



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

21ST MARCH 2019

21ST CENTURY SCHOOLS PROGRAMME - PROPOSALS TO REORGANISE PRIMARY SCHOOLS, SECONDARY SCHOOLS AND SIXTH FORM PROVISION IN THE GREATER PONTYPRIDD AREA

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE IN DISCUSSION WITH THE CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION (COUNCILLOR MRS J ROSSER)

Authors: Mrs Gaynor Davies Director of Education and Inclusion Services and Andrea Richards, Head of 21st Century Schools

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to advise Members of the outcome of the recent consultation in respect of proposals to reorganise primary schools, secondary schools and sixth form provision in the greater Pontypridd area.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:

- 2.1 Note the information contained within the attached consultation report, which includes details of items of correspondence received during the consultation exercise and notes of the various meetings held.
- 2.2 Consider the contents of the attached Consultation Report and note its publication and distribution to the relevant stakeholders as required by the Welsh Government School Organisation Code.
- 2.3 Agree to progress the proposals to the next stage of the review process by firstly agreeing to publish the Consultation Report, and secondly, issuing appropriate Statutory Notices after the Consultation Report is published.
- 2.4 Agree to an amendment of the proposals in relation to catchment changes such that there will be no change to the catchment area of Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School.

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To progress the proposal in accordance with the process outlined in Welsh Government legislative guidance (the School Organisation Code).

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 Members will recall that, at the meeting of the Cabinet held on 3rd October 2018, approval was given to begin a process to formally consult on proposals to reorganise primary schools, secondary schools and sixth form provision in the greater Pontypridd area.
- 4.2 The consultation process in respect of this proposal has been undertaken under the arrangements outlined in the Welsh Government's School Organisation Code. These arrangements stipulate that a Consultation Report must be prepared prior to the publication of any Statutory Notices which will progress the proposal. It further states that this Report must be published within 26 weeks of the end of the consultation period, which is 1st August 2019 in this instance.
- 4.3 The Consultation Report prepared in respect of this particular proposal is attached at Appendix A for your attention. It contains information in respect of meetings held to discuss the proposal, with copies of the notes taken at these meetings. It also contains a summary of the correspondence received during the consultation period and where appropriate, the responses given to the comments and queries raised.
- 4.4 Members' attention should be drawn to the summary of the responses from Estyn on page 6 of the Consultation Report, which are reproduced in full as Appendix 5 to the attached consultation report.

5. THE STATUTORY PROCESS

- 5.1 Four statutory notices will need to be published in respect of these proposals, as follows:-
- The alteration of the age range of pupils that may be admitted to Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School, from 11 – 19 years to 11 – 16 years, resulting in the removal of the sixth form provision;
 - The closure of Pontypridd High School and Cilfynydd Primary School and the creation of a new 3 – 16 'all through' School on the site of the current Pontypridd High School. There will be no sixth form provision at this school;

- The closure of Hawthorn High School and Hawthorn Primary School and the creation of a new 3 – 16 ‘all through’ School on the site of the current Hawthorn High and Hawthorn Primary Schools, with the Local Authority designated ALN specialist class located in Hawthorn High School, as well as the current pupils receiving education through the medium of English at Heol y Celyn Primary School transferring to the new school. There will be no sixth form provision at this school;
- The closure of Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Pont Sion Norton and Heol y Celyn Primary School and the opening of a new Welsh medium Primary School on the site of the current Heol y Celyn Primary School.

- 5.2 If agreed, and subject to the matter not being called in for consideration by Scrutiny, the Consultation Report will be published on 28th March 2019. Following this the Statutory Notices will be published on 1st April 2019 and will allow for a minimum 28 day period for objections, ending on 10th May 2019.
- 5.3 If any objections are received during this period, in accordance with the aforementioned Code, an Objection Report will be prepared. This matter will then be reported to a future meeting of Cabinet, probably in June 2019, for Members to receive and consider the Objection Report and to make a final decision on this to Welsh Government approval.
- 5.4 The proposals consulted upon, in this report, are dependent on decisions taken on the future restructuring of sixth form provision. The School Organisation Code states that any proposals which affect sixth form education must be approved by the Welsh Ministers; and the Council **must** also send to the Welsh Ministers any proposals which it considers are related to the proposals requiring determination.
- 5.5 However, Welsh Government have already confirmed that they will only determine the proposal relating to the removal of the sixth form from Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School. Any statutory objections received must be sent to the Welsh Ministers, in addition to the Objection Report referred to above, within 35 days of the end of the objection period for them to consider and determine the outcome of the Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School proposal. The remaining proposals will be for the Council’s Cabinet to determine.
- 5.6 The closure of the schools and the opening of new schools in accordance with the statutory notices will still be subject to the approval by Welsh Government of the 21st Century Schools and Education Programme Final Business Cases associated with these proposals.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 If the proposal proceeds, it is proposed that £37.4 million be invested in building new or refurbishing / remodelling existing buildings to ensure the pupils have a high quality, viable and sustainable 21st Century learning environment. This will be funded by the 21st Century Schools and Education Programme, which includes a 65% contribution from Welsh Government. The Council's 35% share of the capital costs will be met through prudential borrowing.
- 6.2 Any revenue and capital costs that accrue in completing the consultation and preparing financial business cases for Welsh Government approval will be met from within existing budgets.

7 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 Equality, Community and Welsh Language Impact Assessments were prepared in respect of this proposal and were published on the Council's website together with the Consultation Document that outlines the proposal in detail. Copies of all impact assessments are included at Appendix 2 of the attached consultation report.

8 LINKS TO THE COUNCIL'S CORPORATE PLAN / OTHER CORPORATE PRIORITIES/ SIP

- 8.1 The Council's Corporate Plan commits to "Continue to invest in improving school buildings, to ensure the County Borough's pupils have a learning environment fit for the 21st Century." The proposals considered in the report contribute to all 7 well-being goals within the Future Generation (Wales) Act 2015.

9 CONCLUSION

- 9.1 Members are asked to consider the contents of the attached Consultation Report, to agree to its immediate publication, and to give officers approval to publish the appropriate Statutory Notices on 1st April 2019 to progress these proposals.

Other Information:-

Relevant Scrutiny Committee: Children and Young People

Background Papers

The paper included as an appendix to the report is:

- The Consultation Report

Contact Officer

Lisa Howell, Business and School Organisation Manager - 01443 744062

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

21.03.19

**Item: 21ST CENTURY SCHOOLS PROGRAMME - PROPOSALS TO
REORGANISE PRIMARY SCHOOLS, SECONDARY SCHOOLS AND
SIXTH FORM PROVISION IN THE GREATER PONTYPRIDD AREA**

Background Papers

NONE

Officer to contact:

APPENDIX A

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CONSULTATION REPORT

Proposals: The reorganisation of primary schools, secondary schools and sixth form provision in the Pontypridd area.

Contents

		<u>Page</u>
1.	Who did we consult with?	2
2.	The Proposals	4
3.	The Consultation Process	4
4.	Summary of Responses to Consultation	6
	Proposal 1 – Sixth form changes	8
	Proposal 2 – Creation of a new 3-16 school for Hawthorn	16
	Proposal 3 – Creation of a new 3-16 school for Pontypridd	18
	Proposal 4 – Creation of a new Welsh Medium Primary School	20
	Proposal 5 – Catchment changes	22
5.	Conclusion	24
	<u>Appendices</u>	
1.	Consultation document	
2.	Community Impact Assessments x 4 Equality Impact Assessment Welsh Language Impact Assessment	
3.	Notes of consultation meetings	
4.	Notes of meeting with the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee	
5.	Estyn's response to the proposals	
6.	Hawthorn High School's letter to parents / carers	
7.	Pontypridd High School's letter to parents / carers	
8	Results of separate consultation of Owen Smith MP	

This report is prepared in accordance with the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013. Its purpose is to inform the outcome of the consultation held during the period 15th October 2018 and 31st January 2019 between all stakeholders and interested parties listed below.

1. Who did we consult with?

A copy of a consultation document which fully outlined and explained our proposal was sent to the following stakeholders. The document was also published on the Council website at www.rctcbc.gov.uk/schoolconsultations

- The Governing Bodies, parents, carers and staff of Hawthorn High School, Hawthorn Primary School, Heol-Y-Celyn Primary School, Pontypridd High School, Cilfynydd Primary School, Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School, Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School and YGG Pont Sion Norton
- The Governing Bodies, parents, carers and staff of Abercynon Primary, Cefn Primary, Coedpenmaen Primary, Coedylan Primary, Craig yr Hesg Primary, Ffynnon Taf Primary, Gwauncelyn Primary, Gwaunmeisgyn Primary, Llanilltud Faerdref Primary, Llantrisant Primary, Llwynocrwn Primary, Maesybryn Primary, Maesycod Primary, Parclewis Primary, Penygawsi Primary, Trallwng Infants, Trehopcyn Primary, Trerobart Primary, Ynysboeth Primary, YGG Abercynon, YGG Evan James, YGG Garth Olwg, St Michaels RC Primary, Our Lady's RC Primary, SS Gabriel & Raphael RC Primary, St Helens RC Primary (Caerphilly), Mountain Ash Comprehensive, Ysgol Gyfun Garth Olwg and Ysgol Ty Coch.
- Other Governing Bodies of neighbouring primary and secondary schools
- The Church in Wales and Roman Catholic Diocesan Authorities
- Caerphilly County Borough Council
- The Governing Body of Coleg Y Cymoedd
- The Governing Body of St David's College
- The City and County of Cardiff Council
- The Governing Body of the University of South Wales
- Welsh Minister for Education & Skills
- Assembly Members for all constituencies and regional areas serving Rhondda Cynon Taf
- Members of Parliament for the Rhondda, Pontypridd, Ogmore and Cynon Valley constituencies
- Estyn
- Cwm Taf Local Health Board
- Teaching and support staff trade unions
- Central South Consortium
- South Wales Police and Crime Commissioner

- The Early Years and Childcare Partnership
- South East Wales Transport Association
- The local Communities for Work Plus Employment Support Programme
- Community Councils: Pontypridd Town Council, Llantwit Fardre Community Council, Llantrisant Community Council, Ynysybwl/Coed y Cwm Community Council
- Neighbouring local authorities
- Mudiad Meithrin
- Menter Iaith
- The Welsh Language Commissioner

2. The Proposals

The proposals are to:

- Develop post 16 education provision at Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School, Beddau and Coleg y Cymoedd, Nantgarw. For those students who opt for a Roman Catholic education, provision will be available at St David's College, Cardiff;
- Create two new 3-16 schools, in Pontypridd and Hawthorn by sharing both primary and secondary sector resources;
- Improve and increase Welsh Medium primary provision by building a new school on the current Heol Y Celyn Primary School site, which will incorporate the two Welsh medium provisions at both Heol y Celyn and YGG Pont Sion Norton;
- Amend the catchment areas of Pontypridd High, Hawthorn High and Bryncelynnog Comprehensive Schools to better meet and match the demand for school places;
- Improve the learning environments for pupils with additional learning needs (ALN).

Details of the proposal and the rationale behind it are fully outlined in the consultation document that was available to all the stakeholders listed and which is attached as Appendix 1. The Community Impact Assessments, Equality Impact Assessment and the Welsh Language Impact Assessment are also attached as Appendix 2.

3. The Consultation Process

All stakeholders identified in Section 1 were advised of the availability of the consultation document and when required were provided with a hard copy. In addition to this, the following meetings were also convened:

School Affected	Group	Time, Date & Venue
Hawthorn High School	Governors and Staff Meeting	Monday, 12th November 2018, 3.30pm, Hawthorn High School
Pontypridd High School	Governors and Staff Meeting	Monday 12th November 2018, 3.30pm, Pontypridd High School
Heol Y Celyn Primary School	Governors and Staff Meeting	Wednesday 14th November 2018, 4pm, Heol Y Celyn Primary School
Hawthorn Primary School	Governors and Staff Meeting	Wednesday 14th November 2018, 4pm, Hawthorn Primary School
Cilfynydd Primary School	Governors and Staff Meeting	Monday, 19th November 2018, 4pm, Cilfynydd Primary School

School Affected	Group	Time, Date & Venue
YGG, Pont Sion Norton	Governors and Staff Meeting	Tuesday, 20th November 2018, 4pm YGG, Pont Sion Norton
Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School	Governors and Staff Meeting	Thursday, 22nd November 2018, 3.30pm, Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School
Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School	Governors and Staff Meeting	Thursday, 22nd November 2018, 3.30pm, Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School
Hawthorn High School	School Council	Monday, 12th November 2018, 2pm Hawthorn High School
Pontypridd High School	School Council	Monday, 12th November 2018, 2pm Pontypridd High School
Heol Y Celyn Primary School	School Council	Wednesday 14th November 2018, 2.30pm, Heol Y Celyn Primary School
Hawthorn Primary School	School Council	Wednesday 14th November 2018, 2.30pm, Hawthorn Primary School
Cilfynydd Primary School	School Council	Monday, 19th November 2018, 2.30pm, Cilfynydd Primary School
YGG Pont Sion Norton	School Council	Tuesday, 20th November 2018, 2.30pm, YGG Pont Sion Norton
Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School	School Council	Thursday, 22nd November 2018, 2pm Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School
Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School	School Council	Thursday, 22nd November 2018, 2pm Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School

Notes of all of the above meetings are attached at Appendix 3. These notes record the questions raised, and the comments and statements made, with responses provided where appropriate.

In addition to these meetings, and in order to provide the opportunity for more debate and dialogue on the proposals, five open evening/exhibitions were held at various locations throughout the areas affected by the proposals. Officers from the Education and Inclusion Services Directorate, Corporate Estates, Highways, School Transport and Human Resources were in attendance.

At these open evenings all attendees were requested to sign in so that the level of attendance could be recorded. The attendance registers indicate that a total of 187

people attended these events over the five nights. Attendees included school governors, staff, pupils, local councillors, the constituency Assembly Member, the Member of Parliament, parents and local residents. The highest number of consultees that attended a single session was 59, and the lowest number of attendees was only 20.

A meeting with the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee was held on 19th December 2018, where the consultation proposals were presented and comments and questions on the proposals received and where appropriate were answered by the officers in attendance. Notes of this meeting were recorded and are included at Appendix 4.

