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14th July 2015

Dear Consultee,

DECISION NOTIFICATION – STATUTORY NOTICE (3-16 ABERTILLERY LEARNING COMMUNITY PROPOSAL) DATED 8 JUNE 2015

I refer to the Statutory Notice dated 8 June 2015 (“the Statutory Notice”) published by Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council (“the Council”), which made the following proposals:

1. To close Abertillery Comprehensive School, Abertillery Primary School, Roseheyworth Millenium Primary School, Queen Street Primary School and Bryngwyn Primary School.
2. To redefine the catchment area for St Illtyd’s Primary School
3. To establish a new English medium community school on the existing school sites (listed in 1.) within the Abertillery Central Area to be maintained by the Council for boys and girls aged 3 – 16; and
4. To create a new school building (forming part of the 3-16 school detailed in 3.) on the former Six Bells Colliery site, Chapel Road, Six Bells, Blaenau Gwent, Abertillery, NP13 2ND (to replace the Queen Street and Bryngwyn school buildings).

Twenty two (22) statutory objections to the proposals were received during the 28 day statutory notice period. An Objection Report summarising these objections and the responses to these objections has been published on the Council’s website in compliance with section 49 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 (“the 2013 Act”) and section 5.1 of the School Organisation Code 2013 (“the Code”).

On Thursday 9 July 2015, the Education Recovery Board considered the proposals in the Statutory Notice, the objections to the Statutory Notice and the responses to those objections in accordance with the requirements of the 2013 Act and the Code.

I can confirm that the Education Recovery Board determined that the proposals in the Statutory Notice should be implemented. The decision is consistent with the authority’s strategic policy on introducing 3-16 provision across the county borough, and was taken for the following reasons:

1. To create a sustainable community based education system capable of improving educational standards across the 3-16 age range in the Abertillery central area;



We welcome correspondence in the medium of Welsh or English. / Croesawn ohebiaith trwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg neu'r Saesneg.

Anvil Court,
Church Street,
Abertillery,
NP13 1DB

Llys yr Einion,
Heol yr Eglwys,
Abertyleri,
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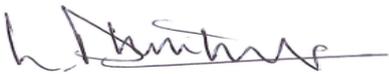
2. To increase the numbers of pupils accessing secondary education as part of that system within the area;
3. To establish an innovative all-through school approach to enhance seamless phase-to-phase transition;
4. To implement the second phase of Blaenau Gwent's School Organisation Policy (2015) in the Abertillery central area;
5. To establish the preferred site of the new school building on the former Six Bells Colliery site, a detailed investigation was carried out on the former Abertillery Bowls Centre site. The investigation determined the site to be unsuitable; this coupled with the outcome of previous investigations within the area led to the decision that Six Bells former colliery site is the most suitable site for the development of the school building, subject to Planning requirements; and,
6. To reduce school travel times, an adjustment to the catchment area was required as the Warm Turn area of the existing catchment for St Illtyd's Primary School is closer to the preferred site.

The Council has secured Welsh Government 'in-principle' £20.25m funding for the 21st Century Schools programme. The £20.25m investment into the school estate is 50% match funded from the Council's Capital Programme. The 21st Century Schools Band A proposal includes an investment of £9.1m for the new Abertillery Primary School building and £6m for the Six Bells Primary School building. This £15m investment into the school estate will now be taken forward as an integral part of the 3-16 Abertillery Learning Community

OBJECTION REPORT

A copy of the Objection Report in respect of the Statutory Notice can be found on the Council's website via the following link <http://www.blaenau-gwent.gov.uk/education/18071.asp> hard copies are also available from the Council on request.

Yours sincerely



Lynn Phillips
Head of Education Transformation and Performance