

St Cyres Comprehensive School

Consultation on a change of the status of the School from a Maintained Foundation School to Maintained Community School

20th January 2012

The Governors of St Cyres Comprehensive School have agreed to consult with parents, staff members and the wider community to consider altering the status of the school from a Foundation School to a Community School. The governing body have agreed unanimously to the change to Community status at a governors meeting held in December 2011.

How will the consultation work?

This consultation document sets out the issues to be considered in these proposals, how the statutory process will be carried out and how you can make your views known. This document sets out the reasons why Community Status is being proposed and confirms a timetable for the various aspects of decision-making and consultation.

The date of the consultation meeting is the 25th January 2012 at 6:00 pm; it will be held at the school which will provide access to persons affected by the proposals. For reasons of Health and Safety it is important to note that admission to the individual consultation event beyond safety limits will not be allowed.

The period for consultation will run from 20th January 2012 to 20th February 2012.

At the end of this consultation document is a proforma that you are invited to complete with any comments that you may have on the proposal and return to the School. Alternatively, comments can be made by e-mail to the school at contact@stcyres.org

When making comments, including those submitted via e-mail, on the proposal please provide your full name and postal address to enable further information to be provided or queries answered as appropriate.

Introduction

The Vale Council is proposing to establish the Penarth Learning Community that involves the “amalgamation” of three special schools to form a new special school and re-provision of the upper and lower St Cyres Comprehensive School on one site and within one building. This process will involve the closure of all school buildings currently occupied by the four schools. The comprehensive and special school will be separate schools within the same building

The site development boundary is determined by the land currently occupied by St Cyres School, Penarth site and by the two special education needs (SEN) schools of Ysgol Erw'r Delyn and Ashgrove School to the south of St Cyres. With the coming together of the schools there are inevitable synergies that can be developed, building on and improving existing relationships between the schools.

Meetings have already taken place in respect of the consultation on the closure of the 3 special schools. After the feedback to consultation was considered the Vale of Glamorgan Cabinet decided to progress the proposals by publishing a statutory notice on the 4th January 2012. Interested parties have until 4 February 2012 to register any objections to the proposals. If there are objections the matter will be referred to the Welsh Ministers for consideration.

There is no need for statutory procedures to transfer St Cyres to its new premises. However the governing body have decided that it is desirable for St Cyres to become a community school rather than a foundation school for the reasons set out at page 3 of the document. This change of category requires statutory procedures as set out at page 5 of the document.

What is a Community School?

A community school is run by the local authority, which differs slightly from a foundation school in that the authority;

- owns the land and buildings, but the governing body is responsible for the running the school;
- employs the staff ;
- provides support services, for example, psychological services and special educational needs services and
- determines and administers the admission policy and criteria to allocate places where there are more applicants than places available

A Community school will look to develop strong links with the local community, sometimes offering use of their facilities and providing services like childcare and adult learning classes. The Penarth Learning Community has identified the use of the building to support the local Community ranging from more traditional aspects in terms of life long learning to the provision of modern sports facilities. Community status will ensure that strong links with the community are maintained and further developed.

WHY ARE WE CONSIDERING THE CHANGE?

The Local Authority will require overall tenure of the school building and site to progress the Penarth Learning Community development that will otherwise prove difficult if the school remains Foundation Status. The Penarth Learning Community is a shared site and funding for the development is based on this model with extensive community use.

The governing body have understood and fully accepted the Local Authority's situation and has unanimously endorsed the change to Community Status that will realise the future aspirations for the school.

The Governing body at St Cyres Comprehensive School has always been keen to ensure that the school sustains and improves standards and is eager to develop as an organisation. The change of status in conjunction with the rebuild of the school will provide significant opportunities for the school to develop accordingly and to raise standards for pupils.

The relationship between the Local Authority and the school has always been strong; the local authority has recognised many findings of previous Estyn inspection reports that;

- The school which has two sites is clearly inefficient both in terms of staff travelling between the two sites and duplication of services such as catering, administration, caretaking etc resulting in increased revenue costs for the school.
- The condition of the school buildings is such that significant costs are regularly incurred on patching up buildings and repairing failing heating and electrical systems.
- Continuing emergency repairs are creating a substantial drain on funding which could be diverted to other priorities. It is a particular challenge for the Leadership Team and Governors to maintain morale and improve outcomes in circumstances where the planning and delivery of the school day is impeded by poor accommodation.
- The design of most of the buildings, with regard to classroom layout is extremely poor. The small size of many classrooms is a major cause for concern and inappropriate for modern day needs.

The commitment of the Local Authority to improve school facilities was recognised in 2005 where the replacement of St Cyres Comprehensive School was identified as a priority within the Vale's initial Schools Investment Strategy and approved by Members. In 2009 the scope of the project was expanded to address the deficiencies at the three Vale SEN schools via the inclusion of the mainstream and SEN schools within a single building on the combined St Cyres Comprehensive and SEN school site.