We are required to consult with the Education Inspectorate for Wales, Estyn on each of our proposals. A summary of their response is set out below, and the detailed response is available in Appendix 5.

- **Proposal to change sixth form provision** — *It is Estyn's opinion that the proposal is likely to at least maintain the current standards of education;*
- **Proposal to change primary and secondary school provision in the Hawthorn area** – *It is Estyn's opinion that the proposal is likely to at least maintain the current standards of education;*
- **Proposal to change primary and secondary provision in Pontypridd** – *It is Estyn's opinion that the proposal is likely to at least maintain the current standards of education in the area;*
- **Proposal to close YGG Pont Sion Norton and the Welsh stream of Heol y Celyn Primary School and create a Welsh medium community primary school** – *It is Estyn's opinion that the proposal is likely to at least maintain the current standards of education in the area.*

4. Summary of Responses to Consultation

Responses to the matters raised at the meetings outlined above are summarised in the notes of the meetings attached as Appendix 3.

Questionnaires

2,168 questionnaires were received during the consultation period. Some were sent in via email, some were received at the open evenings, some by post, by hand, and the vast majority came via the schools affected by the proposals.

Pupils at Hawthorn and Pontypridd High Schools completed a large proportion of questionnaires received. We have been made aware by staff members and pupils of these schools that the questionnaires were completed during school time and under staff supervision. These questionnaires were either delivered by, or collected directly from the schools themselves.

Both Hawthorn High School and Pontypridd High Schools wrote to parents and carers sharing their intended response to the consultation proposals. The letter encouraged parents and carers to copy the responses shared by the respective schools. These letters are included in Appendices 6 and 7 respectively.

For transparency it should be noted that the template for recording consultation responses had been altered by two of the schools and a significant proportion of responses were subsequently recorded on the modified proforma. We acknowledge that these may have been modified as it was felt that not all of the questions were personally relevant to all consultees. It is considered however that each individual proposal is an integral part of the wider strategic school management plan, and by not giving consultees the opportunity to complete the full questionnaire, they were inadvertently not given the opportunity to comment fully on all proposals as intended. It is also unclear whether or not learners were given full access to consultation information in order to make an informed decision on all proposals.

The number of altered questionnaires received totals 1,016. This equates to 47% of the total number of questionnaires received.

The breakdown of the respondents who submitted questionnaires is below:

Total Received	2,168
Parents	533
Pupils	1,040
Staff	163
Residents	64
Other/Unspecified	368

The results of the questionnaires received are below:

Proposal 1 – The Proposed Changes to Sixth Form Provision							
For	150	Against	1,735	Unsure	130	N/A Not answered	153
Proposal 2 – Create a new 3-16 school for Hawthorn							
For	278	Against	504	Unsure	299	N/A Not answered	1,087
Proposal 3 – Create a new 3-16 school for Pontypridd							
For	205	Against	746	Unsure	738	N/A Not answered	479
Proposal 4 – Creation of a new Welsh medium primary school							
For	125	Against	427	Unsure	333	N/A Not answered	1,283

Proposal 5 – Catchment area changes							
For	926	Against	698	Unsure	317	N/A Not answered	227

General Correspondence

In addition to the questionnaires, a number of respondents sent in letters and emails. There were 427 written responses received during the consultation period, and of these 109 were duplicates. Copies of all responses have been scrutinised by Cabinet and will be fully considered as part of the decision making process.

Owen Smith MP undertook a separate consultation on the proposals via the schools affected, the results of which are not included in the body of this report. This is an inappropriate use of school time and resources duplicating a statutory process over which Mr Smith has no mandate. The results of this additional consultation were collated and analysed by Owen Smith MP. In the interests of transparency, this information is included at Appendix 8.

A summary of the comments received during the consultation period taken from the questionnaires and other correspondence, as well as feedback provided verbally at the public drop-in sessions, is recorded below.

We received a number of letters and emails that were duplicated, and a number of responses whilst not duplicated, contained common themes, questions and concerns. Where this is the case, to avoid repetition we have captured these as singular comments in this part of the report.

Responses have been grouped below in relation to the section of the proposals to which they refer. Where required, and/or appropriate, our responses are also included. The comments are in bold and where appropriate, our response follows:

Proposal 1 – Sixth form changes

Cardinal Newman

- **Why isn't Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School receiving any investment similar to that being invested in the other schools in the proposal?**

Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School is a voluntary aided school and is governed, managed and controlled by the Roman Catholic Church. It is the responsibility of the Roman Catholic Diocese to apply to Welsh Government for capital funding to improve the quality of the buildings or to create 3-16 schools. Welsh Government has a capital allocation available at favourable terms for church schools, where 85% of the capital investment requirements are met by Welsh Government. However, the Council is supporting the Diocesan to develop business cases to secure 21st Century Schools funding for a number of potential investments in church schools.

- **Does St David's College have the capacity to take on new pupils?**

The Principal of St David's College has confirmed that they do.

- **How will pupils be transported to St David's College?**

Free transport will be provided for those who meet the Home to School Transport criteria. Pupils that do not live in RCT will have to contact their own Council's School Transport Department for further information on criteria and eligibility.

- **The proposals to co-operate with St David's College, Cardiff, are welcomed.**

The A Level outcomes at St David's College are very good, for example in 2018, 30% achieved A*-A, 84% achieved A*-C and 98% achieved A*-E.

- **Why wasn't Cardinal Newman considered an appropriate site for the sixth form centre?**

There is already post-16 education provision in this area at the Nantgarw Campus of Coleg Y Cymoedd. Post 16 students in Cardinal Newman, Hawthorn High School and Pontypridd High School are already opting for Coleg Y Cymoedd with retention rates of year 11 pupils transferring into year 12, in their current school equating to 35.83%, 35.71% and 32.26% respectively, with 47.5%, 48.2% and 48.3% respectively transferring to Further Education.

- **Where is the equality impact assessment and community impact assessment for Cardinal Newman?**

The consultation document and the consultation process is prepared in accordance with the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013. These documents are not a requirement for the changes that affect Cardinal Newman.

- **Have students been consulted?**

Yes they have. In accordance with the School Organisation Code, officers from the Council met with individual school councils as a part of the consultation process. Notes taken at these sessions are included within Appendix 3.

In addition to this, numerous written responses from pupils were received during the consultation period.

- **Will Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School still work with Y Pant Comprehensive School? What scope is there to widen the catchment area for post 16 to include Y Pant?**

The advice given to the school is to continue to work collaboratively with Y Pant and to further strengthen the links and shared learning opportunities that both schools have forged. At this moment in time there are no plans to include Y Pant in these proposals.

- **Why hasn't Cardinal Newman Comprehensive School been taken into account for the 3-16 proposals? St Michael's RC Primary School should join Cardinal Newman to make a 3-16 school.**

As previously stated, the decision to progress any such scheme would be have to be made by the Diocese.

Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School

- **What will be the result of the investment in the new school?**

The £10m funding that has been allocated to this project is a part of a larger sum that has been approved in principle by the Welsh Government through its 21st Century Schools Programme. The Council will need to undertake a full review of the school site and will undertake site and building surveys before early design work can commence. This will be done in collaboration with the school.

Priority for this funding will be to improve the sixth form facilities at the school, however it is envisaged that other improvements and refurbishment works to the school will also be incorporated.

- **Can you extend the ALN provision to post 16 to ensure the sixth form centre of excellence is inclusive for all?**

As a Council we are committed to ensuring that learners access the most appropriate post 16 provision suitable to their needs. Not all learners with additional learning needs are able to access the level 3 courses that are predominantly available in our mainstream schools as this would not be appropriate to their needs. However, thorough effective person centred planning continued focus will be placed on securing the most appropriate post 16 provision for learners with additional learning needs. For learners who are able to access post 16 courses within a mainstream setting, a robust assessment of their needs and bespoke provision will be required to ensure curriculum access and successful outcomes. For some learners with additional learning needs, more vocational routes to learning within a further education institution is more appropriate to their needs and effective transitional planning will be required.

The Council has a well-established partnership with Coleg Y Cymoedd and post 16 special school satellite bases are situated on Aberdare, Llwynypia and Nantgarw campuses for learners with severe and complex learning needs.

- **What is a centre of excellence?**

Excellent is a term used by Estyn to judge the performance of an education provider in a number of defined categories. An excellent school demonstrates very strong and sustained performance and practice and it is the Council's education ambition to ensure all that pupils have access to high quality educational experiences and excellent provision at all key stages, including post 16 provision.

In terms of these proposals, we would define this as an education provision that has excellent standards of leadership, learning and well-being, in facilities that are equipped to deliver a 21st Century learning experience.

- **It will be difficult for pupils from different schools to come together at sixth form.**

Data suggests that this is already happening very successfully at a post 16 level in Coleg Y Cymoedd and at a number of schools within the County Borough. All secondary schools will continue to provide impartial careers advice and guidance, and

will work in partnership with schools that provide sixth form provision and Coleg Y Cymoedd to ensure that the transition at post 16 continues to be well managed and successful. Offering choice for learners and securing the most appropriate learning pathway is a priority for ensuring engagement and successful outcomes for post 16 learners.

- **The school will be too large, you will lose the personal touch.**

There are a number of larger schools in the County Borough, and significantly larger schools across Wales. The benefits of having a larger sixth form provision outweigh the advantages of smaller schools as the curriculum offer provided in larger school settings ensures greater choice for learners.

- **It will benefit pupils as more courses will be available.**

Yes. There will be a greater number of post 16 courses available and greater opportunities for students to opt for their preferred combination of subjects.

- **The buildings are outdated and need upgrading. The investment will provide better facilities and opportunities.**

Yes. The investment will benefit all students not just those studying in the sixth form.

- **Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School is an excellent school with improving results**

Yes. The Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5 data for 2018 evidences this statement.

- **Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School is the natural choice for the sixth form centre – budget, capacity and attainment.**

Yes. The school has strong and effective leadership and this is evident by many performance indicators.

- **Slightly larger post 16 class sizes will provide a better learning environment for children**

Yes. Having larger post 16 classes creates greater opportunities for collaboration between students and for sharing a wider range of experiences.

Pontypridd High School and Hawthorn High School

- **Partnership working has already been attempted with Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School and Y Pant Comprehensive School and it failed.**

The proposal is not suggesting a partnership between Pontypridd/Hawthorn High School and Bryncelynnog/Y Pant. The proposals are to establish a larger and improved provision based at Bryncelynnog. This is not a consortium arrangement. Nevertheless, it is acknowledged that the schools do offer and share a limited number of post 16 courses.

- **Only a small number of pupils in both schools have expressed an interest in attending Bryncelynnog for sixth form.**

We cannot comment on the survey undertaken by the two schools with their pupils. However, the actual data on the number of pupils that choose to stay in Hawthorn and Pontypridd High School for their sixth form provision is very low. For example, for Pontypridd High School in September 2018 out of a potential 155 pupils in year 11 (as at July 2018), only 50 returned to Year 12, indicating that 67.74% choose alternative provision. This clearly suggests that Pontypridd High School does not currently provide the choice of curriculum options or educational experiences that some learners are seeking. Furthermore, if the curriculum offer is likely to be further restricted in future due to the deficit position, a further decline in numbers is inevitable and the provision will become even more unviable. The position was the same for Hawthorn High School in September 2018. Out of a potential 112 pupils in year 11 (as at July 2018), only 40 returned to Year 12, indicating that 64.29% choose not return to Hawthorn High School. By enhancing the curriculum offer in Bryncelynnog School it is likely that an increase in pupil numbers will be experienced as evidenced in Tonyrefail Comprehensive School following the implementation of the recent 21st Century Schools developments in the Rhondda.

- **£10m in Bryncelynnog will be used for the poor quality buildings, not just the sixth form.**

All the improvements made to the buildings at Bryncelynnog will potentially benefit sixth form learners and other pupils. For example, science labs upgrades will be utilised by all students.

- **Pontypridd and Hawthorn High Schools should not be compared to Bryncelynnog given that they are in different Free School Meals categories**

For the post 16 provision the Welsh Government data does not compare performance of schools based on the free school meal categories. However, the Council's data evidences that the majority of pupils eligible for free school meals do not return to the sixth forms in Pontypridd and Hawthorn High Schools. The majority opt to study at Coleg Y Cymoedd. In September 2018, only 10.7% of the Key Stage 5 cohort were eligible for free school meals in Pontypridd High School and 14.0% in Hawthorn High School - a significantly lower figure than that in Key Stage 4 in both schools. Therefore, as the free school meal comparison at Key Stage 5 between Pontypridd, Hawthorn and Bryncelynnog secondary schools is not significantly different, it is not unreasonable to compare and contrast the performance of learners, particularly at A-level.

- **Hawthorn and Pontypridd High Schools commented that the A-level results are misleading in the consultation document. They maintain that they have been above the Welsh average on the majority of the indicators**

The data in the consultation document is based on Welsh Government data sets. Welsh Government updated the Key Stage 5 results on 12/11/18. The following table shows the most recent results published on the Welsh Government All Wales Core Data Sets and provides data relating to Level 3 outcomes, the Average Wider Points Score (AWPS) and the percentage of learners achieving 3A*/C. The results confirm that the Key Stage 5 results for both schools at 3A*/C are consistently below both the RCT and the Welsh average from 2015-2017.

		Level 3 %	Average Wider Points Score	3 A*/C %
2015	Hawthorn High	98.2	772.7	14.0
	Pontypridd High	95.2	856.8	20.6
	Cardinal Newman	96.2	832.4	30.4
	Bryncelynnog	98.6	670.2	34.7
	RCT lowest	89.2	455.9	14.0
	RCT average	97.0	730.2	28.6
	Wales average	97.0	799.7	40.0
2016	Hawthorn High	97.6	772.3	14.3
	Pontypridd High	100	928.4	27.5
	Cardinal Newman	98.7	812.1	21.3
	Bryncelynnog	100	823.8	46.6
	RCT lowest	92.2	521.9	11.8
	RCT average	97.0	765.7	29.0
	Wales average	98.0	823.2	38.3
2017	Hawthorn High	100	739.9	41.7
	Pontypridd High	100	820.9	42.6
	Cardinal Newman	95.6	774.8	58.8
	Bryncelynnog	94.3	787.5	52.8
	RCT lowest	86	507.1	16.3
	RCT average	96.3	677.6	45.1
	Wales average	97.1	730.6	54.7

- **The AWPS for Pontypridd High School is higher than most schools.**

The AWPS is calculated by dividing the total number of points gained from all courses sat at Key Stage 5 and not just the number of A-levels or their equivalent. Pontypridd High School provide a large number of Key Skill courses that inflate this figure and makes comparison with any other institutions very difficult. Due to this very issue, the Welsh Government no longer uses the AWPS as an assessment criteria comparator.

