The CITY OF CARDIFF COUNCIL

ESTABLISHMENT OF A NEW HIGH SCHOOL IN THE WEST TO REPLACE GLYN DERW HIGH SCHOOL AND MICHAELSTON COMMUNITY COLLEGE (10 March 2016)

Reason for this Report

1. This report is prepared in accordance with the Welsh Government’s School Organisation Code, statutory document 006/2013. Its purpose is to set out the objections received to the statutory notice to Close Glyn Derw High School and Michaelston Community College (the Glyn Derw and Michaelston Federation) from 31 August 2017, establish a new replacement 11-18 community high school to serve the Caerau and Ely areas from 01 September 2017 and to transfer the newly established high school to new build premises on the current Glyn Derw High School site from September 2018, which was published on 05 January 2016 and the Council’s response to these objections.

The Proposal

2. At its meeting on 10 December 2015 the Cabinet, in accordance with the terms of the Schools Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act, approved a recommendation for the publication of a statutory notice to:

- Close Glyn Derw High School and Michaelston Community College (the Glyn Derw and Michaelston Federation) from 31 August 2017.
- Establish a new replacement 11-18 community high school to serve the Caerau and Ely areas from 01 September 2017.
- To transfer the newly established high school to new build premises on the current Glyn Derw High School site from September 2018.

3. The decision was made by Cabinet having reviewed the responses to the consultation which had been undertaken (in accordance with the School Organisation Code) between 12 October and 23 November 2015.

4. The notice was published on the Council website, displayed at the Glyn Derw and Michaelston sites and in the local area on 05 January 2016. Additionally stakeholders identified in the Welsh Government School Organisation Code as needing to receive either a hard copy of the notice or to be e-mailed a link to the Council website were notified of the publication of the notice.

Objections Received and Council Response

5. One objection to the statutory notice was received.

6. The points raised in the objection are set out in Bold/italics below.
7. The paragraphs following these points contain the Council’s response to the objections.

8. The objector expressed the view that “the area of Penally Road already has too much congestion. There is no proper bus route on this area and the number of cars and school buses will be tenfold. The school buses do not have enough safe space and nowhere to stop that is safe for residents and pupils”.

9. Traffic and transport implications would be considered as part of the Transport Assessment that would be required in order to achieve planning consent for building works. This assessment will inform any transport stipulations made a condition of planning consent.

10. Penally Road is already covered by a 20mph speed limit and there are parking restrictions in place. An initial assessment suggests that a footway be created on the school side of Penally Road from Heol Trelai in order to improve the pedestrian access to the school. Additional pedestrian crossing facilities will also be required.

11. There is an existing bus route on Heol Trelai, which is within easy walking distance of the existing Glyn Derw High School site. No school transport will be provided to the school, as all pupils living within the catchment area live within three miles walking distance of the school and therefore the Council has no statutory duty to provide any free transport. Commercial bus routes may be reviewed although it is unlikely that any changes would be made to the existing routes to divert via the school.

12. The Council would work with the Governing Body of the proposed new school to develop a Travel Plan to minimise any potential disruption.

13. Cardiff’s Supplementary Planning Guidance (Access, Circulation and Parking Standards 2010) sets out that all new or expanded schools are required to develop a Travel Plan for submission with a planning application. A School Travel Plan is specifically designed to address the transport needs of pupils and staff and will vary according to the nature of the education being provided, any community facilities on site and the catchment area of a school. A Travel Plan is a policy and action plan to:

   • manage transport efficiently
   • improve access by all means of travel for employees, visitors, parents and students
   • encourage sustainable transport – walking, cycling, public transport and car sharing
   • reduce car use.

14. Cardiff’s transport network is under pressure and experiences congestion from commuters driving into the city and people making short local trips by car. Traffic associated with the school run adds to congestion. The City of Cardiff Council’s policy is to encourage and promote the increased use of sustainable travel modes and to promote independent travel to school wherever possible.
15. Encouraging active travel to school is a very important means of increasing levels of physical activity in children and tackling the growing problem of childhood obesity. Reducing congestion at the school gate is key to ensuring the safety of pupils and to mitigating impacts on the local neighbourhood.

16. All addresses within the catchment areas of Glyn Derw High School or Michaelston Community College are within 3 miles of either site, and therefore no pupils resident in the catchment area of either school wishing to attend an English-medium community secondary school would qualify for free home to school transport. This is only provided for secondary age pupils who live three or more miles from the nearest appropriate catchment area school.

17. Cardiff Council School Transport section would be able to provide families with advice on safe walking routes to school based on individual home addresses.

18. The statutory notice relates specifically to the legal establishment of the school. Traffic is a potential consequence separate to this and will be considered as part of the planning application process.

Admissions and catchment area arrangements

19. There are no plans to change the Council’s policy on the admission of children to schools as a result of these proposals.

20. The statutory processes required to establish any new provision could be completed by September 2017 and these would therefore enable the admission of pupils from this date.

21. It is proposed that the new school will incorporate the existing catchment areas of both Glyn Derw High School and Michaelston Community College.

