



**Objection Report:
Proposal to build a new area school on
a new site in the Aeron Valley and
Discontinue
Ciliau Parc Primary School
and
Dihewyd Primary School
and
Felinfach Primary School**

Under Section 49 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013, proposers must publish a summary of the statutory objections and the proposers' response to those objections.

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| Total number of objections received:11 |
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| 1.Objection | School Service Response |
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| Oppose building a new school on the Felinfach campus. | The option to build a school on the Felinfach campus has been discounted by Cabinet however due to the Welsh Government guidelines with regards school organisation, the option had to be included in the consultation document. |
| Support a new area school as long as it has sufficient capacity. | The proposal is to build a new school on a new site with a capacity for 210 full time pupils which based on the current pupil number will have approximately 30% spare capacity. |
| Concern that Ciliau Parc school building will not be maintained and that the education provision will suffer as a result. | During the last 2 years over £10,000 has been allocated to the school to undertake repairs and maintenance to the building in addition to the delegated school budget. |
| 2.Objection | School Service Response |
| No information included with regards the proposed location and the option to locate the school on the Felinfach campus seems to remain as it has been included in all the documents. | Purchasing land to build a new school cannot happen before the proposal is agreed by full Council. The option to build a school on the Felinfach campus has been discounted by Cabinet however due to the Welsh Government guidelines with regards school organisation, the option had to be included in the consultation document. |

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| <p>Saddened at the closure of a small school which will be replaced by a large area school.</p> <p>Consultation process has been confusing.</p> | <p>All the area schools in Ceredigion have been classified by the Welsh Government as rural schools. The Ceredigion average teacher/pupil ratio in 2018 was 19.2 against an average for the whole of Wales of 22.</p> <p>The process has to follow the requirements of the Welsh Government 'School Organisation Code'</p> |
| <p>3.Objection</p> | <p>School Service Response</p> |
| <p>Consultation process has been confusing – with limited information regarding its location and whether the school is a new build. Concerns over the Felinfach Theatre site being used.</p> <p>If approved, is the school likely to be complete by September 2022.</p> <p>Road health and safety outside Ciliau Parc school should be a priority – there should be a reduced speed limit, zebra crossing, traffic lights or a lollipop person.</p> | <p>The process has to follow the requirements of the Welsh Government 'School Organisation Code' Until the proposal is approved by full Council, a suitable site cannot be identified or purchased. The proposal is to build a new school and not a refurbishment of the Felinfach Theatre site.</p> <p>The estimated time required to build a school of the nature proposed is 15 months, therefore we are confident that the school will be complete within the 2022-23 academic year.</p> <p>The Local Authority review speed limits biannually however during this financial year, Welsh Government are reviewing the national speed limits in street-lit areas. If the proposal is approved, the speed limit on the B4339 by the school would become 20mph but it wouldn't affect the A482.</p> <p>Pedestrian crossings are considered as traffic calming measures however there are strict criteria for implementation in terms of pedestrian and vehicle flow and the area concerned does not have the required levels.</p> |

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| <p>For many children the new school will be ready at the end of their primary education.</p> | <p>Whenever a new school is built, due to the lead in time, there will be pupils that will have moved to secondary school. The pupils currently in Year 3 and below will benefit from the new facilities.</p> |
| <p>There has been a lack of investment and the school have also lost a full time teacher and a number of support staff.</p> | <p>During the last 2 years, over £10,000 has been allocated to the school to undertake repairs and maintenance to the school building. This sum is in addition to the sum allocated every year as part of the school budget.</p> |
| <p>What will happen if the school is not ready by September 2022? Will the pupils be taught in mobile classrooms?</p> | <p>When the number of pupils in the school peaked in January 2018 at 79, the school choose to employ an additional teacher on a temporary contract in order to operate a fourth class. It was able to do this because it held a very high level of reserves at the time. With the subsequent fall in the number of pupils and the depletion of reserves, the rationale for the fourth class ceased and the school chose to return to a three class structure – which is what would be expected for a school of that size – in September 2019, with the consequential loss of a temporary teaching post</p> |
| <p>The meeting held at Ty Glyn where a ‘council representative’ confirmed that the school would close anyway if support was not given to the proposal for a new school was deemed to be threatening.</p> | <p>Pupils will not be moved to mobile classrooms. If there is perceived to be a delay in the school being ready to open during the 2022-23 academic year, the pupils will remain in their existing schools until the new school is ready.</p> <p>The meeting held at Ty Glyn was not organised by the Local Authority or known to the Local Authority and no Local Authority employee was in attendance.</p> <p>No comment can therefore be made on the perceived ‘threatening’ message given.</p> |
| <p>4.Objection</p> | <p>School Service Response</p> |
| <p>The Council have created too much uncertainty since 2016 with parents now</p> | <p>In 2016, following meetings with all parents, staff and governors, the</p> |

