COUNCIL

Report of:  Director for Children and Schools

Date:  20 October 2016

REVIEW OF PRIMARY EDUCATION PROVISION
IN MILFORD HAVEN

1. SUMMARY

(a) The purpose of this report is to provide feedback to Council on the consultation undertaken with the Diocese of Menevia as approved by Council at its meeting on 14 July 2016.

(b) Members should ensure that due regard is made of the Diocese’s response as part of their consideration of the Director’s recommendation.

(c) The recommendation outlined below is that the Council should proceed to publish a Consultation Document and commence general consultation in relation to reorganising primary education provision in Milford Haven.

2. CONSULTATION WITH THE DIOCESE OF MENEVIA

(a) Paragraph 3.4 of the Welsh Government’s School Organisation Code states that “In the case of proposals to reorganise schools … which have a designated religious character…the proposer must conduct consultation with the appropriate religious body before the consultation document is published. The proposer must allow 28 days for the receipt of comments and must have due regard to those comments before any decision is made to proceed to general consultation”.

(b) Following the resolution of Council at its meeting on 14th November 2015, a letter was sent to the Diocesan Director of Education on 20th July 2016 (Appendix A). This letter outlined the proposal made by Council and asked for any comments to be submitted to the Director for Children and Schools by 31st August 2016.

(c) The Diocesan Director of Education for the Diocese of Menevia responded to the consultation on 20 September (Appendix B). The Diocese is supportive of the proposal.

3. RECOMMENDATION

(a) To note the response of the Diocese of Menevia;
(b) That the Director for Children and Schools be authorised to undertake general consultation on the proposal to:
i. Discontinue The Meads Infant and Nursery School and Milford Haven Junior School and establish a new 3-11 English medium primary school using both current school sites;

ii. Extend the age range of St Francis Catholic Primary School in order to admit part-time three year old pupils.

Background Documents:
School Organisation Code (Welsh Government, 2013)
Review of Primary Education Provision in Milford Haven (Council, 14 July 2016)
APPENDIX A

Dear Sister Angela,

REVIEW OF PRIMARY EDUCATION PROVISION IN MILFORD HAVEN

At its meeting on 14th July 2016, Pembrokeshire County Council considered my report on the findings of a review undertaken on primary provision in Milford Haven. Both community schools in the town face great challenges in accommodating a growing pupil population and the Council needs to act to address this.

Further to the merits of amalgamating The Meads Infants and Nursery School and Milford Haven Juniors, it was evident from the responses received to our preliminary engagement with stakeholders that extending the age range of St Francis Catholic Primary School would encourage parents to express a preference for that school. As you are aware, St Francis’ School has approximately 25% spare places and by admitting part-time three-year-olds, may be able to address some of the challenges faced by the other two schools.

At the above meeting, Council approved to commence statutory consultation on the following proposals:

- To discontinue The Meads Infant and Nursery School and Milford Haven Junior School and to establish a new 3-11 school using both current sites;
- To extend the age range of St Francis Catholic Primary School in order to admit part-time three year old pupils.

In accordance with the School Organisation Code, it is a requirement that where there are proposals to reorganise schools which have a designated religious character, the proposer (the Council) must conduct consultation with the appropriate religious body before the consultation document is published.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh and English, and will respond within a maximum of 15 working days. We will respond in the language in which the correspondence is received (unless you ask us to do otherwise). / Rydym yn croesawu gorch啁iad yr Gymraeg a Saesneg a byddwn yn ymateb yn pen 15 dwr ddod gan fan balf. Byddwn yn ymateb yn yr iaith eraill 37 o shebiaeth a dderbynwyd (om bai och chi bwyd yr gofynnydd ni weinidog yr wahaniaid).

For a copy in large print, easy-read, Braille, audio, or an alternative language, please contact Pembrokeshire County Council on the number above. / Os am gopi mwyn print mawr, ffotmat hawdd ei eiddo, Braille, sain neu mewn iaith arall, cysylltwch â Chyngor Sir Penfro ar y rhif uchod.
There is also a requirement that the proposer must allow 28 days for the receipt of comments and must have due regard to those comments before any decision is made to proceed to general consultation.

I would be grateful, therefore, if you would consider the above proposals and that you inform me of your views on the matter by 31st August 2016.

Yours sincerely,

Kate Evan-Hughes
Director for Children and Schools
Ms Kate Evan-Hughes, 
Director for Children and Schools, 
Pembrokeshire County Council, 
County Hall, 
Haverfordwest SA611TP

20th September 2016

Dear Ms Evan-Hughes,

Review of Primary Education Provision in Milford Haven

Proposal Two To extend the age range of St. Francis Catholic School in order to admit part-time three year old pupils.

Thank you for consulting the Diocese of Menevia in accordance with the School Organisation Code with regards to the review of primary education provision in Milford Haven.

I refer to proposal two above and confirm that I have spoken to Mrs. Sue Roberts, Headteacher and Mr. Huw Jones, PCC regarding the details in your letter.

As a result of these discussions, I believe that there is support for this proposal from the school, the governors and the county council. I am informed that the increase in number on roll resulting from admitting the three year old pupils would be accommodated within the existing school building without financial implication for the diocese. I agree that extending the age range probably would encourage parental preference for St. Francis as the children would not have to change schools for Foundation 2/Reception as they do currently.

In addition to the benefits for St. Francis, it is clear that proposal two will alleviate some of the challenges faced by the other two schools concerned and for this reason also I am pleased to support it.

Yours sincerely,

P. L. Mansfield
Diocesan Director of Education