22. Detailed information regarding admission arrangements is contained in the Council’s Admission to Schools booklet and this information can also be viewed on the Council’s website (www.cardiff.gov.uk).

Financial Implications

23. As at 31st March 2015 the combined budget deficit of the two schools was £1.177 million. It is anticipated that this position will deteriorate further for the year 2015/16 mainly as a result of the two schools operating at low pupil number levels.

24. The opportunities arising from the two schools operating from one site from January 2016 and the current suspension of the two schools delegated budgets should provide a basis for the financial position to be stabilised so that no further increase is made to the deficit as of 31 March 2016.
25. The closure of the two schools and the establishment of a new replacement community High School from 1st September 2017 will require this deficit to be made good and it is currently anticipated that this will be funded from the SOP reserve. Any mitigation or improvement of the position in the intervening period would have a beneficial effect on the anticipated SOP reserve balance and the affordability of the wider 21st Century Schools Programme.

26. The Authority’s re-aligned 21st Century Schools Capital Investment programme includes a budget of £36.4 million for a project to deliver a High School in the West of Cardiff. At this stage this project has in-principle approval only and will be subject to full Business Case approval as the scheme progresses. A combined SOC / OBC stage business case will be considered by WG Capital Panel in February.

27. If the SOC / OBC approval is granted by WG, this will increase the level of expenditure available to be incurred against the project budget from 5% to 20% in line with the thresholds approved by Cabinet in March 2015.

28. Current committed expenditure against the project budget totals approximately £1.1 million. 5% of the project budget would total £1.8 million and so expenditure to date is well within the appropriate threshold at this stage. However it should be noted that all expenditure undertaken by the Local Authority to progress this project prior to Full Business Case approval from WG will be undertaken at the risk of not achieving Full business Case approval and the anticipated 50% WG Funding contribution.

29. The recommended option to deliver a new build school on the current Glyn Derw High School site would be affordable within the identified budget. However a fundamental element of this assessment is the initial valuation from the Council’s Valuers concerning the level of the Capital Receipt achievable from the sale of the Michaelston site after September 2018.

30. The achievability of the capital receipt required is crucial to ensuring the project is affordable within the approved programme and therefore a more robust valuation must be undertaken to provide assurance around this. It is a significant concern and a major financial risk to the authority that approval to proceed with this proposal is being sought without a robust valuation to support the achievability of the required level of Capital Receipt.

**HR Implications**

31. A Human Resources Framework has been produced in consultation with key stakeholders including head teachers, governors, representatives of the diocesan authorities and the trade unions. It provides the basis for managing the human resources issues associated with School Organisation Planning and its purpose is to support governing bodies
and staff working in schools, through a variety of strategies and with the ultimate aim of minimising compulsory redundancies across schools in Cardiff. This framework has recently been reviewed in consultation with the trade unions.

32. In the period leading up to the school closure the Council will work with the Federation Headteacher and governing body to ensure that staff continue to be supported and motivated during what may be a potentially difficult situation. Full consultation with staff and trade unions will need to begin immediately following the outcome of this report. A school closure places school staff at a potential risk of redundancy and this will need to be managed in consultation with staff and trade union colleagues. During a period of suspended delegated budget, HR People Services will continue to provide extensive support to the Governing Body in relation to all staffing and human resource matters.

33. In order to mitigate the risk of compulsory redundancy, the Council will seek work with other schools to secure employment in other schools in Cardiff through the redeployment process. Under the Staffing of Maintained Schools (Wales) Regulations 2006 the Temporary Governing Body of a new school is responsible for the appointment of staff. The Council will advocate that the new temporary governing body operates a ring-fenced recruitment process which is ring-fenced to those staff affected by the school closures, in the first instance.

34. The Temporary Governing Body will be responsible for determining the new school’s leadership arrangements and the school staffing structure. Whilst the Staffing of Maintained Schools (Wales) Regulations 2006, as amended, allows for ring fenced recruitment to Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher posts in school reorganisation situations, the Council will urge the Temporary Governing Body to advertise nationally for both Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher positions and to put in place a robust recruitment process to appoint high quality leadership. HR People Services will work with the Temporary Governing Body and the Education Service to support this recruitment process.

35. Full support will be offered to the school staff and Governing Body by HR People Services throughout the reorganisation, this will involve attendance at consultation meetings, meetings with school staff where appropriate. HR People Services will also work with the Federation Headteacher and the Education Service to devise a training programme for all of the Federation school staff to access for support with job applications and interview schools.

Cabinet Decision

36. **RESOLVED:** that

- the proposal as set out in paragraph 2 be approved without modification.
- officers be authorised to take the appropriate actions to implement the proposal as set out in paragraph 2.
• officers be authorised to publish a summary of the statutory objections and the Authority’s response to those objections (referred to as the “Objection Report”) within 7 days of the determination of the proposal.

• approval of any necessary contracts be delegated to the Director of Education and Lifelong Learning in consultation with the Section 151 Officer, Director of Legal Services and the Cabinet Member for Finance and Education and Lifelong Learning following the respective grant approvals by the Welsh Government.

Nick Batchelor
Director of Education and Lifelong Learning
March 2016