It should also be noted that the AWPS is not a criteria that is used by Universities in scoring a student's University application.

- **Pontypridd and Hawthorn High advised that they were not happy with the use of the negative language used to describe the schools.**

It was not the intention to convey negativity towards any schools affected by this consultation. The language and terminology used in the consultation document are commentaries based on the interrogation of the data. It is also important to reflect when considering the performance of Pontypridd and Hawthorn High Schools that until recently both schools were two of forty secondary schools across Wales that were identified by Welsh Government as consistently underperforming and were included in the Schools Challenge Cymru Programme. Over the three years to 2017 both schools had significant additional investment which in total was in excess of £1.24m in addition to the funding allocation from the Council and had access to high quality leadership and teaching support provided directly by Welsh Government. This investment has provided the two schools with a significant advantage over similar schools in Wales. However, despite this considerable additional resource both schools remain in a significant deficit position.

- **The education standards in Coleg Y Cymoedd were raised as a concern, as were the results and the 2017 Estyn Report.**

It is acknowledged that Estyn's inspection of Coleg Y Cymoedd in 2017 was critical of the A-Level provision. However, Estyn recognised that the College was in the process of improving the quality of the provision and graded the College's prospects for improvement as 'good'. The 2018 results support Estyn's conclusions for improvement.

Furthermore, the College has also invested in employing new A Level teachers and the new Principal continues to raise accountability and performance across both the academic and vocational subjects. The successful completion rates for the College have increased for 2018 by 3% and 8% for the A Level Centre.

The current data in the table below shows that the A-level performance of Bryncelynnog and Coleg Y Cymoedd continues to improve. Bryncelynnog is the third best performing sixth form in RCT based on the A*-C A Level performance, Coleg Y Cymoedd sixth best, Cardinal Newman ninth, Hawthorn 12th and Pontypridd 13th.

	Percentage of A-levels		
	A*-A	A*-C	A*-E
Bryncelynnog CS	34.5	81.8	97.3
Coleg Y Cymoedd	17.8	74.8	99.0
Cardinal Newman RC CS	24.4	72.6	98.8
Hawthorn HS	16.9	58.4	88.8
Pontypridd HS	17.4	58.3	90.3
RCT Average	20.2	71.6	95.4
Central South Average	25.6	75.8	97.4

The FE Colleges Learner Outcomes Report was published by Welsh Government on 7th February 2019. It evidences further progress by Coleg Y Cymoedd across a wide range of curriculum areas including A Levels. The College is now performing above the national comparator rates for the main overall qualifications and above the national comparators for 65% of all subject areas. This is a significant improvement from 2014/15 when no subject area was above the national comparators. This data also does not take into account the higher than average level of deprivation of the students, when compared to the Welsh average.

- **Questions regarding the numbers for a viable sixth form.**

250 learners was the calculated number of learners specified in the Welsh Government's Learning and Skills Measure 2009 in order for a sixth form provision to financially break even. It is likely that this figure is higher now as the funding per pupil is relatively lower, with any increases not keeping pace with inflation.

- **The accuracy of the numbers in the document that relate to sixth form class sizes were questioned.**

These have been scrutinised and are accurate.

Each school is funded directly for the number of students enrolled on each course. Hence if there are 14 students undertaking a course in Pontypridd High School but 8 are from Hawthorn, Pontypridd High School will only receive funding for the 6 Pontypridd High School students.

- **The sixth form projected figures are questioned.**

The forecasted figures are based on current data and trends.

- **What is the justification for moving all sixth form provision out of the town area of Pontypridd?**

The justification for removing the sixth forms from Pontypridd High, Hawthorn High and Cardinal Newman is not based on geography alone. Coleg Y Cymoedd offers this provision and is located in the catchment area of Hawthorn High School, a school that serves Pontypridd. As stated in the consultation document the justification for this change relates to improving education standards, meeting pupil demand, providing more choice, and improving financial viability to develop a sustainable provision.

- **How can a centre of excellence be created in Coleg Y Cymoedd when the LA has no input into it?**

The Council has an effective working relationship with Coleg Y Cymoedd and has supported the campus developments in Aberdare, Llwynypia and Nantgarw.

The relationship between the College and the Council is stronger than ever with opportunities for collaboration between both parties being developed in many new areas. The Chief Executive of the Council and the Cabinet Member for Education are governors on the College Board.

- **Should the £10m earmarked for Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School be used to build a sixth form provision in Pontypridd?**

There is already a provision in Pontypridd at Coleg Y Cymoedd.

Proposal 2 – Creation of a new 3-16 school for Hawthorn

- **What evidence is there to support the fact that an all-through school works?**

The Council's first all-through school opened in Llanhari six years ago, and another three all-through schools opened in September 2018. There are also a number of other Councils throughout Wales that have opened or are in the process of opening or consulting on opening all-through schools too. As such the data on this school model is relatively new.

We are however gathering data in the form of educational outcomes, attendance figures, pupil voice surveys etc, to make sure that we are constantly monitoring these schools and will continue to do so going forward. Anecdotally we are receiving very positive reports from all of the schools.

- **Will the younger and older children be segregated? I don't want my young child exposed to older themes and inappropriate language.**

We have a number of all-through schools operating in the County Borough and this is managed with appropriate segregation of the younger and older pupils. The schools are designed so that there are separate entrances, learning environments, toilets, and outdoor learning and play spaces.

The all-through schools in the County Borough are managed differently depending on the ethos that the Headteacher instils within the school, and so no school operates in exactly the same way. However, what is common is that when pupils from different ages integrate or work collaboratively on school projects, it is done under supervision. It should also be recognised that older school children can be positive role models to younger children and can assist with peer mentoring and buddying schemes.

- **What will be the impact of the extra traffic? How will this be managed?**

A planning application will be submitted specifically for the new school, and as a part of this there will be a Traffic Impact Assessment undertaken focussing on both the immediate and surrounding area. This assessment will not only look at the current capacity of the highway, but also the impact of any increase in traffic flow, on not just the highway but also on pedestrian and cycling routes.

The expectation is that this report will contain recommendations in relation to improving the existing highway infrastructure as well as incorporating pedestrian safety measures, which could include traffic calming, or additional pedestrian crossing points.

The most recent school changes in Porth, Tonypandy and Tonyrefail resulted in the Council investing significant sums in improved safe routes to schools, which benefit the whole community and have proved successful in their operation.

- **Will the teachers have the experience and skills to teach across all key stages?**

The structure of the new 3-16 school, and the relevant staffing structure, will be developed and implemented by the interim Governing Body and new Headteacher, once appointed. They will ensure that appropriately experienced staff are appointed under the guidance of the Council's Human Resources Team.

All-through schools provide an opportunity for further training and staff development and for the development of specialist roles.

- **Pupils will have to be taught on a building site.**

The contractors that will be undertaking the works on site will be experienced in working on live school sites. Their experience of this will be one of many aspects scored as a part of the competitive tender process.

The health and safety of the pupils and staff will be paramount at all times, and the contractors will work collaboratively with the school and the Council to ensure that any disruption is minimised. The Council has significant experience in managing this and the processes and procedures that we have adopted on other projects have been very successful.

- **Does this model copy England's Academy Schools?**

No it does not.

- **Class sizes will be too big.**

The capacity of the school and the classrooms will be designed for 30 pupils.

- **By closing the primary schools we are negatively impacting the local communities.**

A Community Impact Assessment has been undertaken and was published on the Council's website. It is also attached within Appendix 2 of this report.

- **Some of the communities affected have vulnerable families. How will you ensure that these families will be integrated into the new school?**

We already have considerable experience of bringing pupils and their families together when we open new schools and the process of transition is well planned and managed over a period in the run up to the start of the new school year. We will apply the previous approaches, working with the respective Headteachers to plan this effectively as early as possible.

Since we undertook the last school reorganisations in the Rhondda, the Council has established the Resilient Families Service, which delivers support to families across Rhondda Cynon Taf through a Team Around the Family (TAF) approach. The Service focuses on increasing family resilience by providing intensive support for up to 12 weeks and is designed to give families the practical help to manage the challenges they are facing by focusing on their strengths as a family.

All schools in the County Borough work closely with the Resilient Families Team to resolve any issues families are facing. Referrals to the Resilient Families Service can be made by families themselves or schools with the family's permission. Creating larger schools can also build capacity within staffing structures and opportunities for developing more specialist wellbeing and/or family liaison posts which will clearly benefit more vulnerable children and families.

Proposal 3 – Creation of a new 3-16 school for Pontypridd

- **What are the benefits of an all-through school?**

As above and as set out in the consultation document.

- **Will the younger and older children be segregated? I don't want my young child exposed to older themes and language.**

As above.

- **What will be the impact of the extra traffic? How will this be managed?**

As above.

- **Will the teachers have the experience and skills to teach across all key stages?**

As above.

- **By closing the primary schools we are negatively impacting the local communities.**

As above.

- **Concerns in relation to the pollution levels around the A470 were raised.**

The Local Authority conducts regular monitoring of ambient outdoor air quality in the County Borough and results of this monitoring are compared against health based Air Quality Objectives. The monitoring network is regularly reviewed to determine the most relevant locations to monitor, with regards to statutory guidance, previous assessments and local knowledge. The monitoring has demonstrated that the vast majority of the County Borough experiences good air quality, with the areas of poor air quality being highly localised. A copy of the latest Air Quality Progress Report is available on the Council website.

Within the County Borough it has been acknowledged that Nitrogen Dioxide, an air pollutant often associated with road traffic emissions, can be elevated in some discrete locations. This is dictated by volume of traffic, proximity of buildings/people, climate, topography of the area and the surrounding built environment. It is understood that the A470 can represent a significant source of locally experienced Nitrogen Dioxide along various parts of its length, however, a number of factors may affect its manifestation and dispersion. Therefore not all communities along the length of the A470 experience similar levels of Nitrogen Dioxide or are at risk of non-compliance to an Air Quality Objective. The Local Authority has identified three discrete areas, Cilfynydd (174 properties), Nightingales Bush (11 properties) and Treforest (8 properties) where the close proximity to the A470, the environment and topography of the area, have been significant factors in the need to declare associated Air Quality Management Areas. These three Air Quality Management Areas associated with the A470 all have resident populations in built up areas within 10-15 metres from the A470.

There is Statutory Guidance which has been utilised by the Local Authority to plan the required monitoring network in Rhondda Cynon Taf since 1998 and it assists with establishing the likelihood of compliance to an Air Quality Objective at a specific location. The current Guidance (Local Air Quality Management Technical Guidance .TG16) implies that at locations such as Pontypridd High School, where members of the public/students would congregate beyond 20m from the used area of a major strategic road (the A470), they are likely to be compliant with Air Quality Objectives for Nitrogen Dioxide. There are other local factors, such as traffic flow, wind direction and topography of the area, which would also be taken into account when assessing air quality at this location. This area of the A470 has a relative free flow of traffic, compared to other more congested areas and the school is positioned on the windward side of the prevailing wind, with the wind commonly blowing in the direction to the opposite side of the A470 at this location. In addition the A470 is situated at a slightly higher elevation to the area occupied by Pontypridd High School, as a result it would benefit from improved dispersal in comparison to areas with a built environment in close proximity and directly adjacent or above the A470.

Therefore in line with statutory guidance and knowledge of the local area outlined above, no monitoring has been undertaken at Pontypridd High School, as it was not deemed to be at risk of breaching the relevant Air Quality Objective. However, to provide reassurance, a monitoring device has been set up at a potential worse case location on the campus since December 2018, to obtain the required air quality data, to enable the results to be compared against the annual Air Quality Objective for Nitrogen Dioxide.

- **Need to address traffic issues by the schools.**

A planning application will be submitted specifically for the new school, and as a part of this there will be a Traffic Impact Assessment undertaken focussing on both the immediate and surrounding area. This assessment will not only look at the current

capacity of the highway, but also the impact of any increase in traffic flow, on not just the highway but also on pedestrian and cycling routes.

The expectation is that this report will contain recommendations in relation to improving the existing highway infrastructure as well as incorporating pedestrian safety measures which could include traffic calming or additional pedestrian crossing points. The most recent school changes in Porth, Tonypandy and Tonyrefail resulted in the Council investing significant sums in improved safe routes to schools, which have benefitted the whole community.

Proposal 4 – Creation of a new Welsh Medium Primary School

- **There should be a Welsh medium school in north Pontypridd**

We are proposing to build a brand new, larger school in the Pontypridd area. School transport will be available for those who are eligible. There is already a Welsh medium school in Pontypridd i.e. YGG Evan James which has surplus capacity and there is also YGG Abercynon to the north.

- **Why not use the site in Glyncoch?**

All of the proposals included in the consultation are inter-dependant. By closing Heol Y Celyn Primary and the transferring of the English medium pupils to Hawthorn, this frees up a site, which we know is suitable, to construct a new and larger Welsh medium school which will accommodate the pupils from YGG Pont Sion Norton as well as the Welsh medium pupils already attending Heol Y Celyn.

- **Heol Y Celyn should be made into a Welsh only school as well as giving YGG Pont Sion Norton a new school.**

The demand for Welsh Medium education in this area does not justify this.

- **Pupils will have to travel further for Welsh medium education and this is not acceptable.**

It is acknowledged that this may well be the case for some pupils, however the majority of pupils will be unaffected as nearly 70% of pupils currently attending YGG Pont Sion Norton do so utilising school transport.

