary School through the instigation of formal statutory procedures. The closure of the school will be planned for the end of the summer term in 2017.

From 1 September 2017, the catchment area of Bancffosfelen Primary School to be included within the existing catchment area of Pontyberem Primary School.

Transfer to Secondary School will remain the same, Ysgol Maes y Gwendraeth and Ysgol Dyffryn Aman. It must be noted that it is the home address which is taken into account when considering admission to secondary school and not the primary school attended.

Transport will be provided in accordance with Carmarthenshire County Council's School Transport Policy.

DETAILED REPORT ATTACHED?	YES (2 Reports)
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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: Gareth Morgans Chief Education Officer

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

1. Policy and Crime & Disorder – Developments are consistent with the Authority's Corporate Strategy, Children and Young People's Plan and the Modernising Education Strategic Outline Programme.

2. Legal – Appropriate consultation will need to be initiated in accordance with the relevant statutory procedures.

3. Finance – Revenue implications will be catered for within the Local Management of Schools Fair Funding Scheme.

4. ICT – Resources will follow pupils to alternative school within the locality including ICT.

5. Risk Management Issues – Continuing with current inadequate provision would see current problems being perpetuated and the County Council failing to meet its obligations for the education of children in the area served by the present school.

6. Staffing Implications – Staffing implications will be addressed in accordance with the County Council's Redeployment Policy and Procedures.

7. Physical Assets – One redundant school building which would be addressed in accordance with the Modernising Educational Provision Future Use/Disposal of Redundant Land and Buildings arising from the MEP programme policy and procedures.

CONSULTATIONS

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

Signed: Gareth Morgans Chief Education Officer

- 1. Local Member(s)** – The Local Member, Cllr. Joy Williams, (Pontyberem Ward), has been advised of the proposal and provided with a copy of the draft consultation document.
- 2. Community / Town Council** – Not applicable at this stage in the process. The Community Council will be consulted formally during the formal consultation stage.
- 3. Relevant Partners** – Not at this time but will be consulted during the formal consultation stage.
- 4. Staff Side Representatives and other Organisations** – Teaching and non-teaching staff unions will be consulted during the formal consultation stage.

Section 100D Local Government Act, 1972 – Access to Information List of Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:

THESE ARE DETAILED BELOW :

Title of Document	File Ref No. / Locations that the papers are available for public inspection
Planning School Places – Primary Schools – The Way Forward	www.carmarthenshire.gov.wales – The County Council Agenda 9 Pre 28/06/2004) – 11/04/2001
Modernising Education Provision Strategy and Draft Implementation Plan	www.carmarthenshire.gov.wales – Education and Learning – Useful Links
Modernising Education Provision Timeline / Rollout:	www.carmarthenshire.gov.wales – Executive Board Agenda – 31/05/2005

Title of Document	File Ref No. / Locations that the papers are available for public inspection
Modernising Education Provision Update / Revised Draft Timetable	www.carmarthenshire.gov.wales – Executive Board Agenda – 24/07/2006
Modernising Educational Provision Future Use/Disposal of Redundant Land and Buildings arising from the MEP programme	www.carmarthenshire.gov.wales Executive Board 31/05/05
MEP Annual Report 2013/14 and Programme 2014/15	MEP Annual Report 2013/14 and Programme 2104/15
Strategic Outline Programme 21 st Century Schools	Strategic Outline Programme 21st Century Schools
Carmarthenshire's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2014-2017	WESP 2014-2017