



CABINET - 11TH DECEMBER 2024

SUBJECT: SCHOOL ORGANISATION CODE 2018 - PROPOSAL FOR THE AMALGAMATION OF HENDRE JUNIOR SCHOOL AND HENDRE INFANTS SCHOOL

REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR FOR EDUCATION AND CORPORATE SERVICES

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1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to update Members in respect of the proposed amalgamation of Hendre Junior School and Hendre Infants School with effect from September 2025.
- 1.2 Members are asked to consider the information contained in the Consultation Report and approve the recommendations, via vote, to proceed to Statutory Notice.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The consultation period for the proposal commenced on the 2nd September 2024 and ended midnight on the 15th October 2024.
- 2.2 To discharge the Council's duty under the School Organisation Code 2018, there is now a requirement for Cabinet members to give due regard to the content of the Consultation Report and determine whether or not it is appropriate to move to the next stage in the process.
- 2.3 A Consultation Report has been compiled and attached as an annex to this report. The Consultation Report summarises each of the issues raised by consultees. Any emerging themes that have been raised through gathering the views of consultees during the consultation process have been responded to by means of clarification with supporting reasons.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 Cabinet Members are asked to:

- a) Consider the information contained in the Consultation Report
- b) Approve the recommendation, via vote, to proceed to Statutory Notice in relation to the proposed amalgamation of Hendre Junior School and Hendre Infants School with effect from September 2025.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 To seek Members approval on the recommendations, via vote, to proceed to the publication of a Statutory Notice in respect of the proposal.
- 4.2 Assist the Council in discharging its duties in line with the requirements of the Welsh Government's School Organisation Code 2018.

5. THE REPORT

- 5.1 The term "Amalgamation" describes a formal and legal agreement by which two or more existing schools become one school, for example where an Infant and Junior school become a Primary as is the basis for this proposal.
- 5.2 The amalgamation of schools is a more formal way of extending existing collaboration and promoting closer working relationships. Both schools have been informally 'collaborating' since September 2022 and share the same Head Teacher with both Governing Bodies working together for the best interests of the school, pupils and wider community.
- 5.3 It is proposed that the current school sites would remain in operation but function as a single Primary school campus. Both schools are located in the same locale within the Caerphilly basin (130 yards on opposite sides of St Cenydd Road) and there are no proposed changes to the existing shared catchment arrangements.
- 5.4 The Governing bodies of both schools have requested the Local Authority consider the proposal and agree to proceed in partnership with the individual schools to formal consultation.
- 5.5 Further to Cabinet approval gained on 24th July 2024, formal consultation for the proposal was carried out between the 2nd September 2024 and the 15th October 2024.
- 5.6 A prescribed list of recipients as outlined in the School Organisation Code 2018 were written to and a consultation document was published in Welsh and English, both in hardcopy and electronically via the Authority's website based. Reasonable access to information was promoted from an Equalities

perspective and other formats were available, including a child friendly version.

- 5.7 Members of the Education and Social Services Scrutiny Committee who met on the 3rd September 2024 in their capacity as a consultee under the School Organisation Code 2018, had the opportunity to consider the information contained in the consultation pack and provide their views which have been noted as part of the minutes of the meeting and summarised in the Consultation Report.
- 5.8 The consultation period ran for 42 days (with at least 20 of these being school days) to provide adequate time for response and conscientious consideration has been given to any responses received.
- 5.9 There were 8 responses received in respect of the proposal as outlined in 1.1. In addition, a number of pupils from both schools engaged in the consultation process through 'learner voice' sessions which have been reported on separately. These are broken down into more detail in the Consultation Report.
- 5.10 A Consultation Report has been compiled and has been attached as an annex to this report. The Consultation Report summarises each of the issues raised by consultees. Any emerging themes that have been raised through gathering the views of consultees during the consultation process have been responded to by means of clarification with supporting reasons. In addition, Estyn has provided a formal response in consideration of the educational aspects of the proposal which is included in the Consultation Report.
- 5.11 The Consultation Report will be published electronically on the Sustainable Communities for Learning pages on the Council's website.
- 5.12 Consultees who have indicated in their consultation response that they wish to be notified will be advised by letter or email of the availability of the Consultation Report along with the key stakeholders identified in the School Organisation Code 2018.

5.13 **Conclusion**

Pursuant to the requirements of the School Organisation Code 2018, formal consultation has now concluded in relation to this proposal and this report has been compiled along with the Consultation Report to provide members with the necessary information to make an informed decision as to whether to progress the proposal to the next statutory stage which would entail permission to publish a Statutory Notice. The School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013, provides that anyone wishing to make objections to a school organisation proposal has the opportunity to do so at this stage. An Objection Report will then be brought before Cabinet in addition to an updated Integrated Impact Assessment, and at this point, a final determination regarding the proposal will be requested.

6. ASSUMPTIONS

- 6.1 No assumptions have been made in relation to this report. The process outlined by Welsh Government is being adhered to ensure transparency, balanced and open decision making.

7. SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 A full Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) has been completed in relation to the proposal to ensure compliance with the socio-economic duty, Sections 1 to 3 of Equality Act 2010.

[Link to IIA](#)

- 7.2 Subject to Cabinet approval to progress to Statutory Notice, the IIA will be further reviewed and updated after this stage. The purpose of this further assessment is to take account of any further information that has come forward through the consultation stages or otherwise, to further support conscientious consideration prior to final determination.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 Hendre Infants School and Hendre Junior School are currently funded separately.
- 8.2 The amalgamation process brings both budgets into a single funding formula for the proposed Hendre Primary School.

9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 This will be dependent on specific proposals and will be considered as part of the process.

10. CONSULTATIONS

- 10.1 The proposal was presented to the Education and Social Services Scrutiny Committee at their meeting of the 26th November 2024 and considered as Item 10 of the agenda.

Following consideration of the Consultation Report, it was moved and seconded that the recommendations be approved. By way of Microsoft Forms and verbal communication, this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED to:

Endorse the recommendation to Cabinet, via vote, to proceed to Statutory Notice in relation to the proposed amalgamation of Hendre Junior School and Hendre Infants School with effect from September 2025.

Vote: Unanimous (agreed)

11. STATUTORY POWER

11.1 School Organisation Code 2018 (Welsh Government) School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013

Author: Andrea West, Place Shaping and Sustainable Communities for Learning Service Manager

Consultees:

Dave Street, Interim Chief Executive
Richard Edmunds, Corporate Director of Education and Corporate Services
Mark S Williams, Corporate Director for Economy and Environment
Councillor Carol Andrews, Cabinet Member for Education and Communities
Councillor Donna Cushing, Chair of Education and Social Services Scrutiny Committee
Councillor Brenda Miles, Vice Chair of Education and Social Services Scrutiny Committee
Sue Richards, Head of Education Planning and Strategy / Place Shaping Programme Director
Stephen Harris, Head of Financial Services and S151 Officer
Keri Cole, Chief Education Officer
Sarah Ellis, Lead for Inclusion and ALN
Sarah Mutch, Early Years Manager
Paul Warren, Strategic Lead for School Improvement
Jane Southcombe, Financial Services Manager
Lynne Donovan, Head of People Services
Robert Tranter, Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer
Ben Winstanley, Head of Land and Property Services
Steve Pugh, Corporate Communications Manager

Background papers:

[Link to Consultation Report – Hendre Infants School / Hendre Junior School](#)