REVIEW OF EDUCATION PROVISION ON THE ANGLE PENINSULA

1. BACKGROUND

At an Extraordinary meeting of Council held on 14 January 2016, consideration was given to the review of primary education provision in the Angle peninsula. In particular, consideration was given to the statutory consultation that had been undertaken and the publication of the subsequent Consultation Report. The decision of Council was as follows:

(a) That the Director for Children and Schools be authorised to publish a Statutory Notice to discontinue Angle VC School, Orielton CP School and Stackpole VC School and to establish a new 3-11 Voluntary Controlled English medium school for the Angle peninsula.
(b) That the site of the proposed new school be located across the road from the current Orielton Community School, i.e. on land to the south of The Elms, Hundleton.

2. DETAILS RELATING TO CONSULTATION

(a) Statutory Consultation was undertaken between 3rd September 2015 and 16th October 2015 and complied with the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and School Organisation Code. The Consultation Document (Document A) provided details of the proposal as follows:
   o The Status Quo – Background;
   o Current School Standards;
   o Details of the Proposal;
   o Details of the Statutory Process;
   o Summaries of most recent Estyn inspections of schools;
   o Community Impact Assessment;
   o Travel Maps
   o Equality Impact Assessments;
   o Response Form.

(b) 380 responses were received during the consultation period. The general consensus was that the proposal presented the most equitable solution for all pupils on the peninsula.

(c) A Consultation Report (Document B) was subsequently published on 7th January 2016 and included:
   • A summary of each of the issues raised by consultees;
• A response to these issues by means of clarification, rejection of concerns and supporting reasons;
• Estyn’s view of the overall merits of the proposal.

The Consultation Report was presented for consideration by Council at its extraordinary meeting on 14th January 2016 and reflected the many observations made by pupils, parents and residents.

3. PUBLICATION OF STATUTORY NOTICE

(a) The Statutory Notice (Appendix A) was published on 15th January 2016 and placed at/in conspicuous places in the area served by the schools, as follows:

i. The County Council’s website;
ii. All entrances to Angle VC, Orielton CP and Stackpole VC schools;
iii. Angle: Village Shop, Community Notice Boards (x2), Angle Church;
iv. Hundleton: Community Notice Board, Highgate Inn, Speculation Inn
v. Stackpole: Community Notice Board, Stackpole Cheriton Church Hall;
vi. Maidenwells Community Notice Board;

(b) Copies of the Statutory Notice were provided to the three schools to distribute to pupils, parents/carers/guardians and staff members; the schools were provided with letters to be sent to parents advising them of the publication of the Statutory Notice and that it could be obtained from the school or the County Council’s website.

(c) The following consultees received either a hard copy of the proposals or an emailed link to the Statutory Notice on the County Council website:

• The Chairs of the governing bodies of Angle VC, Stackpole VC, Orielton CP schools;
• The Chairs of the governing bodies of schools likely to be affected by the proposal: Golden Grove CP, Lamphey CP and Monkton Priory CP;
• The Directors of Education for the Dioceses of Menevia and St David’s;
• The Welsh Ministers;
• Estyn;
• Local and regional Assembly Members, Members of Parliament and County Councillors representing the area subject to the proposal;
• Teaching and staff trade unions representing teachers and other staff at the schools subject to the proposal;
• ERW – the Regional Education Consortium;
• SWWITCH – the Regional Transport Consortium;
• The Dyfed Powys Police and Crime Commissioner;
• The Town and Community Councils of Angle, Hundleton, Stackpole & Castlemartin, Lamphey and Pembroke;
All independent nursery/childcare providers in the area via the Pembrokeshire Family Information Service
The Early Years, Childcare and Learning Group of the Childcare and Young People’s Partnership;
The Hywel Dda Health Board;
Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority;
Pembrokeshire Local Service Board;
Pembrokeshire Communities First;
Carmarthenshire County Council;
Ceredigion County Council.

