



Ein cyf/Our ref JMEWL/01437/22

Councillor Steve K.Hunt
Leader of Neath Port Talbot Council

leader@npt.gov.uk

28 July 2022

Dear Steve,

Thank you for your letter of 29 June regarding plans to review a former decision by Neath Port Talbot Council relating to schools in the Swansea Valley.

The School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 sets the legislative framework for school reorganisation and requires the Welsh Ministers to publish a School Organisation Code. The Code imposes requirements on those bringing forward proposals and those responsible for determining them. When proposing significant changes to schools, local authorities and other proposers must comply with the 2013 Act and the statutory provisions of the Code and must take into account a range of factors. A copy of the Code can be found on the Welsh Government website at <https://gov.wales/school-organisation-code>.

As you point out in your letter, on 22 October 2021 the Cabinet of Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council approved the implementation of a proposal to establish an English-medium 3-11 school with a specialist Learning Support Centre (LSC) for 16 pupils with a statement of special educational needs relating to Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD), in new build premises to accommodate pupils from the current catchment areas of Alltwen Primary, Godre'r graig Primary and Llangiwg Primary, all of which will be discontinued on 31st August 2024.

As set out in section 6.1 of the Code, proposals must normally be implemented as determined or approved. However, under Section 55 of the 2013 Act, if a proposer is satisfied, after consultation with any affected governing body, that a proposal would be unreasonably difficult to implement on the original date, or that circumstances have so altered since the proposal was approved that its implementation on the original date was inappropriate, it may modify the proposal so that its implementation is delayed by up to three years, bring forward the proposal by a period of up to 13 weeks or it may determine that the proposal should be abandoned.

This proposal did not require approval under sections 50 or 51 of the 2013 Act but fell to be approved by the local authority under section 53 of the Act. Any decision to delay, bring forward, or abandon this proposal is therefore a matter for the Cabinet of the local authority to determine in accordance with the 2013 Act and the Code.

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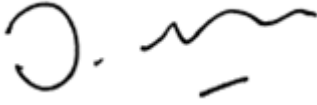
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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

Notification of any determination to delay, bring forward or abandon a proposal must be given to relevant parties including the Welsh Ministers, Estyn, the governing bodies and parents, pupils and staff of any affected school, as appropriate within seven dates of it being made. The notification must set out briefly the reasons for the determination.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large 'J' followed by a series of wavy lines and a short horizontal stroke at the end.

Jeremy Miles AS/MS
Gweinidog y Gymraeg ac Addysg
Minister for Education and Welsh Language