

CABINET

Date of Meeting	Tuesday, 23 rd January 2018
Report Subject	School Organisation
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Education
Report Author	Chief Officer (Education and Youth)
Type of Report	Strategic

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A report was presented 26th September 2017 requesting that Cabinet underpinned its previous decision to provide a mandate for officers to formally consult on school organisation change via statutory proposals for Brynford and Lixwm CP Schools.

Cabinet determined that the recommendation be amended to:

That there should be a short pause to allow officers to work with the Governing bodies of Brynford and Lixwm CP Schools.

The report outlines the process made since Cabinet in September and provides further information and options for Cabinet to consider in order to provide a determination on the way forward for the area.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That Cabinet considers the contents of this report and determines whether to proceed to statutory consultation on school organisational change. The proposal will be to amalgamate Brynford and Lixwm primary schools to create one area school.
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REPORT DETAILS

1.00	BACKGROUND
1.01	<p>Following an informal area review, in December 2016, Cabinet, having carefully reviewed the feedback received from the consultation, determined to commission consultation on statutory proposals for school organisation change for September 2017 based on Option B – Area school on two sites i.e. Ysgol Rhos Helyg, Rhosesmor remaining as it is and Brynford and Lixwm CP Schools amalgamated to form one school on a second site.</p> <p>However, if proposals for a federation between Brynford CP and Lixwm CP were submitted from both governing bodies prior to consultation on statutory proposals commencing in September 2017, this would be considered by Cabinet at that time.</p>
1.02	<p>In response to the National Strategy for Small and Rural Schools, officers met with the Chair of Governors of both schools.</p>
1.03	<p>At this meeting officers confirmed that they would be willing to support the governors through the federation process and also bid for funding to WG in 18/19 via this grant (should it continue to be available) if there is mutual agreement between the governing bodies to pursue a formal federation.</p>
1.04	<p>The Governors of Lixwm were in favour of federation. However, the initial view of the Governors of Brynford was that they were not in favour of a federation. In order to gauge the opinion of their parents and carers, the Governors of Brynford held two meetings, one at the end of the Summer term and one at the beginning of the Autumn term. Having considered the views of parents and carers, the Governors of Brynford confirmed in writing that they do not wish to pursue a Federal arrangement with Lixwm CP.</p>
1.05	<p>Although the Council has powers to consult on federation, it would not seek to pursue a federation where there is no mutual agreement.</p>
1.06	<p><u>Update Since September Cabinet</u></p> <p>The Cabinet Portfolio Member wished to meet the governors of both Lixwm and Brynford CP, and governors of other school/s approached to form a federation, to gain personal insight.</p> <p>Consequently, separate meetings have taken place with the Cabinet Portfolio Member, Senior Officers and representative governor groups at both Brynford and Lixwm CP.</p>
1.07	<p>The meeting at Lixwm CP took place on the 10th October 2017 and the Governors confirmed they had not been able to come to an agreement with the Governors of Brynford CP in respect of a proposed federation. However, they were continuing to seek out other opportunities for a possible federation.</p>

1.08	The meeting at Brynford CP took place on the 16 th October 2017 and the Governors explained their rationale for not wishing to pursue a federal arrangement and have sent in further correspondence reaffirming that position. See Appendix 1 – Letter from Brynford CP Governing Body.
1.09	Previously both schools had been working collaboratively. However, given the difference of opinion and the resulting tension, informal collaboration between the two schools has now discontinued. As a result a resurrection a proposed federation appears an unlikely prospect.
1.10	In seeking out new opportunities Lixwm Governors had approached the Governing body of Ysgol Y Foel, Cilcain and a meeting took place 6 th November 2017.
1.11	The Cabinet Portfolio Member and Senior Officers met with the Chair and Vice Chair of Ysgol Y Foel, Cilcain dated 20 th November 2017 to ascertain the views of the Ysgol Y Foel Governors on the request to consider a federation proposal with Lixwm CP.
1.12	<p>The Chair of Governors at Ysgol Y Foel, has confirmed the Governors views to all parties as follows:</p> <p>‘The governors have reviewed the information you have provided and whilst we are keen to continue working closely with Ysgol Licswm and other schools in our small school family, we are not seeking a federation partner at this time. As you are aware Ysgol y Foel is currently implementing significant organisational changes and our focus is on completing this and ensuring our standards remain high during the transition period.</p> <p>I appreciate this position is not the desired outcome for Ysgol Licswm. We do wish to continue working with Ysgol Licswm to ensure we leverage efficiencies, best practice and drive great outcomes for all of our children.’</p>
1.13	The Governors at Lixwm CP have been unable to establish a federal partner. They have however, provided the attached response requesting that Cabinet provide more time is given in order that they may pursue becoming a Church school with the Diocesan Authority as noted in Appendix 2. Cabinet should be aware that Lixwm CP governors have previously approached the Diocesan Authority.
1.14	Should Cabinet provide a mandate for officers to consult via statutory proposals for the area, an anticipated timeline for this process is provided in Appendix 3.
1.15	Cabinet will be aware from previous statutory proposals that there is opportunity at key milestones whereby proposals, can be stopped, paused and or reviewed should there be a change in circumstance.
1.16	The proposed Capital investment in a proposed area school, requires statutory proposals to be approved in order that capital investment can be considered by Welsh Government via their business case process. Essentially there are two clearly defined and separate processes which

	have to be worked through in sequence.
1.17	Should Cabinet determine to create an area school following formal consultation, the existing schools would cease and a new school would be legally formed by September 2019 which would require changes in governance and leadership. Relocation on one site is dependent on capital investment and would follow through the business case process for the next band of the WG 21 st Century Schools Programme, which is planned from 2019-2024

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	There are no resource implications associated with this report.

3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
3.01	Meetings with Governor representatives of schools as noted in the body of the report.
3.02	School Organisational Change models required formal Consultation within the Legal Framework of the School Organisational Code.

4.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
4.01	Consultation and progress on School federal arrangements are reported to the Education and Youth Programme Board.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	Appendix 1 - Letter from Brynford C.P. Governing Body Appendix 2 – Letter from Lixwm C.P. Governing Body. Appendix 3 - Anticipated Statutory proposal timeline

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	<p>Previous Cabinet papers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 13th December 2016, • 26th September 2017 <p>Contact Officers: Damian Hughes Telephone: 01352 704135 E-mail: damian.hughes@flintshire.gov.uk</p>

7.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
7.01	<p>School Organisation Code – The new School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 makes Local Authorities responsible (rather than the Welsh Ministers prior to October 2013) for the determination of most statutory school organisation proposals that receive objections. Such provisions apply to any proposals published on or after 1st October 2013 that consider the establishment, discontinuance or otherwise significantly alter schools.</p> <p>The Council does this in line with the Welsh Government’s statutory School Organisation Code</p> <p>http://wales.gov.uk/docs/dcells/publications/130719-school-organisation-codes-en.pdf</p>