(d) The objection period under the Statutory Notice expired on 13\textsuperscript{th} February 2016 resulting in seven objections.

4. OBJECTIONS TO THE PROPOSAL

(a) As objections have been made to the proposal, the Council must publish a summary of these and provide appropriate responses. Such objections and responses are contained within the Objection Report attached to this report (Appendix B).

(b) The profile of the objectors is such that all have an interest in Stackpole VC School, i.e.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Parent (Stackpole VC School)</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Grandparent (Stackpole VC School)</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Parent (Stackpole VC School)</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Parent &amp; Governor (Stackpole VC School)</td>
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<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Grandparent (Stackpole VC School)</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Parent (Stackpole VC School)</td>
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<td>G</td>
<td>Governor and Member of Stackpole Community Council</td>
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(c) The basis of the objections largely mirror the views made by Stackpole parents/residents during statutory consultation and can be categorised as follows:
- Consultation process;
- Eligibility criteria for 21\textsuperscript{st} Century Schools funding;
- Travel times;
- Location of proposed school;
- Environmental impact;
- Pupil numbers;
- Costings of preferred and alternative options;
- Member interest;
- Ranking of options;
- Designation of proposed school (religious character).
Members should consider the proposer’s responses to each of the issues identified above as part of their determination of the proposal.

5. FACTORS TO BE CONSIDERED IN DETERMINING THIS PROPOSAL

(a) **Standards of provision in the Angle peninsula**
The standard of provision in the Angle, Stackpole and Orielton schools is good and provides well for the pupils of the area. However, the current provision has some limitations which would be addressed by the proposal to establish a single primary school for the area. The proposal will result in new facilities being provided which will enhance the learning experience for all pupils and provide ample opportunity for the new school to become the educational hub for all pupils and other members of the community. Establishing a single 3-11 school will result in a rationalisation of teaching accommodation onto one site and this will lead to better provision for pupils and as a result, the opportunity to achieve improved standards and learner outcomes. The new school will provide a learning environment that meets 21st Century schools requirements which is both flexible and robust to support change in the future.

(b) **The standard of education currently provided and the continuing ability of the school to maintain satisfactory standards**
The proposal will build upon the strengths of the existing schools. Orielton received “Good” judgements from Estyn for current performance and their prospects for improvement following their inspections in 2013 and positive outcomes were evident in 2009 for Stackpole and Angle (these schools have not yet been inspected under the new Estyn framework). It is reasonable, that in light of this performance, that the prospect for a successful new school to be established as a result of the proposal, is good. The improvements from the new build will provide enhanced learning environments and resources for all pupils.

(c) **Delivery of the curriculum**
A new school for the Angle Peninsula will result in a considerable strengthening of the delivery of the National Curriculum requirements of the Foundation Phase and Key Stage 2. It will enable staff to increase the support to colleagues in planning and delivering the curriculum in areas of expertise to meet individual needs of particular groups of learners and vulnerable pupils. The increased resource will facilitate the development of specific teams of staff to deliver specific programmes to meet the full and diverse range of needs of the pupils. This new build will also support the school in planning for the planned changes in the current National Curriculum.

(d) **The effect of the proposal on other schools and educational institutions**
The proposal seeks to establish a new school whose catchment area will include the catchments of the existing schools in the peninsula. As a consequence of the preference for the new school to retain a “small and
rural" characteristic, it is unlikely that there will be any significant impact on other neighbouring schools.

(e) The need for places and the impact on accessibility of schools
The Angle peninsula is a sparsely populated area which is currently covered by three primary schools which have a significant level of surplus places. As at January 2015, surplus places stood at 40% and this level is expected to grow further in subsequent years. In making the proposal for a new school to serve the peninsula, the Authority has an opportunity to remove these surplus places whilst also considering the likely demand for places in the future. It is the case that any significant new housing developments arising in the area are more likely to be located in the neighbouring urban areas of Pembroke and Pembroke Dock.