The school bus route distances of the new routes proposed will be shorter than the current school bus routes travelled. We have calculated the routes, and the average overall distance travelled for those pupils who already use school transport will be shortened by just over 1 mile per day.

- **The traffic caused by school transport at YGG Pont Sion Norton causes gridlock. I and other residents will be glad to see the Welsh School moved elsewhere. Years ago the school was an English medium school used by local children walking to school. This is no longer the case and the buses and parents cause misery to local residents trying to get to work.**

Yes. The home to school transport drop off and pick up each day is very difficult directly off the A4054 and this can cause congestion due to difficulties associated with the existing school site.

- **Parents would have to get two buses to pick their child up in an emergency.**

There is a direct bus to Heol Y Celyn from Glyncoch, but from Ynysybwl and Cilfynydd it would require a change of bus in Pontypridd Bus Station.

However, parents from Glyncoch and Ynysybwl needing to attend YGG Pont Sion Norton in an emergency by public transport are currently required to change buses at Pontypridd Bus Station.

The need for emergency collections should be infrequent.

- **Parents in the north of Pontypridd will not send their children to Welsh medium education because there is no Welsh medium nursery in the area. Can we put a Welsh medium nursery in another school in north Pontypridd, which could eventually feed into the new school in Rhydyfelin?**

There is already a Welsh Medium Meithrin in Ynysybwl and an unregistered setting in Cilfynydd.

- **The Council will be lowering the number of Welsh medium schools in RCT. This is unacceptable and will not help reach the Cymraeg 2050 target.**

On the contrary, these proposals are to invest in a brand new and larger primary school increasing Welsh medium pupil places by 93 across the existing provisions.

The Council is contributing to this target in other areas in the County Borough as we are increasing our Welsh medium pupils places in a number of schools through the delivery of our 21st Century School projects. We have already increased capacity and made improvements in a number of schools, including YGG Tonyrefail and YGG Llwynycelyn; we are currently consulting on increasing the Welsh medium capacity in Penderyn Community Primary School; and we are planning on increasing capacity in YGG Aberdar and YG Rhydywaun utilising 21st Century Schools investment. This highlights the Council's commitment to improving Welsh medium education.

- **25% of pupils in RCT are educated in Welsh. Does the LA spend 25% of its 21st Century Schools budget on Welsh Language Schools?**

Currently just under 20% of pupils in RCT are educated in Welsh. The 21st Century Schools programme for Band B (this is the funding that covers the works required as a part of this consultation) totals circa £168million.

Within this overarching budget, we anticipate that the investment into improving Welsh medium education will be circa £60million, which equates to 35%.

- **There is no transparency as to how this decision was made. Can we see the options that were ruled out?**

If we are to proceed with these proposals as consulted upon, then the site at Heol Y Celyn affords us with a suitable site to enable us to build a larger Welsh medium school

to our 21st Century School standards. This is a consultation period and if a decision is made not to pursue these proposals other options will then be considered.

- **The proposal for the new school should include a Welsh medium SEN unit. This is a missed opportunity.**

This may be something we consider in due course as we regularly review the need for specialist provision in the Local Authority.

Proposal 5 - Catchment Changes

- **Concerns that friendship groups of pupils in Tonteg will be split up.**

Every school has a designated catchment area, however, parents/carers have the right to state a preference for their child(ren) to attend any school. If the number of applications received for a particular year group in a school is below the school's Admission Number, all applications for admissions to that year group at the school will be granted. Bryncelynnog has over 200 surplus places and a further 200 places in the school are occupied by children from the Tonteg area. Therefore, for the foreseeable future, children that reside in Tonteg should be able to apply and secure a place at Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School.

- **Concerns that there will be a detrimental impact on the wellbeing of those that attend Gwauncelyn as they transfer to a different school**

There are a number of examples across the County Borough where children in the same primary school attend a different secondary school and the transition is well planned and managed. Meaningful and successful transition is an integral part of ensuring that pupils settle into their new school environments with little disruption. Advice and support will be provided by the Local Authority to all schools involved to ensure that the transition process is as smooth and worry free as possible for the pupils.

- **Is the walking route between Gwauncelyn Primary and Hawthorn High safe?**

If the proposals to change the catchment area for Hawthorn High are to go ahead, then a review of this walking route will be commissioned to ensure the safety of pupils. This review will include an independent assessment of the route, and any recommendations made by the independent assessor will be implemented.

- **Not all pupils that live in Tonteg will be eligible for school transport to Hawthorn High School**

This is correct. The criteria used by Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council to determine the eligibility to receive free school transport is based on walking distance, measured by the shortest, available walking route, with free transport being provided to secondary school learners whose home address is more than two miles from the nearest or catchment school.

In terms of the distance and eligibility for free school transport, the Council operates a far more generous allowance than the Learner Travel Measure (Wales) 2008, which

only requires transport to be provided for those secondary school pupils who live more than three miles from their nearest or catchment school.

- **Tonteg has strong community links with Llantwit Fardre and Church Village. There are no community links with Hawthorn.**

There is no reason why any community links will be adversely affected by these proposals. Gwauncelyn Primary School will remain open and so these community links will remain.

- **Concerns were raised about the walking route and the level of traffic emissions.**

There is no Air Quality Monitoring carried out in this area and the route does not go through an Air Quality Management Area. It is recognised that the A473 has congested traffic particularly at rush hours in the morning and evening along the road leading to Treforest Industrial Estate/ Upper Boat roundabout.

It's unlikely however that exposure along the route would be long enough to breach Air Quality Standards but it is recommended that exposure to air pollution is minimised as much as possible.

- **There was a lack of consultation with parents of Gwauncelyn Primary School**

The proposal is for an amendment to the catchment area of Hawthorn High School and Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School, not Gwauncelyn Primary School. Notwithstanding that, the governing body, parents, carers and staff of Gwauncelyn Primary School were consulted with (a full list of consultees is included at section 1 of this report).

- **Hawthorn is a worse school than Bryncelynnog. I don't want my child to go there.**

Please see the point above that refers to pupil/parent choice.

We have acknowledged in our consultation document that Bryncelynnog has achieved consistently better results than some other secondary schools over the last few years. Also, in addition in the most recent School Categorisation System Bryncelynnog is categorised as a 'green' school where as Hawthorn High is 'yellow'.

These school reorganisation proposals are interlinked and at the heart of the proposals is raising standards in education. Through their implementation, we intend on tackling a number of the inconsistencies that exist between the schools. The removal of the sixth forms and the creation of 3-16 schools in Hawthorn and Pontypridd, will allow the schools to reallocate much needed resources to Key Stages 3-4, instead of utilising these resources to prop up small and unsustainable sixth forms. This will allow these schools to focus on appropriately resourcing and improving educational standards throughout all key stages.

Work with the new schools will continue with support from the Council to ensure that the standards of learning in the current schools will continue to improve through the transition period of the creation of the new schools and beyond.

- **There is no public transport to Hawthorn from Tonteg**

There are bus links between both areas although there are no direct transport links. A change of bus is required at the Pottery (Treforest Estate) or Parc Lewis School (Treforest).

5. Conclusion

In view of the responses and comments received during the consultation period, a further assessment of the proposals, which are included within the consultation document, has been undertaken. The proposals have been revisited and the impact of the proposals on the quality and standards of education, the community, and transport arrangements, have been reassessed.

The original proposal was to:

- Close the sixth forms of Hawthorn High School, Pontypridd High School and Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School and transfer the post-16 provision to Bryncelynog Comprehensive School or Coleg Y Cymoedd, Nantgarw. For those students who opt for a Roman Catholic education, sixth form provision will be available at St David's College, Cardiff;
- Close Pontypridd High School and Cilfynydd Primary School and create a new 3-16 'all through' school on the site of the current Pontypridd High School;
- Close Hawthorn High School, Hawthorn Primary School and Heol-Y-Celyn Primary School and create a new 3-16 'all through' school on the site of the current Hawthorn High and Hawthorn Primary Schools. The local authority designated ALN specialist class located Hawthorn High School will also transfer to the new school.
- Relocate Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Pont Sion Norton to a new school building to be constructed on the site of the current Heol-Y-Celyn Primary School. The pupils educated through the Welsh Medium at Heol-Y-Celyn will transfer to YGG Pont Sion Norton (the Heol-Y-Celyn pupils educated through the English Medium will transfer to the new 3 – 16 school at Hawthorn, see above);
- Amend the catchment areas for pupils aged 11-16 of the three LA maintained Secondary schools by:
 - Transferring the Graig area of Pontypridd (that is part of the catchment area of Maesycoed Primary School) to the new 3-16 school for Pontypridd (currently part of the Hawthorn High School catchment)
 - Transferring the catchment area of Coedpenmaen Primary School to the new 3-16 school for Pontypridd (currently part of the Hawthorn High School catchment)
 - Transferring the catchment area of Gwauncelyn Primary School to the new 3-16 school for Hawthorn (currently part of the Bryncelynog Comprehensive School catchment).

It is recommended that the proposal set out above is maintained with the exception of the proposed change to the catchment area of Bryncelynog Comprehensive School. It is recommended that the catchment area for Gwauncelyn Primary School remains within the Bryncelynog Comprehensive School catchment area and does not transfer to the new 3-16 school for Hawthorn. Since the consultation commenced in October 2018, the large brownfield site at Llanillid, Llanharan has been purchased by two major developers and the Council has entered into site master planning with the developers, to provide pre-planning advice and guidance. For the site to be developed, a new

secondary school will be required, which, will have an impact on a number of other schools as the new housing development grows. Furthermore, the Council's Local Development Plan will need to be reviewed in 2021, or an equivalent plan developed.

It is therefore proposed that the secondary school catchment areas are monitored over the next 5-10 years taking into account the planned developments and the future new Local Development Plan (or equivalent) to ensure sufficient school places are available across the County Borough.

The recommendations to be put before a forthcoming meeting of the Council's Cabinet are that the following four statutory notices are published to progress with these proposals.

- The alteration of the age range of pupils that may be admitted to Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School, from 11 – 19 years to 11 – 16 years, resulting in the removal of the sixth form provision;
- The closure of Pontypridd High School and Cilfynydd Primary School and the creation of a new 3 – 16 'all through' School on the site of the current Pontypridd High School. There will be no sixth form provision at this school;
- The closure of Hawthorn High School and Hawthorn Primary School and the creation of a new 3 – 16 'all through' School on the site of the current Hawthorn High and Hawthorn Primary Schools, with the Local Authority designated ALN specialist class located in Hawthorn High School, as well as pupils receiving education through the medium of English at Heol y Celyn Primary School transferring to the new school. There will be no sixth form provision at this school;
- The closure of Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Pont Sion Norton and Heol y Celyn Primary School and the opening of a new Welsh medium Primary School on the site of the current Heol y Celyn Primary School.

If agreed, the four statutory notices that make up this proposal will be published in April 2019 and it will allow for a minimum 28 day period during which time any person may lodge an objection to the proposals.

All of the proposals consulted upon, in this report, are dependent on decisions taken on the future restructuring of sixth form provision. The School Organisation Code states that any proposals which affect sixth form education must be approved by the Welsh Ministers; and the Council **must** also send to the Welsh Ministers any proposals which it considers are related to the proposals requiring determination.

However, Welsh Government have already confirmed that they will only determine the proposal relating to the removal of the sixth form from Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School. Any statutory objections received must be sent to the Welsh Ministers, in addition to the Objection Report referred to above, within 35 days of the end of the objection period for them to consider and determine the outcome of the Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School proposal.

The remaining proposals will be for the Council's Cabinet to determine. At the end of the objection period, an Objection Report will be compiled, summarising any objections received. The outcome of this part of the process will be considered by Cabinet again at a meeting to be held in June 2019.

Appendix 1

Consultation Document

21ST CENTURY SCHOOLS



CONSULTATION ON THE REORGANISATION
OF PRIMARY SCHOOLS, SECONDARY SCHOOLS
AND SIXTH FORM PROVISION
IN THE PONTYPRIDD AREA

Table of Contents

Introduction and the Consultation Process	1
What will the consultation process entail?	3
What do you have to consider?	4
How do you make your views known?	5

Section 1

Overview of the Proposals	7
---------------------------------	---

Section 2

The Proposed Sixth Form Changes	26
---------------------------------------	----

Section 3

Proposed Changes to Primary and Secondary Provision in Hawthorn	36
---	----

Section 4

Proposed Changes to Primary and Secondary Provision in Pontypridd	48
---	----

Section 5

Proposed Changes to Welsh Medium Primary Education Provision	56
--	----

Consultation Response Pro-forma	62
--	-----------

Introduction

Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council wishes to seek the views of a wide range of stakeholders on the proposals to:

- Develop post 16 centres of excellence based at Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School, Beddau and Coleg y Cymoedd, Nantgarw. For those students who opt for a Roman Catholic education, provision will be available at St David's College, Cardiff;
- Create two new 3-16 schools, in Pontypridd and Hawthorn, which will take a radically different approach to education in the areas, by sharing both primary and secondary sector resources;
- Improve and increase Welsh Medium primary provision by building a new school on the former site at Heol y Celyn, which will incorporate the former provisions at both Heol y Celyn and YGG, Pont Sion Norton;
- Amend the catchment areas of Pontypridd High, Hawthorn High and Bryncelynnog Comprehensive Schools to better meet and match the demand for school places;
- Improve the learning environments for pupils with additional learning needs (ALN).

To achieve this, the proposal is to:

- Close the sixth forms of Hawthorn High School, Pontypridd High School and Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School and transfer the post-16 provision to Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School or Coleg y Cymoedd, Nantgarw. For those students who opt for a Roman Catholic education, sixth form provision will be available at St David's College, Cardiff;
- Close Pontypridd High School and Cilfynydd Primary School and create a new 3-16 'all through' school on the site of the current Pontypridd High School;
- Close Hawthorn High School, Hawthorn Primary School and Heol-Y-Celyn Primary School and create a new 3-16 'all through' school on the site of the current Hawthorn High and Hawthorn Primary Schools. The local authority designated ALN specialist class located in Hawthorn High School will also transfer to the new school.
- Close Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Pont Sion Norton and open a new Welsh Medium Primary School to be constructed on the site of the current Heol-Y-Celyn Primary School. The pupils educated through the Welsh Medium at Heol-Y-Celyn will transfer to the new school (the Heol-Y-Celyn pupils educated through the English Medium will transfer to the new 3 – 16 school at Hawthorn, see above);
- Amend the catchment areas for pupils aged 11-16 of the three LA maintained Secondary schools by:
 - Transferring the Graig area of Pontypridd (that is part of the catchment area of Maesycoed Primary School) to the new 3-16 school for Pontypridd (currently part of the Hawthorn High School catchment)
 - Transferring the catchment area of Coedpenmaen Primary School to the new 3-16 school for Pontypridd (currently part of the Hawthorn High School catchment)
 - Transferring the catchment area of Gwauncelyn Primary School to the new 3-16 school for Hawthorn (currently part of the Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School catchment).

