

**Report To:** Cabinet

**Date of Meeting:** June 6<sup>th</sup> 2017

**Lead Officer:** Karen Evans

**Report Author:** Head of Education and Children's Services

**Title:** Proposed new 3-16 Catholic school in Rhyl

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**1. What is the report about?**

The report is to inform Cabinet Members of the findings of the formal consultation in regards to Denbighshire County Council closing St. Mary's Catholic Primary school (Ysgol Mair) and Blessed Edward Jones Catholic High School on the 31<sup>st</sup> August 2019; and the Diocese of Wrexham to establish a new 3-16 Catholic School on the existing site from the 1<sup>st</sup> September 2019.

**2. What is the reason for making this report?**

A decision is required by Cabinet to give approval to proceed to the next stage.

**3. What are the Recommendations?**

- (i) To note the findings of the formal consultation for the closure of St. Mary's Catholic Primary school (Ysgol Mair) and Blessed Edward Jones Catholic High School and the opening of a new 3-16 Catholic school.
- (ii) To approve the publication of a statutory notice for Denbighshire County Council closing St. Mary's Catholic Primary school (Ysgol Mair) and Blessed Edward Jones Catholic High School on the 31<sup>st</sup> August 2019; and the Diocese of Wrexham to establish a new 3-16 Catholic School on the existing site from the 1<sup>st</sup> September 2019.
- (iii) That Cabinet confirms that it has read, understood and taken account of the Well-being Impact Assessment as part of its consideration.

**4. Report details.**

- 4.1 Denbighshire County Council in partnership with the Diocese of Wrexham has undertaken a formal consultation on the proposal to close St. Marys Catholic primary school (Ysgol Mair) and Blessed Edward Jones Catholic High School on the 31<sup>st</sup> August 2019 and the Diocese of Wrexham to establish a new 3-16 Catholic school on the existing site from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2019. The formal

consultation started on the 15<sup>th</sup> February 2017 and came to an end on the 30<sup>th</sup> March 2017.

- 4.2 The consultation included a range of meetings for stakeholders including a public meeting led by Rt. Rev'd Peter M. Brignall, Bishop of Wrexham, this was attended by approximately 100 people.
- 4.3 In total we received 106 responses- 1 letter, 5 emails and 100 standard response forms- 72 online and 28 paper forms. In addition we also received 73 Children's response forms. Of the 106 responses received 98 were for the proposal, 5 against and 3 didn't state either way.
- 4.5 Members need to consider the consultation report and the supporting documents which have been produced following the formal consultation period. For ease of reference these are detailed below:
- Appendix 1 contains the formal consultation report. In the report we have to;
    - Summarise each of the issues raised by consultees;
    - Respond to these issues by means of clarification;
    - Set out Estyn's view of the overall merits of the proposal.
- The formal consultation report document contains the following appendices:
- Appendix A- Consultation Document recipient list
  - Appendix B- Summary of comments/ questions raised in meetings
  - Appendix C- School Council findings
  - Appendix D- Summary of responses received via letter and email
  - Appendix E- Summary of responses via the Formal Consultation Response form
  - Appendix F- Estyn Response

## **5. The Way Forward**

- 5.1 From reviewing this information it is recommended that the Council proceeds to publish a statutory notice based upon the current proposal. The Statutory Notice will be required to be published for 28 days. During this 28 day period anyone wishing to make objections to the proposal has the opportunity to do so. It is intended that subject to approval this proposal will be published on 20<sup>th</sup> June 2017 with the objection period ending on the 17<sup>th</sup> July 2017. To be considered as statutory objections, they must be made in writing or by email, and sent to the proposer within 28 days of the date on which the proposal was published.
- 5.2 Following this date the Council will need to publish an objections report and the Cabinet will be asked to utilise its powers under the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 to consider any objections submitted and to determine whether to implement the proposal. The final decision is likely to be made in September/ October 2017.
- 5.3 The Diocese of Wrexham have noted the findings of the consultation and are in full support in moving forward to the publication of the Statutory Notice for the proposal.

**6. How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Priorities?**

- 6.1 The proposal supports the priority of “Improving performance in education and the quality of our school buildings” and has been highlighted as a workstream as follows:

“We will continue to review school provision across the County to ensure that we provide the right number of school places, of the right type, in the right location.”

**7. What will it cost and how will it affect other services?**

- 7.1 There will be minimum costs to the Council via the publication of the statutory notices. This will be mainly postage and printing costs associated with the actual publication. The requirement for such notices to be published in local newspapers has now been removed reducing such costs.

**8. What are the main conclusions of the Well-being Impact Assessment? The completed Well-being Impact Assessment report can be downloaded from the website and should be attached as an appendix to the report.**

- 8.1 Please see attached the updated Well-Being Impact Assessment- New Catholic 3-16 school in Rhyl.

**9. What consultations have been carried out with Scrutiny and others?**

- 9.1 Full consultation has been undertaken with all stakeholders and the findings from the formal consultation are summarised in the consultation report. Both Governing Bodies are fully supportive of the proposal.

**10. Chief Finance Officer Statement**

- 10.1 The overall budget currently estimated in the Council’s Corporate Plan (2012-2017) for this project is £23.8 million. It will be funded in partnership between Denbighshire County Council and the Welsh Government as part of the 21st Century Schools programme. As with all of the 21st Century Schools projects, the council has had to provide the initial funds to fully develop a business case before Welsh Government will commit to its funding share. Equally, in order to achieve the timescales outlined, formal processes have to be undertaken before the detailed business case is approved by Welsh Government. Although this approach involves some risk, the project would not be able to proceed otherwise.

**11. What risks are there and is there anything we can do to reduce them?**

- 11.1 To ensure that the key milestone of the school being opened by September 2019 is achieved there will be a need to manage the risks associated with the process.
- 11.2 As per the approach with other projects the design stage will be progressed at risk as per the approval of the overall funding package from the Welsh Government. However on the basis that the design stage needs to be progressed to reach this stage this has to be seen as an acceptable risk. The difference in this approach is that the school organisation proposals will need to run concurrently with the design stages.

## **12. Power to make the Decision**

School Standards and Organisations (Wales) Act 2013  
Modernising Education Policy Framework (approved by Cabinet January 2009)