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| <p>only being given a few months to provide a viable option.</p> <p>By the time the new school opens, a whole generation of children will have been failed as far as their education is concerned having endured 6 years of uncertainty.</p> <p>The Council's proposed timetable is not realistic as the land cannot be purchased until the Council approve the proposal.</p> <p>What happens if the new school is not ready?</p> <p>The understanding of the community is that the Council already have the Felinfach theatre site lined up for development even though it is the biggest objection by most parents.</p> | <p>consensus of opinion was that the area should be considered for a new school</p> <p>The Local Members confirmed support for a new area school and Cabinet therefore deferred a decision until agreement in principle to Band B Funding had been received so that a new school on a new site could be built.</p> <p>The Authority disagrees with the statement that pupils' education has suffered as a result of the consultation. All three schools received 'good' judgements in all categories during their latest Estyn inspections. The quality and standards of education has not been compromised and not cited as a concern.</p> <p>Land to build a new school cannot be purchased until the Council approve the proposal. The projected timetable is believed to be realistic as the estimated build time is 15 months.</p> <p>Pupils will remain in their existing schools until the new school is ready.</p> <p>The Felinfach Theatre site has been discounted as a suitable development.</p> |
| <p>5.Objection</p> | <p>School Service Response</p> |
| <p>The proposed school seems to be on an unspecified location, with an unrealistic timescale and no details of the budget provided.</p> <p>The message that has been conveyed repeatedly is that if the proposal to close Ciliau Parc school is not</p> | <p>The location cannot be confirmed as the land has not been purchased. The timescale is realistic and has been carefully drawn up by experts in construction and delivery of similar projects. Details of the budget was included in the Consultation Document in Section 9 – Financial Information</p> <p>This message has not been conveyed by Local Authority officials and has not been included in any of the documents.</p> |

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| <p>supported that the option of a new school will no longer be available.</p> <p>Despite over 3 years of consultations, no concrete proposal presented – it constitutes bullying.</p> <p>Closing the school before the Council have an idea of what it will be replaced with is failing the pupils.</p> <p>The school is being radically underfunded in what seems like a deliberate attempt to acknowledge the virtues of a new school.</p> <p>Closing the school will damage the community. The village hall will also be at risk of closure as the majority of the income for the hall is derived from school related activity.</p> | <p>The engagement exercise commenced in February 2019 when stakeholders were given an opportunity to present options or comment on the proposal to create a new area school on a new site in the Aeron Valley. Details of the proposal can be found on the front of all the documents and also within the body of the consultation document.</p> <p>Details of the exact provision and location will be communicated once approval of the proposal is received and suitable land purchased. Detailed plans will then be developed and shared with the schools in question.</p> <p>The Authority's schools funding formulae are applied consistently across all schools in the county. All schools are funded according to the same criteria. Variation only occurs because of specific factors in a school in any given year. These factors include for example pupil numbers, free school meal entitlement and additional learning needs.</p> <p>The Authority recognises and values the contribution that the school and staff are making to the area. The comment is noted.</p> |
| <p>6.Objection</p> | <p>School Service Response</p> |
| <p>Majority of people are of the opinion that it is futile to oppose the proposal as the Council have already reached its decision.</p> | <p>The final decision is made by full Council. In addition to an informal consultation and a statutory consultation, a drop in session was also held with Council officials being present to discuss the proposal where parents, staff and Governors were invited to attend.</p> |

The Councils' Corporate Strategy states 'Investing in People's Future as one of its priorities – the children are the future. All evidence points to the fact that children perform better in smaller schools.

The closure of a small rural school will have a detrimental effect on the community and transport would need to be provided to an area school.

Research suggests that small, mixed age classes are better for students.

The motivation for closure of small rural schools is financial with the cost per pupil at many small schools only exceeding larger schools by a small amount.

In order to deliver and achieve the Corporate Strategy, continuing with the 21st century schools rationalisation programme has been highlighted and a new school in the Aeron Valley included as one of the priorities. Evidence proves that children's attainment is good when teaching and learning, and leadership is consistently strong. The new area school is not being proposed due to any concern regarding pupils' performance.

The Authority recognises and values the contribution that a small rural school makes to every community. It is also acknowledged that school transport will have to be provided in accordance with the Authority's Home to School Transport Policy.

Extensive research has been undertaken into the impact class sizes, much of which is contradictory. Andreas Schleicher, Director of Education and Skills and Special Advisor on Education Policy to the Secretary General of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Has concluded " Everywhere, teachers, parents and policy-makers favour small classes as the key to better and more personalised education... and yet, Pisa results show no relationship between class size and learning outcomes, neither within nor across countries"

Financial viability is only one of the considerations taken into account. The School Organisation Code confirms that it is important that funding for education is cost effective. The number of pupils, curriculum delivery, the number of surplus places and the condition of the buildings also have to be taken into account.