To achieve these changes, the Council, in partnership with Welsh Government, is planning to invest £37.4m in new or refurbished/remodelled school buildings and facilities.

The proposals are inter-dependent projects and it is proposed that the changes will be implemented over the period to 31 August 2022. Given the number of schools affected by the proposals, the consultation document has been set out in the following five sections, encouraging consultees to provide feedback on specific school proposals:

- **Section 1** – Overview of the Proposals;
- **Section 2** – The proposed sixth form changes;
- **Section 3** – The proposed changes to primary and secondary provision in Hawthorn;
- **Section 4** – The proposed changes to primary and secondary provision in Pontypridd;
- **Section 5** – The closure of YGG Pont Sion Norton and the creation of a new Welsh Medium Primary school at the current Heol-Y-Celyn site. The Welsh Medium stream of Heol y Celyn will transfer to the new school also. This will increase capacity and improve Welsh Medium provision and will also remove dual language provision.

Who will we consult with?

We are seeking the views of the following stakeholders:

- The Governing Bodies, parents, carers and staff of Hawthorn High School, Hawthorn Primary School, Heol-Y-Celyn Primary School, Pontypridd High School, Cilfynydd Primary School, Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School, Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School and YGG, Pont Sion Norton
- The Governing Bodies, parents, carers and staff of Abercynon Primary, Cefn Primary, Coedpenmaen Primary, Coedylan Primary, Craig yr Hesg Primary, Ffynnon Taf Primary, Gwauncelyn Primary, Gwaunmeisgyn Primary, Llanilltud Faerdref Primary, Llantrisant Primary, Llwyncrwn Primary, Maesybryn Primary, Maesycod Primary, Parc Lewis Primary, Penygawsi Primary, Trallwng Infants, Trehopcyn Primary, Trerobart Primary, Ynysboeth Primary, YGG Abercynon, YGG Evan James, YGG Garth Olwg, St Michaels RC Primary, Our Lady's RC Primary, SS Gabriel & Raphael RC Primary, St Helens RC Primary (Caerphilly), Mountain Ash Comprehensive, Ysgol Gyfun Garth Olwg, Ysgol Ty Coch.
- Other Governing Bodies of neighbouring primary and secondary schools
- The Church in Wales and Roman Catholic Diocesan Authorities
- Caerphilly County Borough Council
- The Governing Body of Coleg Y Cymoedd
- The Governing Body of St David's College
- The City and County of Cardiff Council
- The Governing Body of the University of South Wales
- Welsh Minister for Education & Skills
- Assembly Members for all constituencies and regional areas serving Rhondda Cynon Taf
- Members of Parliament for the Rhondda, Pontypridd, Ogmore and Cynon Valley constituencies
- Estyn
- Cwm Taf Local Health Board

- Teaching and support staff trade unions
- Central South Education Consortium
- South Wales Police and Crime Commissioner
- The Early Years and Childcare Partnership
- South East Wales Transport Association
- The local Communities for Work Plus Employment Support Programme
- Community Councils : Pontypridd Town Council, Llantwit Fardre Community Council, Llantrisant Community Council, Ynysybwl/Coed y Cwm Community Council
- Neighbouring local authorities
- Mudiad Meithrin
- Menter Iaith
- The Welsh Language Commissioner

What will the consultation process entail?

The consultation will start on Monday, 15th October 2018 and will be completed at 5pm on Thursday, 31st January 2019. The feedback from the consultation will be collated and summarised, and a report presented to the Council's Cabinet in February 2019. This consultation report will be available for all persons to view on the Council's internet site and copies can be obtained on request from the address detailed on page 6 of this document.

The Council's Cabinet will consider the report and will consider, based on the feedback, whether to proceed with the proposals, make changes to the proposals or not proceed with the proposals. If the Cabinet decides not to proceed, that will be the end of the proposals for the foreseeable future.

If the Cabinet decides to proceed with the proposals Statutory Notices will be published providing a 28 day notice period for objections. The School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 requires that anyone wishing to make objections to a school organisation proposal has the opportunity to do so. To be considered as statutory objections, objections must be made in writing or by email, and sent to the Council within 28 days of the date on which the Statutory Notices are published.

As the proposals include changes to sixth form education, the Welsh Government Minister for Education and Skills will determine the outcome of the Statutory Notice in respect of the Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School proposals. The outcome of the Statutory Notices in respect of the creation of the two 3 – 16 schools and the closure and relocation of YGG Pont Sion Norton will be determined by the Council's Cabinet.

If there are objections, the Council's Director of Education and Inclusion Services will publish an objection report providing a summary of the objections and her response to them within 7 days of the determination decision of the proposals by the Council's Cabinet, for the proposals Cabinet are responsible for. Any objections received in respect of the Cardinal Newman proposal will be sent to the Welsh Ministers for consideration within 35 days of the end of the objection period. The objection report will also be available for all persons to view on the Council's internet site and copies can be obtained on request from the address detailed on page 6 of this document.

What do you have to consider?

The remainder of the consultation document sets out the rationale for the proposed changes to Welsh and English primary, secondary and post 16 education provision in the communities within the catchment areas of Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School, Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School, Hawthorn and Pontypridd High Schools, and YGG Pont Sion Norton. We would like you to consider the information contained within this document and to hear your views as to whether or not you support the proposals as outlined in the Introduction section of this document on page 1.

How do you make your views known?

Consultation events will be held locally and you are welcome to attend the appropriate meeting.

School Affected	Group	Time, Date & Venue
Hawthorn High School	Governors and Staff Meeting	Monday, 12th November 2018, 3.30pm, Hawthorn High School
Pontypridd High School	Governors and Staff Meeting	Monday 12th November 2018, 3.30pm, Pontypridd High School
Heol-Y-Celyn Primary School	Governors and Staff Meeting	Wednesday 14th November 2018, 4pm, Heol-Y-Celyn Primary School
Hawthorn Primary School	Governors and Staff Meeting	Wednesday 14th November 2018, 4pm, Hawthorn Primary School
Cilfynydd Primary School	Governors and Staff Meeting	Monday, 19th November 2018, 4pm Cilfynydd Primary School
YGG, Pont Sion Norton	Governors and Staff Meeting	Tuesday, 20th November 2018, 4pm YGG, Pont Sion Norton
Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School	Governors and Staff Meeting	Thursday, 22nd November 2018, 3.30pm, Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School
Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School	Governors and Staff Meeting	Thursday, 22nd November 2018, 3.30pm, Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School
Hawthorn High School	School Council	Monday, 12th November 2018, 2pm Hawthorn High School
Pontypridd High School	School Council	Monday, 12th November 2018, 2pm Pontypridd High School
Heol-Y-Celyn Primary School	School Council	Wednesday 14th November 2018, 2.30pm, Heol-Y-Celyn Primary School
Hawthorn Primary School	School Council	Wednesday 14th November 2018, 2.30pm, Hawthorn Primary School
Cilfynydd Primary School	School Council	Monday, 19th November 2018, 2.30pm, Cilfynydd Primary School
YGG, Pont Sion Norton	School Council	Tuesday, 20th November 2018, 2.30pm, YGG, Pont Sion Norton
Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School	School Council	Thursday, 22nd November 2018, 2pm Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School
Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School	School Council	Thursday, 22nd November 2018, 2pm Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School

School Affected	Group	Time, Date & Venue
Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School	Parents and public drop in session and exhibition	Tuesday, 15th January 2019, 3 - 6pm Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School
Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School	Parents and public drop in session and exhibition	Wednesday, 16th January 2019, 3 - 6pm, Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School
YGG Pont Sion Norton and Heol-Y-Celyn Primary Welsh Department – both schools and members of the local community	Parents and public drop in session and exhibition	Thursday, 17th January 2019, 4 - 6pm Rhydyfelin Children's Centre
Hawthorn High, Hawthorn Primary and Heol-Y-Celyn Primary – all three schools and members of the local community	Parents and public drop in session and exhibition	Tuesday, 22nd January 2019, 3 - 6 pm Hawthorn High School
Pontypridd High and Cilfynydd Primary – both schools and members of the local community	Parents and public drop in session and exhibition	Thursday, 24th January 2019, 3 - 6 pm Pontypridd High School

Consultation questionnaires are attached. These will also be available at the drop-in session detailed above and on the Council's website at www.rctcbc.gov.uk

You are also welcome to put your views and any questions you may have in writing to:

Director of Education and Inclusion Services
21st Century Schools team,
Ty Trevithick,
Abercynon CF45 4UQ

Telephone: (01443) 744227

Email: schoolplanning@rctcbc.gov.uk

All correspondence should be received no later than 5pm on Thursday, 31st January 2019.

Please note that responses to the consultation will not be treated as objections to the proposal. Objections can only be forwarded following the publication of the Statutory Notices.

The majority of the schools affected by this proposal are English medium schools and therefore the consultation documents have been distributed in English based on the chosen language medium for education. Welsh language copies of the consultation document have been provided to the Welsh medium schools and to the Welsh Department of Heol-Y-Celyn Primary School. If a Welsh language copy of the consultation document is required, please contact the address above.

SECTION 1

Overview of the Proposals

Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council wishes to seek the views of a wide range of stakeholders on the proposals to:

- Develop post 16 centres of excellence based at Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School, Beddau and Coleg y Cymoedd, Nantgarw. For those students who opt for a Roman Catholic education, provision will be available at St David's College, Cardiff;
- Create two new 3-16 schools, in Pontypridd and Hawthorn, which will take a radically different approach to education in the areas, by sharing both primary and secondary sector resources;
- Improve and increase Welsh Medium primary provision by creating new school provision to replace Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Pont Sion Norton and the Welsh stream of Heol y Celyn Primary School;
- Amend the catchment areas of Pontypridd High, Hawthorn High and Bryncelynnog Comprehensive Schools to better meet and match the demand for school places;
- Improve the learning environments for pupils with additional learning needs.

To achieve these changes, the Council, in partnership with Welsh Government, will invest £37.4m in building new or refurbishing/remodelling existing buildings to ensure the pupils have a high quality, viable and sustainable 21st Century learning environment.

This investment will include:

- New and refurbished buildings at Hawthorn Primary and High School sites and Pontypridd High School site to create two 3-16 schools;
- New and improved sixth form facilities at Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School;
- Construction of a new Welsh Medium Primary school that will be constructed on the current site of Heol-Y-Celyn Primary School. The capacity of the building will be sufficient to incorporate YGG Pont Sion Norton and the Welsh Medium stream of Heol-Y-Celyn Primary School;
- A review of the safe routes to school, and improvements to walkways, road crossings and road speed management measures will be made to ensure the required safety standards are met. This is the approach we have implemented in other communities in earlier school reorganisation proposals with significant improvements being made to safe routes to schools.

What is the basis for the proposals to create 3 - 16 Schools?

Successful Futures

In March 2014, the Welsh Ministers commissioned Professor Graham Donaldson to undertake an independent review of curriculum and assessment arrangements in Wales, from the Foundation Phase to Key Stage 4. His report, entitled 'Successful Futures' was subsequently published in February 2015 and was adopted by the Welsh Government as policy shortly afterwards. It is now the Welsh Government's position on curriculum reform across Wales. This document can be viewed online using the following link

<http://gov.wales/docs/dcells/publications/150225-successful-futures-en.pdf>.

The key recommendations from Successful Futures for all-through schools are:

- The curriculum 3–16 should be organised into Areas of Learning and Experience.
- The new national curriculum in Wales should have six Areas of Learning and Experience: Expressive Arts; Health and Well-being; Humanities; Languages, Literacy and Communication; Mathematics and Numeracy; and Science and Technology.
- Children and young people should have their learning developed across the curriculum through three cross-curriculum responsibilities that should be the responsibility of all teachers: literacy; numeracy; and digital competence.
- A digital competence framework and an accompanying 'Routes to Learning Digital Competence' should be developed and be included as a cross-curriculum responsibility.
- The expectations for the three cross-curriculum responsibilities and wider skills should be embedded within the Areas of Learning and Experience
- The new national curriculum should be organised as a continuum of learning from 3 to 16 without phases and key stages.
- Progression should be described in relation to a continuum of learning in each Area of Learning and Experience from when a child enters education to the end of statutory schooling.
- Progression should be signalled through Progression Steps at five points in the learning continuum, relating broadly to expectations at ages 5, 8, 11, 14 and 16
- All teaching and learning should be directed to achieving the four curriculum purposes.
- Teachers should apply the pedagogical principles identified in this report when planning their teaching and learning, to ensure that the activities relate directly to the curriculum purposes.
- Children and young people should have opportunities to learn from expertise and experience from outside the school.

The first and most obvious change to the curriculum is the reorganisation of what pupils learn into six Areas of Learning and Experience and three Cross-Curriculum Responsibilities. Adopting this approach at national level will give schools more freedom to teach a wider range of things in different ways. Letting teachers make more decisions about what is taught will give schools and teachers much more freedom to work on subjects and topics that are relevant to their learners, so it will be possible for any two schools in Wales to teach and assess different things to measure progress of learners. This will affect how schools can be organised, so that all-through schools will be able to organise a wider range of staff to do things in different ways.

The removal of phases and key stages will give teachers more freedom to work by accommodating the needs of their pupils. This breaks down the distinctions between what happens in a primary and secondary school and especially between the key stages – clearly this puts an all-through school in an advantageous position when thinking about deciding what pupils learn and how they learn it across a whole-school continuum. In turn, this ability to work with a wider range of colleagues will help all teachers develop their practice. A single workforce in a school reflecting on and jointly developing and designing what works for five-year olds, teenagers and young adults is capable of a wider range of points of reference and a wider range of practices than a smaller group of teachers with a one-phase window to consider.