The governing body have approved the change to Community status that will realise the future aspirations for the school. The school and continuing working relationship with the Local Authority will ensure a state of the art 21st Century School for pupils that will enhance educational delivery and opportunities for all.

ADVANTAGES OF COMMUNITY STATUS

The major advantages of the change to Community Status are the financial and resource related efficiency savings that will be generated. The change of status will free up valuable resources that can be directed to both teaching and improving standards for pupils. Efficiencies will result directly from the transfer of responsibilities to the Local Authority in respect of;

- Ownership of the buildings, land and associated matters;
- The Local Authority will be responsible for employing staff and any Human Resource issues
- All administration in relation to the Admissions Policy, processing of admissions applications and statutory appeal hearings would be carried out by the local authority.

HOW WOULD THIS CHANGE THE DAY TO DAY RUNNING OF THE SCHOOL?

There is no significant difference between a Community and Foundation status school other than those mentioned previously. All maintained schools whether Community or Foundation status are treated in exactly the same way in that they are bound by the national curriculum, they enjoy exactly the same capital and revenue funding from their local authority, the staff are employed on the same nationally negotiated terms and conditions, and they will be legally bound to observe the admissions code.

There will be no change to the day to day and overall running of the school; pupils and parents will see no difference. Any pupil related issues will be dealt with by the school and the levels of resourcing which are currently made available would remain unchanged.

The formula funding of Foundation Schools is exactly the same as for Community Schools. A change in status will not have any impact on the schools revenue budget and the school can continue to exercise choice over the procurement of goods and services as it does at present. The school will be funded through the local authority funded formula as it is now and therefore funding will remain unchanged.

The school will retain the existing links with its feeder primary schools and entitlement to the same services provided by the local authority. The school will continue to provide the statutory curriculum and optional activities that it currently provides.

From the point of view of the employees at the school, there would be no discernable change other than they will be employed directly by the Local Authority.

SCHOOL CONTEXT

The rebuild of the school will ensure the provision of a 21st century learning environment which provides for the full range of learning needs and styles to support the Vale's education priorities of raising attainment, improving outcomes for vulnerable learners, extending post 16 curriculum opportunities, extending lifelong learning and engaging parents and carers.

St Cyres School was described in its last Estyn inspection (23-27 April 2007) under Section 28 of the Education Act 2005 as “a very good school with a number of outstanding features”. The redevelopment will allow the school to significantly develop its full potential and provide an enhanced 21st century learning environment for pupils.

What are the Next Steps?

Consultation on this proposal will be carried out between the 20th January 2012 and 20th February 2012 and results will be reported to Governors shortly after the end of the consultation.

If the governors decide to proceed, a statutory procedure will follow to make the proposed changes for 3rd September 2012. A statutory notice outlining the proposals would need to be published inviting any formal written objections to be submitted within one month of publication of the notice (notices will be published at the affected schools, nearest library and in the local press). The Welsh Ministers will adjudicate on the matter to accept, reject or modify the proposal.

The provisional timetable and procedure which is required by law will be as follows:

Statutory Process	Timescale
Publish Statutory Notice	5 th March 2012
End of objection period	5 th April 2012
Respond to objections	19 th April 2012
Welsh Government determination	Summer Term 2012

What do you now have to consider?

We would like your views as to whether or not you support the proposal to transfer from Foundation to Community status.

How do you make your views known?

You are welcome to put your views in writing to:

Dr Jonathan Hicks
Headteacher
St Cyres Comprehensive School
St Cyres Road
Penarth
CF64 2XP

Alternatively you can complete the consultation proforma at the end of the document and return to the school or e-mail [contact @stcyres.org](mailto:contact@stcyres.org)

Please clearly add your name and full address to any correspondence.

All views must be received by no later than the 20th February 2012

Please note that under the Freedom of Information Act any responses received can be requested and may have to be made public. All views received in writing during the consultation and any subsequent objection period will be forwarded to the Welsh Government if required to comply with the statutory process to establish the new school.

If you require this document in a different format, please e-mail:
[contact@ stcyres.org](mailto:contact@stcyres.org)

CONSULTATION PROFORMA FOR COMMENTS IN RESPECT OF:

**CONSULTATION ON A CHANGE OF THE STATUS OF ST CYRES SCHOOL
FROM MAINTAINED FOUNDATION SCHOOL TO MAINTAINED
COMMUNITY SCHOOL**

Consultation 20th January 2012 to 20th February 2012

Comments:-

Name and Address:-

Please Note: This sheet is for consultation purposes only. All comments will be considered within the consultation process, however, individual responses will not be provided. Please return the proforma to Dr Jonathan Hicks, Headteacher, St Cyres Comprehensive School, St Cyres Road, Penarth CF64 2XP. Please continue on a separate sheet where necessary.