(f) Demand for schools of a particular type
Two of the schools to be discontinued as part of this proposal are Church in Wales Voluntary Controlled Schools, with the other being a Community School. An analysis of parental preference across the peninsula reveals an almost equal preference for schools with and without a religious character. Data derived from the 2015 Pupil level annual school census (PLASC) reveals a total of 141 primary pupils living on the peninsula. Of these, 69 pupils (49%) attend a school with a designated religious character, whilst 72 pupils (51%) attend a school without.

It is considered that the ethos of the proposed new school will be supportive of, and considerate to, pupils, parents and staff of any religious or secular belief. As a result, the diversity of faith, religion and belief at the new school will be increased. Alternatively, any parent wishing to express a preference for their child to attend a community school will continue to be able to do so in neighbouring schools in Lamphey, Monkton or Pembroke.

(g) Journeys to school
Travel times from home to school are an important consideration on the Angle peninsula, particularly in view of the geographic isolation of its various communities. Cross catchment attendance patterns resulting from parental preference and the relative accessibility of schools have been important factors in determining the most equitable location for all pupils on the peninsula.

The analysis and travel maps provided in the Consultation Document (Document A) provide an estimate of the travel times likely to be encountered by pupils and are based on the current pupil population and pupils’ home locations. Travel times are based on the established road network, road classifications and the type of vehicle.

This analysis confirms that 70% of pupils currently attending the three schools live within 15 minutes of Hundleton, i.e. the proposed location of the new school. Only 1% of pupils live in excess of 30 minutes of this location.
There is no legal requirement for the Council to transport pupils under the statutory school age. Based on current policy, transport will be provided for all pupils of statutory school age subject to them meeting the relevant criteria. As in other areas, where there is spare capacity and with the agreement of the bus operator, transport may be provided for children younger than five years as a private arrangement between parents and the bus operator; the Council plays no part in such arrangements.

(h) **Access for disabled pupils**
The age and design of the three current schools provide challenges in ensuring access for disabled pupils. Angle, Orielton and Stackpole schools date from the 19th Century and were not designed as educational buildings. Consequently, their suitability for 21st Century education is classified as either “poor” or “bad”.

The proposed new school will be fully compliant with equality legislation.

(i) **Financial implications**
Schools are funded according to a formula and there are benefits to the overall primary schools budget in creating larger schools. It is also the case that in general, the flexibility offered by a larger budget enables such schools to operate more efficiently and to achieve economies of scale.

The financial situation in relation to Angle, Stackpole and Orielton schools is that they all operate on delegated funding which is far greater than the county average, i.e. between 24% and 65% greater. Given the current climate of austerity, this level of funding cannot be sustained. In comparison, the pupil value of a similar sized school (118 pupils), built in 2004 is currently £3754 per pupil. The proposal will therefore ensure a fairer and more equitable distribution of funding.

(j) **Views of consultees**
The views of consultees have been considered throughout. Non-statutory preliminary consultation was undertaken in the autumn of 2014 before the proposal was developed. Similarly, statutory consultation was undertaken in the autumn of 2015 with findings considered by the County Council before the proposal was published. In both of these cases, consultation has adhered to the principles of consultation laid out in Section 48 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013, namely that the consultation process should:

- Be undertaken when proposals are still at a formative stage;
- Include sufficient reasons and information for particular proposals to enable intelligent consideration and response;
- Provide adequate time for consideration and response; and
- Ensure that the product of consultation is conscientiously taken into account when the ultimate decision is taken.
(k) **21st Century Schools**
If approved, the proposal will form part of the Council’s 21st Century Schools Programme. The establishment of the new school will promote a high standard of education provision, with purpose built facilities for a 21st Century School. The proposal will assist the authority in its ambition to develop learning environments to the same high standard across all schools, improve efficiency in the use of energy and other resources and help to ensure that the school can meet future curricular needs. The provision of one sustainable school for the Angle peninsula will contribute to good strategic management of the school estate.