These changes to what pupils learn and how they learn it are easier to manage in an all-through environment than in a single-phase school or group of schools. They do, though, bring significant challenges as well as opportunities to leadership and practice. The more flexible workforce with greater capacity and flexibility, and the ability to play a role as part of a professional learning community are all likely to be enhanced by the all-through model. Simply by increasing the number and widening the variety of staff, the all-through model enjoys an advantage over the single-phase in the Successful Futures vision of learning.

Similarly, there are implications of the new reforms for buildings, for spaces within buildings for working, teaching and learning, and for access to technology across the whole learning age-range. All-through schools provide a wider range of physical spaces for teaching and learning, and a better range of specialist spaces, resources and materials that can be accessed by a wider age-range than in a single-phase setting. This includes digital, information and learning technology, which is critical to several of the recommendations and which is difficult to afford, maintain and refresh in single-phase schools.

Finally, all-through schools and the reforms in the curriculum carry implications for the role of parents, the local community and the local economy in supporting pupils' progress. The need for transition between Primary and Secondary phases is removed and this can also lead to more continuous and therefore better relationships with parents and carers. Successful Futures is very clear that not all learning that happens to young people happens in a classroom and because of a teacher.

Criteria for the Review of School Provision

In recent years, Estyn has sharpened its approach to inspection of schools and local authorities and has raised the bar in respect of what it considers to be good and excellent provision. Furthermore, Estyn has taken a very hard line on local authorities in Wales that have weaknesses in key areas such as corporate governance, educational standards, attendance levels, surplus places and safeguarding.

Following the last formal inspection of Rhondda Cynon Taf's Education Service in 2012, Estyn also highlighted that the Council had the highest number of surplus places in Wales and that action had to be taken to address this issue. This was followed up by a letter from the Welsh Government Minister for Education and Skills in November 2012 that instructed the Council to take action in respect of surplus places or the Welsh Government would take responsibility for removing the surplus places.

The Elected Members accepted Estyn's recommendations and have been continually reviewing school provision in Rhondda Cynon Taf ever since. The criteria that has been used for selecting schools for review is one or more of the following:

- Surplus places in excess of 25% of published capacity;
- Buildings that are beyond economic repair/not fit for purpose;
- Financially unviable (usually due to a sharp fall in pupil numbers);
- Schools considered to be 'small' schools, i.e. schools with 90 or fewer pupils;
- Separate infant and junior schools in close proximity;
- 'Paired' schools, i.e. where children progress from one of the schools to the other;
- Mixed aged classes where there are more than two age groups in one class;
- Schools considered to be at risk, based on their academic Key Stage data and the quality of the leadership, of meeting Estyn's criteria as a school in need of significant improvement or special measures.

The 3 primary schools and 2 secondary schools included within these 3-16 proposals have been assessed against the aforementioned criteria:

- 4 of the 5 schools have surplus places in excess of 25%;
- The combined maintenance backlog of the 5 schools is £4,352,000 which equates to £1,804 per pupil;
- The educational performance and pupil attendance of the 2 LA maintained secondary schools at Key Stage 4 is consistently in the third and fourth quartiles when compared to similar schools in Wales;

In addition Hawthorn and Pontypridd High Schools combined have small sixth forms of less than 250 pupils (the national recommended minimum number for an efficient and effective sixth form), and with relatively poor educational performance. Please refer to the data contained in sections 2, 3 and 4 of this document for the evidence to support this statement.

Pupil numbers attending the sixth form at Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School have also fallen dramatically in the last three years; in September 2015 there were 195 pupils in the sixth form, this fell to just 80 in January 2018, a reduction of 60%. Having such small post 16 numbers has a significant impact on the post 16 provision available and on the wider sixth form experience for the students. Numbers are forecast to fall even further by January 2019. This reduction in pupil numbers and consequent reduction in post 16 funding from the Welsh Government has meant that the Cardinal Newman School budget is predicted to fall into a deficit balance of over £700k.

The opportunity exists to reconfigure the primary and secondary schools, including post-16 provision to create educationally and financially viable schools that serve the local communities. These proposals seek to achieve this.

What is the educational case for the proposals?

School organisational change should point to the educational benefits that any change will offer, particularly in relation to overall improvements in standards, but also in terms of the social and emotional development of children, which would usually impact beneficially on their overall achievement and outcomes.

It is the Council's view that creating larger sixth forms and 3-16 schools will:

- **Improve educational outcomes;**
 - Create larger school departments or faculties that will promote the sharing of skills and expertise across more viable teams;
 - Provide teaching and support staff with more opportunity to develop professionally;
 - Enable greater opportunities for staff to move between key stages and further develop expertise;
 - Provide a more appropriate skills-based curriculum and wider extra-curricular opportunities which should improve attendance and educational outcomes;
 - Reduce the anxiety caused by transition
- **Improve educational provision;**
 - Provide the conditions that will enable a broader and more diverse curriculum to be developed to better meet the needs of the school's young people and in ways that will be viable and sustainable over the longer term;
 - Improve the range and quality of facilities and learning resources available to the benefit of all pupils;
 - Enable greater continuity of support for vulnerable groups of pupils;
 - Allow for the potential for financial savings in terms of staffing structures and purchase of services, which accrue to a larger school;
 - Broaden the range of extra-curricular and out-of-school activities and develop them in ways that are sustainable over the longer term;
 - Deliver the future capital investment benefits that would arise from the modernisation of a small number of institutions rather than many;
 - Create schools of a sustainable size for their catchment area by removing surplus capacity, providing greater educational and financial stability;
 - Release resources that will be reinvested in improving the buildings and in improving standards of teaching and learning, which otherwise would not have been available;
 - Enable schools to build better relationships with parents and carers.

- **Improve leadership and management;**

- Provides the opportunity for the headteacher to distribute key leadership tasks such as child protection, literacy, numeracy, special educational needs etc to a greater number of staff. Often in a small Primary school, the headteacher takes responsibility for the vast majority of these tasks;
- Creates leadership opportunities for other staff, and for others to specialise in key areas, which will enhance educational provision and outcomes and improve succession planning;
- Allow teaching and support staff access to a wider range of responsibilities
 - Improved career prospects;
 - Improved curriculum co-ordination;
 - The opportunity to teach across a wider age range;
 - An increased range of expertise;
 - Improved opportunities for staff interaction /co-ordination.

These benefits apply equally to the mainstream and the pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) in the schools. This argument is supported by Estyn in its report “School Size and Educational Effectiveness” (Dec 2013), which stated:

- *“Pupils’ standards are good or better in a higher proportion of large primary schools than small and medium-sized primary schools. This may be because large schools tend to have more expertise and capacity to address the needs of more vulnerable pupils and the more able and talented pupils.”*
- *“Examination results for large secondary schools are better than those for small and medium-sized secondary schools for nearly all measures”;*
- *“In general, curriculum provision is broader and better balanced in large secondary schools. Nearly all large secondary schools provide good or better learning experiences for their pupils. Large secondary schools are able to offer a wider range of options due to economies of scale”.*

What is the educational case for creating larger sixth forms?

Over the past few years secondary schools have sought to collaborate to meet the requirements of the Learning and Skills Measure 2009 and to offer a good quality post 16 learning experience to their pupils. Despite the best efforts of the headteachers, schools and the Council:

- There are too many small sixth forms and a rationalisation would better meet the educational needs of the students by strengthening management arrangements, improving the effective and efficient use of resources, and better ensuring a quality educational experience. A viable sixth form, both educationally and financially should, ideally, have at least 250 students; In January 2018 (source : PLASC return), Hawthorn High had 114 sixth form students attending and Pontypridd High 131, just 245 in total between the two schools. Bryncelynnog Comprehensive had 147 sixth form students at the same point in time. Numbers at Cardinal Newman have fallen from 195 in 2015 to just 80 in January 2018, a fall of almost 60%.
- The delivery of post-16 education is inefficient and for many the educational experience could be considerably better. There is still unnecessary post 16 duplication of provision between schools and colleges, choice for many learners is restricted, class sizes are too small, and secondary school surplus places in the County Borough are projected to be almost 3,500 by 2022 and over 775 in the Pontypridd area alone. This leads to valuable education funds being directed at additional staff costs and infrastructure when they would be better directed at the learners and the learner experience. Currently, across Rhondda Cynon Taf, funds amounting to over £300 per pupil that were originally provided to educate 11-16 pupils are redirected at sixth form learners, to subsidise loss making courses due to small class sizes. This amount increases to an average of over £700 per pupil across both Hawthorn and Pontypridd High Schools; at Cardinal Newman this figure is almost £800.
- Small class sizes found in many sixth forms leads to limited student interactions, which diminishes the effectiveness of learning. Across the four secondary schools, 44 post-16 courses were delivered in 2017 with less than 5 pupils per course. This poor learning experience for students is impacting on the numbers of students continuing their post 16 education in the four schools. The percentage of students opting, to stay on in their respective school, for a sixth form education in September 2017, was very low, being 31% in Cardinal Newman, 36% in Pontypridd HS, 46% in Hawthorn and 51% in Bryncelynnog. Where providers have made the greatest progress in collaborating to reduce inefficiencies and improve effectiveness, learner opportunities and student interactions increase. However, travel between providers is seen by some students as a barrier to access a wider choice of courses.
- Choice is often dependent upon learner postal code. There is no equitable post 16 options entitlement for the County Borough;
- The educational achievement and success at Key Stage 4 (in relation to the Average Capped Wider Points Score) and Key Stage 5 (in relation to the Average Wider Points Score) in the County Borough are below Welsh averages and are amongst the lowest in Wales. A step change is still required to raise the number of young people participating in education post 16 and improve the quality of learning outcomes by raising attainment, retention and progression.

Creating a larger sixth form at Bryncelynnog, together with the existing comprehensive post 16 provision at Coleg y Cymoedd creates the capacity and economies of scale to be able to improve:

- **Standards and Achievement** – raising standards of success and achievement and increasing progression to Higher Education and employment.
- **Choice** – improving the breadth and depth of curriculum creating greater choice for all young people to choose learning pathways that best enable them to mix and match vocational, academic and occupational qualifications and experience.
- **Participation** – increasing participation and attendance rates.
- **Equality** – to ensure every sixth form student in the Pontypridd area is able to access the curriculum of choice.
- **Ability to respond to future learners, community and business needs** – Re-skilling and up-skilling the population of Rhondda Cynon Taf as the commercial environment changes, to allow people to compete effectively in the job market.
- **Financial viability and effectiveness** – providing a cost effective and efficient model for delivery, removing unnecessary duplication, aligning capacity with demand (in light of demographic change), generating economies of scale and expanding economies of scope. This will result in the removal of surplus places, the reduction in the number of small sixth form classes, and the duplication of provision between providers.

Further information on this part of the proposals can be obtained in Section 2 of this document.

What is the educational case for creating 3-16 schools?

The great strength of all-through education is the continuity of educational experience which negates the transition “dips” in pupil performance. A 3-16 school provides the opportunity to provide a “bridge” between key stages in order to create a seamless transition for pupils in terms of curriculum planning, learning and teaching. It can allow for a significant sharing of subject expertise and primary pedagogy in particular across key stages 2 and 3.

In 2012, the Council established a new 3-19 school at Ysgol Llanhari and to date the school is making excellent progress, with pupil attainment and development outcomes improving year on year. The cross phase learning and communication with staff is having a positive effect on pupils.

The all through school eases the transition process between the key stages and staff and teachers know the children well as they progress through the year groups and this enables them to assist pupils where additional support is required.

The School has strong leadership, which creates a vision that resonates with all phases, all staff are fully engaged and the school benefits from ‘coherence and continuity’ which assists pupils’ learning progression.

Another important benefit of all-age schooling is being able to achieve greater effectiveness through the sharing of resources, and being able to target these resources, whether financial, physical or human, at key areas of school improvement. Some reported benefits include:

- Provision of specialist teaching in KS2 or extending literacy and numeracy programmes into KS3;
- Access for primary phase pupils to the facilities of secondary phase;
- Providing scope for acceleration programmes for more able and talented pupils;
- Joint Professional Development;
- Directing resources at early intervention;
- Planning a joint curriculum;
- Sharing equipment, hardware and accommodation;
- Increasing the range and capacity for extra-curricular/after school learning;
- Creating common administrative appointments.

Will primary and secondary pupils have to share facilities and resources?

It needs to be stressed that a 3-16 school would not result in young children sharing playgrounds or break times with much older pupils. There are already strict safeguarding protocols which are observed when any primary aged pupils visit a secondary site (walking in pairs in line with teachers or adult helpers at the front and rear).

The primary aged pupils will receive the majority of their lessons in a specialist remodelled primary school building. Nevertheless, the pupils will have the opportunity to be taught in the secondary school to develop their curricular skills through the use of specialised facilities e.g. science and technology. Secondary phase pupils will also be able to have learning opportunities in the primary phase especially around any care related vocational activities and meeting some of the requirements of the Welsh Baccalaureate. These learning opportunities will also provide support to the primary phase staff through such activities, for example year 11 pupils assisting primary school pupils with their reading. This is the case in Ysgol Llanhari, the first ‘all through’ age school in Rhondda Cynon Taf.

What will be the impact on the other “partner” primary schools in the community?

Other partner/associated primary schools in each community will also benefit from the proposal. Pupil transition is important and the Council, through its 21st Century Band A programme has instigated some innovative programmes to ensure the quality of integration at Year 7 was seamless regardless of where they have received their primary experience. No pupil will be disadvantaged when they join the new school at Year 7.

Benefits of a new Welsh Medium Community Primary School

This proposal is outlined and explained in detail in Section 5 (starting on Page 56) of this document. Please refer to this section for more information on this particular proposal.

To comply with Welsh Government guidance and its initiative to create a million Welsh speakers by 2050, which includes an expectation on local authorities to promote Welsh Medium education, the Council is reviewing its Welsh Medium school provision, to ensure that evidenced demand for places is met and that wherever possible, provision is expanded and improved to encourage parents to select a Welsh Medium education for their children. The proposal is to construct a brand new, purpose built school, that will have sufficient pupil capacity to cater for the current pupils of both YGG, Pont Sion Norton and those attending the Welsh Medium stream at Heol y Celyn Primary School; this is one of the schemes being planned to assist in achieving this aim.

