



EDUCATION AND SOCIAL SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 11TH MARCH 2025

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

REPORT BY: CHIEF EXECUTIVE

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 this Report and endorse the recommendations to Cabinet, via vote, to proceed to implementation.
- 1.3 Cabinet will then make a final determination on the 16th April 2025 as to whether or not to implement the proposal following the process outlined in the School Organisation Code 2018 and supporting documentation.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 Further to Cabinet approval gained 11th December 2024, a Statutory Notice for the proposal relating to the amalgamation of Hendre Junior School and Hendre Infants School was published, and the formal objection period ran between 13th January 2025 and the 10th February 2025.
- 2.2 Under Section 49 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 when objections have been received proposers must publish a summary of the statutory objections and the proposer's response to those objections ("the Objection Report").
- 2.3 No Objections were received during this period. As no statutory objections were received, there is no requirement to publish an Objection Report.

- 2.4 To discharge the Council's duty under the School Organisation Code 2018, there is now a requirement for Cabinet members to make a final determination as whether to implement the proposal as outlined in the documentation.
- 2.5 Should Cabinet authorise progression of the project, a Decision Notice will be published setting out clearly the reasons for the decision with reference to the School Organisation Code 2018.
- 2.6 The proposal will then progress to full implementation to amalgamate Hendre Junior School and Hendre Infants School with effect from September 2025.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Prior to a report being presented to Cabinet, Scrutiny Members are asked to:
 - a) Consider the information contained in this Report
 - b) Endorse the recommendation to Cabinet, via vote, to proceed to implementation of the proposal to amalgamate Hendre Junior School and Hendre Infants School with effect from September 2025.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 To ensure Members are updated on the progress in respect of the proposal to amalgamate Hendre Junior School and Hendre Infants School with effect from September 2025.
- 4.2 To seek Member endorsement on the recommendations to Cabinet outlined in 3.1 prior to Cabinet making a final determination in respect of the proposal.
- 4.3 To 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 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 11th December 2024, a Statutory Notice for the proposal to amalgamate was published, and the formal objection period ran between 13th January 2025 and the 10th February 2025.
- 5.6 The Statutory Notice was published on a school day and consultees were given 28 days to respond to the document, with at least 15 of these being school days as defined by Section 579 of the Education Act 1996.
- 5.7 All documentation was published in Welsh and English, complying with the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards. Information was also available in other languages and formats on request.
- 5.8 A prescribed list of recipients as outlined in the School Organisation Code 2018 were written to and a Statutory Notice was published electronically on the Council's website.
- 5.9 Hardcopies of the Statutory Notice were made available at both schools, displayed in the school foyer and on/in close proximity to the entrance gates. In addition, both schools utilised their internal communication network with parents and pupils to raise awareness of the process and publication of the Statutory Notice.
- 5.10 The objection period ran from Monday 13th January 2025 (a school day) and concluded at midnight on Monday 10th February 2025 to provide adequate time for response.
- 5.11 Under Section 49 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 when objections have been received proposers must publish a summary of the statutory objections and the proposer's response to those objections ("the Objection Report").
- 5.12 No Objections were received during this period. As no statutory objections were received, there is no requirement to publish an Objection Report.
- 5.13 To discharge the Council's duty under the School Organisation Code 2018, there is now a requirement for Cabinet members to make a final determination as whether to implement the proposal as outlined in the documentation.
- 5.14 Should Cabinet authorise progression of the project, a Decision Notice will be published electronically on the Council's website. All consultees will be

notified via email/letter and hard copies will be available on request.

- 5.15 The proposal will then progress to full implementation to amalgamate Hendre Junior School and Hendre Infants School with effect from September 2025.

5.2 **Conclusion**

Pursuant to the requirements of the School Organisation Code 2018, the formal statutory objection period has now concluded, and this report has been compiled to provide Members with the necessary information to make an informed decision as to the final determination for the proposal to amalgamate Hendre Junior School and Hendre Infants School with effect from September 2025.

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 An initial Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) for this proposal was undertaken alongside the original Consultation Document forming part of the outline consultation pack which is published on the Council's website.
- 7.2 The Integrated Impact Assessment has been reviewed to include any additional elements highlighted through the statutory consultation process. The purpose of this further assessment is to take account of any further information that has come forward through the consultation or otherwise.

<https://www.caerphilly.gov.uk/caerphillydocs/ia/ia-hendre-inf-jnr-eng>

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 consultation process.

9.2 The Council's Human Resources Team will work closely with all relevant parties to ensure that processes are adhered to, and support is provided as required.

10. CONSULTATIONS

10.1 The draft report was distributed as detailed below. All comments received have been reflected in this version of the report.

11. STATUTORY POWER

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

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Consultees:

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Appendices:

None