If approved, the Council will need to submit a business case to Welsh Government which will provide a robust and reasoned argument that the proposal is the best way forward for the Angle peninsula. The proposed implementation date is dependent upon receiving approval of the business case and the relevant planning consent.

(l) **Consideration of alternatives**
In arriving at the proposal, 17 options for change were considered and described in the Consultation Document (*Document D*). All options have been appraised through the investment objectives and critical success factors of the 21st Century Schools HM Treasury Five Case Business Model before establishing the preferred option. The report to Council on 14th May 2015 provided details of all options and gave reasons why some should be discounted and others considered as possibilities. The preferred option, the proposal, was considered to provide the greatest level of equity for all pupils on the Angle peninsula.

(m) **The impact of the school's closure on accessibility to a school with a religious character, balanced with the need for efficient provision**
Whilst the effect of the proposal is that two primary school with a religious character will close, the new primary school will have a religious character which will conform with the doctrines of the Church in Wales.

(n) **Impact on the community**
A Community Impact Assessment was included in the Consultation Document for this proposal.

It should be noted that the new school will be able to continue to provide the extensive range of opportunities for pupils, parents and the wider community as is available currently. It is acknowledged that participation in breakfast clubs and after school activities provides valuable assistance to working parents and that the latter, in particular, is beneficial to pupils. Whilst such provision is the responsibility of the governing body to determine, there is no reason to believe that the new school would not provide a breakfast club or an effective after school programme.

The Community Impact Assessment acknowledges that the proposed closure of Stackpole School is likely to have a greater effect on the availability of community space than the closure of Angle. However, it
should be noted that potential loss of community facilities at Stackpole School was raised comparatively infrequently in responses to the statutory consultation.

Consideration is being given to providing community facilities in the new school. This will be provided in the context of designing accommodation which allows for flexibility so that rooms can be utilised for different purposes. Such flexibility would ensure that the accommodation can be utilised both during and outside school hours.

(o) **Equality issues**
An equality impact assessment has been undertaken and has identified no negative impact on any vulnerable or minority groups. This proposal should not, therefore, lead to any unlawful discrimination.

6. **CONCLUSION**

(a) The proposal will address the key issues identified in the case for change, i.e.
- To improve standards;
- To ensure more effective leadership by consolidating provision on one site resulting in better delivery of the curriculum and in turn, leading to better outcomes for pupils;
- To provide purpose built specialist facilities which will be suitable for the 21st century and offer flexibility for changing demands in teaching and learning;
- To improve cost efficiency in the running of the education provision in the Angle peninsula, particularly with regard to the condition of buildings and surplus places.

(b) As a result the proposal offers the potential of a positive impact on:
- Outcomes (standards and wellbeing)
- Provision (learning experiences, teaching, care support and guidance, learning environment);
- Leadership and management (leadership, improving quality, partnership working and resource management).

(c) Prior to reaching a decision, Members should note the factors to be considered in determining this proposal, and which are set out in Paragraph 4 above. These individual factors represent the reasons for the recommendation set out below. It should be noted that:

- the statutory consultation in relation to this proposal has been conducted in accordance with the School Organisation Code;
- the proposal has been published in accordance with the School Organisation Code;
- all objections received to this proposal have been considered and appropriate responses provided.
7. **RECOMMENDATION**

To discontinue Angle VC School, Orielton Community School and Stackpole VC School on 31 August 2017 and to establish a new 3-11 English medium Church in Wales Voluntary Controlled Primary School in Hundleton, effective from 1 September 2017.

Background Documents:

- Document A – Consultation Document
- Document B – Consultation Report
- School Organisation Statutory Code – Welsh Government (July 2013)

**APPENDIX A – STATUTORY NOTICE**

**APPENDIX B – OBJECTION REPORT**