All local authorities in Wales now have to produce a Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP). This document indicates how the local authority intends to promote the teaching of the Welsh Language, how it intends working towards increasing the number of children taught through the medium of Welsh and how it can assist achieving the Welsh Government’s target of having one million people in Wales speaking Welsh by 2050. The WESP for RCT can be viewed and downloaded from the Council website via this link

<https://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/EN/Council/WelshServices/Relateddocs/WelshinEducationStrategicPlan201720.pdf>.

Included among the list of actions and outcomes the Council will undertake to help achieve the targets set out in the WESP, by increasing the number of seven year-old children being taught through the medium of Welsh are the following:

- New and improved school buildings with appropriate capacity levels to fully meet forecasted demand for WM provision in their catchment areas
- Consideration of making dual language Primary schools in to full WM schools

This part of the overall proposal, which is to close YGG Pont Sion Norton and Heol y Celyn Primary and open a brand new school, constructed to 21st Century Schools standards and with an increased capacity of 480 pupils plus Nursery provision, which will in turn incorporate a dual language provision, will work towards the achievement of these targets in this area of the County Borough.

What is the likely impact of the proposals on the school pupils?

In making the proposed changes, many things will be different for the pupils from the Pontypridd area, depending on parents' exercising their right of choice, but some things will remain the same:

- Some may have a longer or a different route to school, and some may be transported to school by bus. Some children may lose their entitlement to free transport, but others could gain entitlement;
- Being in classes with predominantly their own age group, the teacher will be better able to offer the primary pupils a wider and more varied curriculum to support all learners, including the least and most able;
- The teachers and teaching assistants may be different, however, the majority of teachers and teaching assistants should be able to transfer between the schools, if they wish to do so;
- For sixth form students there will be less, probably no travelling during the school day to access the curriculum and therefore there will be greater opportunities for more unstructured/informal interaction between students and teachers during the school day. The time saved from not travelling can also be used to focus on studying or completing course work;
- There will be more competition for pupils in and outside the classroom which is what children require if they are to achieve good educational outcomes;
- Being part of a larger school creates opportunity to run school sports teams, debating team etc. The children attending the ALN Classes will also have the opportunity to engage in a wider range of curricular and extra-curricular activities.

The principal change will be an improvement in the quality of the educational provision, and this should have a significant impact on educational performance of the pupils.

Home to School Transport Provision

There is a statutory duty placed upon the local authority (LA) to provide learners with free transport to their nearest suitable school if they reside beyond safe “walking distance” to that school. The term suitable school applies to the catchment area English, Welsh or dual language mainstream school or special school/class as appropriate. The law relating to safe “walking distance” is defined as two miles for learners of compulsory school age receiving primary education and three miles for learners of compulsory school age receiving secondary education.

Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council has exercised the discretionary powers afforded to it under the provisions of the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008 to make a more generous provision to learners as set out below:

- The eligibility criterion for walking distance for learners receiving compulsory primary education at their nearest suitable school has been set at 1½ miles, instead of 2 miles as required by the Measure;
- Free transport to their nearest suitable school, where places are available, is provided to children who meet the 1½ mile eligibility criterion from the start of the Foundation Phase (the start of the school term after their third birthday), rather than from the start of compulsory education (the start of the school term after their fifth birthday) as required by the Measure.
- The eligibility criterion for walking distance for learners receiving compulsory secondary education at their nearest suitable school has been set at 2 miles instead of 3 miles as required by the Measure.
- Free transport is provided to post 16 learners who meet the 2 mile eligibility criterion for two years after the end of compulsory education, rather than until the end of compulsory education as required by the Measure. This provision applies to full time attendance at the nearest school or college to the learner’s home at which the approved course of study that they wish to pursue is offered.
- Free transport to their nearest suitable school is provided to learners (as set out above) in accordance with their preferred religious denomination.
- The term suitable school applies to the catchment area English, Welsh, dual language or voluntary aided (faith) mainstream school or special school/class as appropriate.

With regard to the proposed alternative sixth form centres for Hawthorn and Pontypridd High School pupils at Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School and Coleg y Cymoedd being put forward for post - 16 provision, students will receive free transport, providing they meet the qualifying criteria (2 miles walking distance from home to school/college), to the nearest post-16 establishment that offers the choice of courses that they require. If they choose a centre that is not the closest to their home address, they may of course attend but will not receive any assistance towards the cost of transportation from the Council.

Pupils resident in Rhondda Cynon Taf attending Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School, will be able to select the most appropriate sixth form provision that offers the choice of courses that they require, or if they choose a Roman Catholic post 16 provision, this will be made available at St David’s College, Cardiff. In doing so they will receive free transportation, providing they meet the distance criteria to the nearest provision that meets their subject choices. Students resident in Caerphilly County Borough will need to check this issue with their local authority.

The Welsh Government and the Council has adopted the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child which is expressed in seven core aims that all children and young people:

1. have a flying start in life;
2. have a comprehensive range of education and learning opportunities;
3. enjoy the best possible health and are free from abuse, victimisation and exploitation;
4. have access to play, leisure, sporting and cultural activities;
5. are listened to, treated with respect, and have their race and cultural identity recognised;
6. have a safe home and a community which supports physical and emotional wellbeing;
7. are not disadvantaged by poverty.

We consider that this proposal benefits the children in the Pontypridd community in accordance with the seven core aims set out above.

What is the likely impact of the proposal on the staff of the schools?

For the English Medium school changes in Hawthorn and Pontypridd, and for the creation of the new Welsh Medium Primary School, all the schools involved in the proposals will close and new schools will be opened with a new governing body. Should the proposals proceed, the new 3-16 schools for Hawthorn and Pontypridd and the new Welsh Medium Primary School will need to appoint temporary governing bodies for the interim period until the new schools open. These temporary governing bodies will be responsible for establishing the schools, agreeing new staff structures and undertaking the appointment process for all the staffing posts.

The temporary governing bodies will firstly need to appoint new headteachers, who will then formulate and propose the leadership, management and staffing structures for the new schools. The staffing structure for Hawthorn and Pontypridd 3-16 schools will need to be developed for the school taking into account a number of factors, including delivering a curriculum without sixth form provision. The staffing structure for the new Welsh Medium Primary School will need to reflect the increased pupil roll.

The Council recommends that if the proposals are accepted that the temporary governing bodies of new schools “ring fence” the appointment process for all teaching and associated staff posts to staff within the existing schools in the first instance.

No changes will be required to the governing body of Cardinal Newman, but a revision to their staffing structure will be required due to the loss of the sixth form provision.

The Council has well established Human Resource policies and procedures that give reassurance to staff and employers about the management of organisational change, as illustrated by the recent school organisation changes in the Rhondda and Tonyrefail areas.

What are the disadvantages of the proposals?

School reorganisation will inevitably cause some disruption and uncertainty for a period of time, although experience shows that this can be kept to a minimum and the children's education does not suffer. The disadvantages of the proposals and how these risks can be managed by the Council and the schools are as follows:

Disadvantages	Risk Management
Sixth form students will be required to travel further for sixth form provision.	Sixth form students already study courses at alternative establishments as part of the Taff Ely Post 16 Consortium of schools and have to travel at the beginning, middle or at the end of the school day.
There will be increased costs of home to school transport	The increased costs of transport due to the need to transfer post-16 students to the new centres will be significantly less than the cost of continuing the inefficient post 16 provision in the two secondary schools. Additional transport provision will also need to be considered for YGG Pont Sion Norton pupils if the distance they will have to walk to the relocated school exceeds 1.5 miles.
Some parents may prefer to send their child to two or three schools rather than to one all through school. 3-16 schools are a new concept of education provision to many parents and there may be concerns.	<p>Factors such as the appeal of a modern 21st Century School with the latest education facilities and the availability of free transport (where eligible) could be important considerations for many in making their choice.</p> <p>The 3-19 pilot in Lampeter has been independently evaluated and it is considered to be a success. Ysgol Llanhari is also a 3-19 school and the feedback from parents has been very positive. Other local authorities are adopting a similar approach across Wales, England and Scotland.</p>
There will be staffing implications in that, for example there will be need for only one Headteacher. Staff will be concerned about the security of their jobs	The respective governing bodies will, as soon as possible, once the statutory procedures are completed, address the staffing issues. In practice governing bodies seek to ensure as much continuity in the staffing as possible in these situations.

Despite these disadvantages, the Council considers that the educational advantages of the proposals outweigh the short-term impact of the changes for pupils and parents.

What alternative options have been considered

The current position is that we have too many schools, too many schools with small sixth forms, too many surplus places, and too many schools housed in Victorian or CLASP construction buildings that are expensive to maintain, with limited specialist and outdoor facilities, all of which result in educational standards being too low and limited financial resources not being used efficiently and effectively.

The options available to the Council to improve educational performance and ensure the provision represents value for money are as follows:

Options	Advantages	Disadvantages
(i) - Retain the status quo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No capital investment required by the Council; • No disruption to the pupils, parents and the staff; • No impact on home to school transport; • The schools have a strong tradition and are well supported in the local communities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not address the need to reduce the high number of surplus places in accordance with Welsh Government requirements; • Does not address the need to improve the school buildings to meet 21st Century School standards; • Financially unviable in the future due to the high on-going maintenance costs of the school building estate; • Post 16 funding is insufficient to support the post 16 curriculum offered in the 3 secondary schools which further drains resources that should be spent on 11-16 aged pupils; • Educational performance continues to be at best adequate in some schools.
(ii) – Federate groups of schools, maintain the school buildings but with fewer headteachers and governing bodies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education provision would continue on each school site; • Opportunities for sharing staff expertise and good practice; • Minimum disruption to pupils, parents and staff; • No impact on home to school transport. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not address the need to reduce the high number of surplus places in accordance with Welsh Government requirements; • Does not address the need to improve the school buildings to meet 21st Century School standards; • Financially unviable in the future due to the high on-going maintenance costs of the school building estate; • Post 16 funding is insufficient to support the post 16 curriculum offered in the 3 secondary schools which further drains resources that should be spent on 11-16 aged pupils; • Post 16 provision will continue to be limited in the 3 schools.

Options	Advantages	Disadvantages
(iii) – Further development of the Taff Ely post 16 Consortium working through greater collaboration between schools and the Further Education College, including better use of video conferencing facilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education provision would continue on each school site; • No capital investment required by the Council; • No disruption to the pupils, parents and the staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timetabling highly difficult- possible permutations may arise whereby a pupil might study 3 or more subjects on 3 or more sites; • Increased transportation of learners during the school day, which is difficult to manage and a poor experience for the pupils; • Post 16 funding does not pay for travel between school sites. As a result, the travel is paid for by resources allocated to 11-16 provision; • Limited personal, social and educational interaction between the pupil cohorts.
(iv) - Retain the secondary school sixth forms but close one of the secondary schools.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removes a significant number of surplus places; • Increases the size of other secondary schools and other sixth forms; • Increases the educational and financial viability of the secondary schools and the sixth form provision. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post 16 funding is still insufficient to support post 16 curriculum offered in the remaining secondary schools which further drains resources that should be spent on 11-16 aged pupils; • Post 16 provision will continue to be limited. • Significantly increases the home to school transport costs; • Insufficient savings generated to invest in new buildings to accommodate additional pupils with improved facilities; • Issues with high surplus places, high maintenance costs and unsuitable school buildings in the primary sector not addressed.

Options	Advantages	Disadvantages
<p>(v) – Model being proposed for the Welsh medium primary provision in the area – Merge the primary schools onto existing or new sites, refurbishing existing or building new primary schools.</p> <p>This could include building new primary schools on the sites of secondary schools but the primary schools would be under the control of a separate governing body.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removes a significant number of surplus places; • Increases the size of some primary schools; • Increases the educational and financial viability of the primary schools. • Given there are only 4 welsh medium secondary schools across Rhondda Cynon Taf, it is not feasible to develop a 3-16 or 3-18 Welsh medium school for Pontypridd, and this option offers the best local solution. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited space in some communities to build new primary schools or to expand existing schools; • Issues with high surplus places, high maintenance costs and unsuitable school buildings in the secondary sector not addressed; • The educational and financial viability of the school sixth forms is not addressed.
<p>(vi) – (iv) & (v) above combined</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removes a significant number of surplus places; • Increases the size of other primary and secondary schools and other sixth forms; • Increases the educational and financial viability of the primary schools, secondary schools and the sixth form provision 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The educational and financial viability of the school sixth forms is not fully addressed; • Significantly increases the home to school transport costs; • Insufficient savings generated to invest in new buildings to accommodate additional pupils with improved facilities.

Options	Advantages	Disadvantages
<p>(vii) – Model being Proposed for the English medium schools –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop post 16 centres of excellence at Bryncelynnog Comprehensive, Beddau and Coleg y Cymoedd, Nantgarw with Roman Catholic faith based provision available at St David's College, Cardiff; • Create two new 3-16 schools; • Improve the learning environment for pupils who require Welsh Medium education • Revise English Medium catchment areas to utilise surplus capacity that currently exists. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removes a significant number of surplus places; • Increases the size of sixth form provision and included primary schools • Retains local schools in the community; • Increases the educational and financial viability of the primary schools, secondary schools, the sixth form provision and the College; • Enables the primary and secondary pupils to share specialist facilities, such as sporting facilities; • Improves the transition between KS2 and 3; • Better enables schools to provide an appropriate curriculum to all pupils; • Financially the most cost effective approach and enables the Council to fund its proportion of the investment required; • Minimises the increase in home to school transport costs in some cases. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3-16 schools are a new concept in Rhondda Cynon Taf, and parents will have concerns; • Many sixth form students will have further to travel to access the provision; • Amending catchment areas may not be popular with parents who have an affinity with the school that has served their area in the past; • Increases the home to school transport costs in some cases.

For the changes to the English medium provision options (i) – (vi) above have been considered by the Council and have been discounted and the preferred option, (vii), is that proposed in this consultation document.

