

### **Determination Statement**

#### **Proposal to open a new primary school at Old Road, Briton Ferry, Neath SA11 2ET, in place of Brynhyfryd Primary School, Llansawel Primary School and Ynysmaerdy Primary School, all of which will close.**

At its meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> July 2016, the Council's Cabinet received a report that no objections had been received in respect of this proposal. This meeting followed the end of the period for the submission of objections.

Under the provisions of Section 53 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 Cabinet Members determined to implement the proposal as of 1<sup>st</sup> September 2018.

Having carefully considered the proposal, the fact that no objections had been received and the supporting evidence from Council officers, Cabinet Members approved implementation of the proposal. The decision will enable the Council to comply with the legislative requirements necessary to facilitate the implementation of the proposal which will assist the Council in meeting its duty to secure efficient education in its area.

In reaching their decision, Cabinet Members considered the case for organisational change to primary provision within the Briton Ferry area and gave consideration to the following:

#### **Education**

- The establishment of a new 'all-through' primary school which will offer 21<sup>st</sup> Century educational facilities.
- A new build school will provide a framework for raising levels of attainment and will deliver a range of teaching/learning and financial benefits.
- A new school will provide a stimulating teaching and learning environment in 21<sup>st</sup> Century facilities that will impact positively on the self-esteem and well-being of pupils, improving the learning outcomes for all children across the ability range. It will have sufficient playing fields and green space available on site which is not the case with the existing schools.
- With a new school comes more choices and improved opportunities because there is more space and better facilities.
- The new school will ensure that pupils have adaptable ICT facilities suitable for learning in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Mobile technology will be integrated with a sound pedagogical base to provide pupils with enhanced learning experiences, equipping them with the key skills and motivation needed to raise standards.
- The new build school will be an exciting place for pupils and staff both internally and externally. It will have spacious, light and airy classrooms, access to a range of high quality and appropriate spaces for social interaction. The 2015 report, 'Clever Classrooms', found that well designed primary schools can significantly boost

children's academic performance in reading, writing and maths. The school will allow for the delivery of a pupil centred, inclusive and skills based curriculum that extends to social and sporting activities. It will provide facilities, sporting and cultural, mainly for the benefit of pupils but which will also be available to share with the wider community.

- The proposed new, 21<sup>st</sup> Century build primary school will deliver sufficient accommodation for the total combined forecasted pupil numbers of the existing three primary schools and for growth in pupil population.

### Finance

- Implementation of the proposal should result in revenue savings for reinvestment in the general schools budget. In this regard, the proposal supports the Council's effective management of its education budget and promotes the more equitable distribution of funding across local schools.
- The proposal with its new build element should have a positive impact on other services within the Council and community. The new school build will be funded from 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Programme funding.
- Combined backlog maintenance and accessibility costs for the three existing primary schools would be removed by this proposal.
- The new primary school's budget will be based on the combined pupil roll of the three primary schools. Savings will occur as the primary school will have one head teacher and one management structure. There will also be opportunities for cost efficiencies through removing duplication of tasks.

In reaching their decision, Cabinet Members were advised of the local authority's statutory requirements in respect of consultation on the proposal and its publication in accordance with the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and Welsh Government's Code on School Organisation.

### **Strategic School Improvement Programme**

