



CABINET - 11TH DECEMBER 2024

SUBJECT: FEDERATION OF SCHOOLS – CWMABER INFANTS SCHOOL AND CWMABER JUNIOR 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 federation of Cwmaber Infants School and Cwmaber Junior School, with effect from the start of term January 2025.
- 1.2 Members are asked to consider the information contained in the Consultation Responses Report and approve the recommendations, via vote, to proceed to implementation.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The consultation period for the proposal commenced on the 2nd September 2024 and ended midnight on the 1st October 2024.
- 2.2 To discharge the Council's duty under the Welsh Government's Federation of Maintained School in Wales Regulations 2014, there is now a requirement for Cabinet members to give due regard to the content of the Consultation Responses Report and determine whether or not it is appropriate to move to the next stage in the process which is implementation of the proposal.
- 2.3 A Consultation Responses Report has been compiled and attached as an annex to this report. The Consultation Responses 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 Responses Report
- b) Approve the recommendation, via vote, to proceed to implementation of the federation of Cwmaber Infants School and Cwmaber Junior School, with effect from the start of term January 2025

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 To seek Members approval on the recommendations, via vote, to proceed to full implementation in respect of the proposal.

4.2 Assist the Council in discharging its duties in line with the requirements of the Welsh Government's Federation of Maintained School in Wales Regulations 2014

5. THE REPORT

Background

5.1 The term "Federation" describes a formal and legal agreement by which a number of schools share Governance arrangements.

5.2 The Welsh Government's Federation policy objective is to promote collaboration between all parts of the education system to improve outcomes. School federation is a more formal way of extending collaboration and promoting closer working relationships and is the principal initiative for achieving formal partnership working amongst schools to improve performance and narrow the attainment gap for deprived pupils.

5.3 It is proposed that, subject to Cabinet approval, the Governing Bodies of Cwmaber Infants School and Cwmaber Junior School would Federate with effect from the start of term January 2025. Both Schools have been informally "collaborating" since September 2020 and share the same Head Teacher.

5.4 The Governing bodies of both schools 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 5th June 2024, formal consultation for the proposal was carried out between the 2nd September 2024 and the 1st October 2024.

5.6 A prescribed list of recipients as outlined in the Federation of Maintained School in Wales Regulations 2014 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 Federation of Maintained School in Wales Regulations 2014, 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.
- 5.8 Consultees were given at least 20 school days (excluding inset days) during the consultation period, in line with guidance, to provide adequate time for response and conscientious consideration has been given to any responses received.
- 5.9 There were 6 responses received in respect of the proposal as outlined in 1.1. Which include the formal responses from the Pupil Council and Estyn.
- 5.10 A working group which included the Head Teacher, a representative from the Governing body of both Cwmaber Junior School and Cwmaber Infant School and Local Authority representatives met on the 3rd October 2024, to consider the responses to the proposal and prepare a Consultation Responses Report.
- 5.11 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.
- 5.12 The Consultation Responses Report will be published electronically on the Sustainable Communities for Learning pages on the Council's website.
- 5.13 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 in the Welsh Government's Federation of Maintained Schools (Wales) Regulations 2014.
- 5.14 **Conclusion**

Pursuant to the requirements of the Welsh Government's Federation of Maintained Schools (Wales) Regulations 2014, formal consultation has now concluded in relation to this proposal and this report has been compiled along with the Consultation Responses Report to provide members with the necessary information to make an informed decision and make the final determination as to whether to progress the full implementation.

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 As the proposal seeks to Federate the two school governing bodies only, and they have been in an established collaboration since September 2020, there is no requirement under the statutory process to undertake a wider Integrated Impact Assessment in this instance.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The Federation process does not bring any savings to the Local Authority but may ease financial pressures within schools by sharing resources which can be deployed across the federation.

9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Due to collaboration arrangements already being in place, in both schools, for a number of years there are no personnel implications anticipated directly resulting from this proposal.
- 9.2 Governing Bodies have the responsibility for the management of staffing within schools.

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 9 of the agenda.

Following consideration of the Consultation Responses 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 the implementation of the federation of Cwmaber Infants School and Cwmaber Junior School, with effect from the start of term January 2025.

Vote: Unanimous (agreed)

11. STATUTORY POWER

11.1 School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 Federation of Maintained School in Wales Regulations 2014

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 Responses Report – Cwmaber Infants School / Cwmaber Junior School](#)