



## ***FULL COUNCIL - INFORMATION REPORT***

Date Written	18 June 2021
Report Author	Ann Taylor
Service Area	Democratic Services
Exempt/Non Exempt	Non Exempt
Committee Date	14 <sup>th</sup> July 2021

To: *Mayor, Ladies and Gentlemen*

## **PETITION RECEIVED BY THE AUTHORITY**

### **1.0 SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 To advise Council of two petitions received by the Authority opposing the revamp of the Neighbourhood Learning Centre in the Gurnos.

### **2.0 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 Two separate petitions were received by the authority on 8 June 2021 opposing the revamp of the Neighbourhood Learning Centre in the Gurnos which has been acknowledged by the Democratic Services Department to the first petitioners listed.
- 2.2 One of the petitions advised that residents had been informed that the revamp would consist of 5 one bedroom flats for 16/24 year olds with wraparound support.
- 2.3 They were concerned that this could be detrimental to the area and future house prices and that the Council were not providing all the information available.
- 2.4 The first petition contained approximately 11 signatures and did include an additional four pages, but as these pages did not include a narrative or title at the top, they cannot be counted because there is no evidence that the signatories were aware of what they were signing.
- 2.5 The second petition contained 22 signatures.

## 3.0 RESOLUTIONS

3.1 The petition has been forwarded to the Housing Department who have looked into the concerns raised and advised that throughout the consultation process held several conversations have taken place held via telephone and some via MS Teams due to safety considerations with the ongoing public health situation. Throughout this time it is hoped that many misconceptions or concerns were addressed, particularly around the below:

3.1.1. The perception that building work that's gone on recently is the work associated with the new proposal... this has nothing to do with the redevelopment proposals - it was renovation of the shop, along with some bricklaying work undertaken by Merthyr Valleys Homes due to major problems with a retaining wall. This work has now been completed.

The shop has been renovated with a view to letting it, and for the tenant to be a local person who has a business idea that can be supported.

3.1.2. There has been speculation about facilities being lost in any redevelopment. This is not going to happen. The blocks would be reconfigured as part of the new housing development and all the current training facilities, projects and funding will remain in place for local people to access.

The NLC hosts the European-funded Bridges into Work and Inspire to Work programmes, which support people into employment. Both programmes have strict eligibility criteria. In normal circumstances, there would be face-to-face training, which has not been possible during the pandemic, so the team has been delivering online training with the aim to return to face-to-face in the coming months.

The Council is hoping to give local residents more access to the facility, but this would be totally reliant on funding becoming available. Currently work is being done with a small group to restart ceramics courses, which have also been halted by the pandemic. The group is keen to engage with the community for them to access ceramics courses in the future.

3.1.3. Prior to this proposal, there was a question mark over the future of the NLC and the amount of investment needed to bring the buildings up to standard. Funding has been offered, dependent on the accommodation also being provided, that would give all three buildings a new lease of life and make them sustainable for the future. Without it, it is unclear how much longer this can be maintained.

3.1.4. Concern has been expressed about the young people who would live in the apartments needing 24/7 support. There will be on site support, however this would be for all apartments to access and the support would not be to a form of supervision. The plan would be to help them live independently, giving them support in managing a household and their own finances, etc. The support would act like that of a parent - someone who is always there for you. This could be as little as simply

being on hand to help tenants fix a tripped switch. There would be just one person in residence that every tenant could turn to if they needed help.

3.1.5. Again, we want to emphasise that every young person offered the opportunity to live in the accommodation would be carefully considered and expected to be ready to live independently, and motivated to take part in further training.

3.1.6. It has been suggested that this proposal is the same as, or similar to, other young people's residential schemes by private developers that have been rejected in recent years. It is not. This is a brand new innovative project born out of a discussion about the future of the NLC buildings, the accommodation needs of local young people and their access to training.

## 4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

4.1 There are no financial implications to the authority from this report.

## 5.0 INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

	Positive Impacts	Negative Impacts	Not Applicable
1. Merthyr Tydfil Well-being Objectives	0 of 4	0 of 4	4 of 4
2. Sustainable Development Principles - How have you considered the five ways of working: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Long term</li> <li>• Prevention</li> <li>• Integration</li> <li>• Collaboration</li> <li>• Involvement</li> </ul>	1 of 5	0 of 5	4 of 5
3. Protected Characteristics (including Welsh Language)	0 of 10	0 of 10	10 of 10
4. Biodiversity	0 of 1	0 of 1	1 of 1
<p><b>Summary:</b>  No positive or negative impacts, this is a requirement of the Petitions Policy so that Councillors are made aware that a petition has been received and attended to.</p>			

**ELLIS COOPER**  
**CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

**COUNCILLOR ANDREW BARRY**  
**CABINET MEMBER FOR GOVERNANCE**  
**AND CORPORATE SERVICES**

<b>BACKGROUND PAPERS</b>		
<b>Title of Document(s)</b>	<b>Document(s) Date</b>	<b>Document Location</b>
Petitions 1 & 2	June 2021	Democratic Services
Petitions Policy	26 March 2014	Democratic Services
<b>Does the report contain any issue that may impact the Council's Constitution?</b>		<b>No</b>

***Consultation has been undertaken with the Corporate Management Team in respect of each proposal(s) and recommendation(s) set out in this report.***