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| | Both Dihewyd School and Felinfach School exceed the average cost per pupil for Ceredigion – Dihewyd by £1,585 per pupil and Felinfach by £455 |
| 7.Objection | School Service Response |
| <p>One of the reasons given for closure is the lack of pupils however, the capacity figure given for the new school is 210 – where are the pupils expected to come from?</p> <p>No indication given of location as it has not been disclosed.</p> <p>It has been confirmed that children will be provided with transport that will pick them up from home.</p> <p>What consideration is given to Government initiatives to walk to school?</p> | <p>The projected number of pupils by 2023 included in the consultation document is 172. All new schools are built with approximately 20% spare capacity in order to allow for increased growth in the future.</p> <p>Land to build a new school cannot be purchased before a final decision is made by full Council.</p> <p>Transport arrangements were included in the consultation document where it confirms that free transport will be provided to primary school pupils over 5 years of age who attend their nearest suitable school and who live more than 2 miles from the school. Distance is measured by the shortest walking route between home and school from the nearest Council maintained road to the home address, to the nearest school entrance onto the school site.</p> <p>A safe walking route to school will be implemented as part of the proposal.</p> |
| 8.Objection | School Service Response |
| <p>Parents have confirmed that they should have the choice of whether to send their children to a small rural school or a large area school. If the choice is taken away, they would send their children to another small school or home educate.</p> | <p>Over 75% of the schools in Ceredigion have been classified as being small rural schools. Support and guidance is provided by the Local Authority for all parents who decide to home educate, however Ceredigion strongly feels that children benefit greatly from being in a school environment.</p> |

Compared to recent new builds, it is believed that Dihewyd School is already fit for purpose to deliver 21st Century education.

The aims and objectives of the 21st Century Band B programme is to :

- Deliver learning environments for children and young people that enable the successful implementation of strategies for school improvement and better educational outcomes;
- A sustainable education system through better use of resources to improve the efficiency and cost effectiveness of the education estate; and
- A 21st Century Schools standard which reduces recurrent costs, energy consumption and carbon emissions.

Dihewyd school is located in an old building which has poor energy efficiency. Consequently it does not conform to many of the of the aims and objectives of the 21st Century Band B programme.

The school is the heartbeat of the village – encourages the younger generation to remain and move into the area, vital for the to the local economy, Church, Chapel and village hall.

Community integration and the varied educational experiences both inside and outside the classroom is acknowledged.

The pupil numbers will remain steady for the next few years and not decrease as projected by the authority.

Based on figures provided by the admissions department which included all admission forms received to date and taking into account the year 6 pupils leaving every year, the pupil figures provided are agreed apart from the ones for January 2022 which are predicted to be 29

| Pupil figures in Jan 2019 | Pupil figures in Jan 2020 | Pupil figures in Jan 2021 | Pupil figures in Jan 2022 |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| 32 | 32 | 33 | 32 |

9.Objection

School Service Response

The consultation process is flawed as it has not offered any choice for parents and their views have been completely ignored. One example of this is the

All the options presented during the engagement exercise were included in the consultation document therefore the views expressed by parents and

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| <p>continued inclusion of the Felinfach site as an option in spite of almost universal objection from parents and the community.</p> <p>The closure has been approved without confirmation of the alternative option.</p> <p>The school and children are being starved of funds, staff and facilities at the expense of their wellbeing and education.</p> | <p>members of the community have been acknowledged. All options considered have to be included in the statutory consultation document as confirmed in the Welsh Government guidance 'School Organisation Code'. Therefore the objection to developing the Felinfach site have been acknowledged as the option has been discounted.</p> <p>The final decision is taken by full council – the alternative option or proposal was clearly conveyed in the consultation document.</p> <p>The Authority's schools funding formulae are applied consistently across all schools in the county. All schools are funded according to the same criteria. Variation only occurs because of specific factors in a school in any given year. These factors include for example pupil numbers, free school meal entitlement and additional learning needs.</p> |
| <p>10. Objection</p> | <p>School Service Response</p> |
| <p>What is the process for collating the number of objections?</p> <p>How will the objections be dealt with and considered by Council?</p> | <p>The number of objections are presented to Cabinet for information in the first instance and then presented to full Council when the final decision is taken. The objections will be summarised into a draft objection report which full Council will need to approve prior to implementation.</p> |
| <p>11. Objection</p> | |
| <p>The proposal is supported in principle however there is still concern over the location not being confirmed.</p> | <p>The Local Authority will be able to locate and purchase a suitable site once the final approval is given by full Council</p> |