For the changes to the Welsh medium provision options (i) – (iv) and (vi) – (vii) have been considered by the Council and have been discounted and the preferred option, (v), is that proposed in this consultation document.

Community, Equality and Welsh Language Impact Assessments

As set out in the Welsh Government School Organisation Code, it is a requirement to publish Community Impact, Welsh Language Impact and Equality Impact Assessments. These have been produced as separate documents and are available on the Council's website. The overall impact of all the proposals outlined in this document will be neutral; any facilities currently offered in the schools, such as after school and breakfast clubs will be retained in the new provisions and hopefully enhanced and extended.

The Timetable for the proposed changes

Project	Indicative Start Date	Indicative Completion Date
Hawthorn 3-16 all through school	September 2020	September 2022
Pontypridd 3-16 all through school	September 2020	September 2022
Cardinal Newman 11 – 16 School (no 6th form)	September 2021	September 2022
New Welsh Medium Community Primary School	September 2020	September 2022

Admissions Arrangements

Admissions to all schools, for pupils aged between 3 – 16, outlined in this document will be managed by Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council, as the Admissions Authority in accordance with the Welsh Government School Admissions Code. The Council's Admissions Policy for all maintained schools is outlined in the Council produced "Starting School" admissions booklet. Admissions to sixth forms are managed by the individual schools, with Coleg Y Cymoedd and St David's College, Cardiff managing their own post 16 admissions. All schools included in these proposals are Community schools, maintained by Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council, except for Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School, which is a voluntary aided school.

Admission numbers for the proposed new schools will be calculated and published once the design and planning work for the buildings is completed. It must be stressed that admission numbers will ensure that sufficient school places are made available to meet the current and forecasted demand for school places in the catchment areas of the schools included in these proposals.

Land and Buildings

If the proposals outlined in this document are implemented, there will be some redundant school sites and buildings. As this is an initial consultation process, no decisions have yet been made in respect of the future of these sites and buildings. This issue will be managed in accordance with the agreed Council Policy on Surplus Land and Buildings.

Accommodation

It must be stressed that this is a consultation process and that all design and planning work for the new school buildings is at an early stage of development. However, all works planned are included as part of the Council's 21st Century Schools proposals and any work undertaken, whether this is new build accommodation or refurbishment/remodelling of existing school buildings will be of a high quality, with flexible and sustainable learning environments fully conforming and complying with the standards outlined by Welsh Government for 21st Century Schools.

SECTION 2

The Proposed Changes to Sixth Form Provision

Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council proposes to:

- Develop post 16 centres of excellence based at Beddau and Nantgarw. For those students who opt for a Roman Catholic education, provision will be available at St David's College, Cardiff;
- Create two new 3-16 schools, in Pontypridd and Hawthorn, which will take a radically different approach to education in the areas, by sharing both primary and secondary sector resources;
- Amend the catchment areas of Pontypridd High, Hawthorn High and Bryncelynnog Comprehensive Schools to better meet and match the demand for school places.

To achieve this, the proposal is to:

- Close the sixth forms of Hawthorn High School, Pontypridd High School and Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School and transfer the post-16 provision to Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School or Coleg y Cymoedd, Nantgarw. For those students who opt for a Roman Catholic education, sixth form provision will be available at St David's College, Cardiff;
- Close Pontypridd High School and Cilfynydd Primary School and create a new 3-16 'all through' school on the site of the current Pontypridd High School;
- Close Hawthorn High School, Hawthorn Primary School and Heol-Y-Celyn Primary School and create a new 3-16 'all through' school on the site of the current Hawthorn High and Hawthorn Primary Schools.

This proposal will create a school based sixth form at Bryncelynnog of over 350 students (this will depend on student choice) and further enhance the sixth form and vocational offer at Coleg Y Cymoedd's Nantgarw Campus that already has 350 post 16 students studying traditional A Level subjects and over 1,000 post 16 students studying vocational subjects.

To achieve this change the Council is proposing to invest £ 26.7m across this element of the programme, an estimated breakdown is indicated below:

- £10m at Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School to improve the sixth form facilities and other infrastructure;
- £12m to improve the buildings at Hawthorn High and Hawthorn Primary Schools to ensure they meet the learning and safeguarding requirements of a 3-16 school;
- £4.7m to improve the buildings at Pontypridd High School to ensure they meet the learning and safeguarding requirements of a 3-16 school.

Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School's Sixth Form admission criteria states that access to the sixth form is open to all children of any faith or religion and it is not exclusive to the Christian Faith. For those students who opt for a Roman Catholic education, sixth form provision will be available at St David's College, Cardiff.

Background to the Proposed Post 16 Changes

Since 2009, the Council has been exploring ways to improve post 16 provision with the secondary schools, the FE College and Welsh Government, in a financial climate of decreasing post 16 funding and falling pupil numbers. In September 2011 the Council's Cabinet agreed a way forward which was accepted by the secondary schools that sought to:

- Improve the quality of provision;
- Improve the education outcomes; and
- Be financially viable.

Over the following three years, action was taken to:

- Enhance the 14-19 post 16 consortia of schools, by consolidating the consortia, from 5 to 4 from September 2012. The Welsh medium schools remained as a separate consortium, but only due to the geographical difficulties of sharing minority subjects/courses;
- All the post 16 funding, including the 14-19 Grant, was delegated to each school and/or consortium, with specific targets being set and agreed between the parties;
- Each consortium had a separate governance structure, with a consortium manager;
- The consortium governors were encouraged to determine the curriculum offer and where the curriculum is delivered;
- Ensure the quality of provision is of paramount importance. Schools in each consortium will only be able to offer sixth form provision for those subjects where the quality of teaching and learning is high;
- Specialist vocational provision was to be provided by FE Colleges.

Progress was made in delivering these actions, however with further decreasing student numbers and post 16 funding from Welsh Government, the issues of quality and financial viability of the post 16 provision remain.

As a result, despite the best efforts of the headteachers, schools and the Council:

- There are too many small sixth forms and a rationalisation would better meet the educational needs of the students by strengthening management arrangements, improving the effective and efficient use of resources, and better ensuring a quality educational experience. Other than Coleg Y Cymoedd, none of the sixth form provisions in the Pontypridd area have more than 250 pupils, and have not done so for many years;
- The delivery of post 16 education is inefficient and for many the educational experience could be considerably better. There is still unnecessary post 16 duplication of provision between schools and colleges, choice for many learners is restricted, class sizes are too small, and secondary school surplus places in the three secondary schools considered within this proposal are projected to be over 950 by 2019. This leads to valuable education funds being directed at additional staff costs and infrastructure when they would be better directed at the learners and the learner experience. Currently, across Rhondda Cynon Taf funding amounting to £300 per pupil that was originally provided to educate 11-16 aged pupils is being redirected at sixth form learners, to subsidise loss making courses due to small class sizes. This amount increases to an average of £700 per pupil in Hawthorn and Pontypridd High Schools and almost £800 in Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School;
- Small class sizes found in many sixth forms leads to limited student interactions, which diminishes the effectiveness of learning. Where providers have made the greatest progress in collaborating to reduce inefficiencies and improve effectiveness, learner opportunities and student interactions increase. However, travel between providers is seen by some students as a barrier to access a wider choice of courses.
- Choice is often dependent upon learner postal code. There is no equitable post 16 options entitlement across the County Borough;

- The educational achievement and success at Key Stage 5 (in relation to the Average Wider Points Score) in the County Borough is well below Welsh averages and among the lowest in Wales. A step change is still required to raise the number of young people participating in education post 16 and improve the quality of learning outcomes by raising attainment, retention and progression.
- In 2017, in all 3 of the secondary schools included in this proposal, less than 60 students were entered for 2 or more A Levels or equivalent. Providing an educationally and financially viable curriculum in the three of the four schools is evidently not possible.

In 2014, the Council's Cabinet recognised that the financial position for post 16 provision had significantly worsened and, if the provision was left unchanged, the foreseeable future looked bleak. Therefore, the Council began a rationalisation of post-16 provision, starting with the post-16 provision in the Rhondda Valleys and Tonyrefail. In September 2018 the post 16 changes to the schools in the area were fully implemented, with three sixth forms closing, and only two of the five secondary schools in the area providing post 16 provision. These changes were made to ensure the schools and college provide a suitable and viable post 16 curriculum offer that meets the needs of the students, the local community and the needs of employers.

In the East Taf Ely area of the County Borough, the sixth form position has deteriorated since 2014. Despite two of the three schools collaborating on sixth form provision, the class sizes are too small and uneconomic, particularly when you consider that a Key Stage 5 class requires 18 pupils per teacher to break even. As a result, the small sixth form class sizes, are financially subsidised by funding allocated to the pupils in Key Stages 3 & 4.

Information on the Schools

The schools included within the proposal and the pupil numbers over the past five years are shown below. The pupil numbers are obtained from the statutory annual pupil count (PLASC) which must be undertaken in January each year.

School	Type of School	Age Range	School Capacity	Jan 2014	Jan 2015	Jan 2016	Jan 2017	Jan 2018	% Surplus Jan 2018
Bryncelynnog Comprehensive	Secondary	11-19	1442	1034	1046	1044	1088	1126	21.9%
Cardinal Newman RC	Secondary	11-19	957	732	761	777	790	770	19.5%
Hawthorn High	Secondary	11-19	1098	856	816	755	729	736	32.9%
Pontypridd High	Secondary	11-19	1338	1003	1031	967	945	910	31.9%

The sixth form numbers are shown below.

School	Jan 2014	Jan 2015	Jan 2016	Jan 2017	Jan 2018
Bryncelynnog Comprehensive	196	170	153	135	147
Cardinal Newman RC	174	199	191	153	80
Hawthorn High	168	136	111	115	114
Pontypridd High	124	150	139	133	131
Total	662	655	594	536	472

Pupil projections

Over the next five years the pupil projections for the four schools, which are calculated in accordance with guidance issued by Welsh Government, are as follows. The projections take into account previous trends together with predicted demographic changes. It is important to note that this cannot take account of any unforeseen deviations in local trends.

School	School Capacity	Jan 2019	Jan 2020	Jan 2021	Jan 2022	Jan 2023	% Surplus Jan 2023
Bryncelynnog Comprehensive	1442	1146	1174	1200	1224	1236	14.3%
Cardinal Newman RC	957	802	841	884	914	913	4.6%
Hawthorn High	1098	746	742	756	754	775	29.4%
Pontypridd High	1338	863	880	884	904	936	46.6%

The sixth form projections are as follows.

School	Jan 2019	Jan 2020	Jan 2021	Jan 2022	Jan 2023
Bryncelynnog Comprehensive	152	167	174	172	178
Cardinal Newman RC	65	70	73	83	93
Hawthorn High	98	107	100	92	105
Pontypridd High	111	112	112	108	105
Total	426	456	459	455	481

Schools manage their own admissions for sixth form provision and determine the entry criteria. The Council sets the catchment areas for the sixth form provision in order to determine which students will be eligible for home to school transport. As is the case at present, students have the choice of continuing to study in their catchment sixth form or studying at Coleg Y Cymoedd that offers a wide academic and vocational curriculum. If the proposal was to be implemented in the future and students that would have ordinarily opted for their catchment sixth form school, and not opted for the FE provision, the three year forecasts from the first year of the new sixth form provision will be as follows.

School	Jan 2023	Jan 2024	Jan 2025
Bryncelynnog Sixth Form	388	408	428

The 11-16 forecasts for the first year of the new school provision will be as follows:

School	Jan 2023
Bryncelynnog Comprehensive	1058
Cardinal Newman RC	820
Hawthorn High	670
Pontypridd High	831

Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School would be an 11-16 school and will have 80 surplus spaces. Some of the school buildings could be removed to reduce the surplus or the Archdiocese of Cardiff could use the space to develop or transfer primary school provision on the site.

Current condition of the existing schools

Property condition information on all school buildings is held by the Council, this information is regularly updated to reflect any changes or improvements to the buildings and reported to Welsh Government each year. The overall condition ratings of the school buildings are as follows:

School	Building Condition Survey Result	Suitability Survey Result
Bryncelynnog Comprehensive	C+	B
Cardinal Newman RC	C-	B
Hawthorn High	C-	B
Pontypridd High	C+	B

Quality and standards

As part of a national programme of school inspection, Estyn inspects all schools and further education colleges in Wales. A comparison between the quality and diversity of education provided at the four secondary schools and at Coleg Y Cymoedd during their last inspections is as follows:

School	Date Inspected	Judgement – Current Performance	Judgement – Prospects for Improvement
Bryncelynnog Comprehensive	February 2016	Adequate	Good
Hawthorn High	March 2014	Adequate	Good
Pontypridd High	January 2014	Adequate	Good
Coleg Y Cymoedd	November 2017	Adequate	Good

Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School was inspected in May 2018 under the revised framework, the outcome of the inspection is summarised below:

Inspection Area	Judgement
Standards	Good
Wellbeing and attitudes to learning	Good
Teaching and learning experiences	Good
Care, support and guidance	Good
Leadership and management	Good

As a result of receiving 'adequate' ratings, Bryncelynnog Comprehensive, Hawthorn and Pontypridd High Schools were placed in the category of requiring monitoring by Estyn following inspection. Following Estyn follow up procedures, Bryncelynnog Comprehensive, Hawthorn and Pontypridd High Schools were all deemed to have made sufficient improvement and were removed from the list of schools requiring Estyn monitoring in November 2016, October 2015 and November 2016 respectively.

Coleg Y Cymoedd despite receiving an adequate grading for performance was not placed in a category requiring Estyn monitoring. St David's College, Cardiff was last inspected in 2010 under the former inspection methodology and its overall performance was judged as excellent with excellent prospects for improvement.

Since 2014, schools have been categorised according to a four-point 'traffic light' system, (green, yellow, amber and red) with a 'green' school having the highest rating and a 'red' school the lowest. This National Schools Categorisation System introduced by the Welsh Government provides a systematic view of a school's Foundation Phase to Key Stage 4 performance as appropriate, based on publicly available data and the school's own self-evaluation in respect of leadership, learning and teaching. The aim of this system is to determine the level of support a school requires to support it to improve. The National Schools Categorisation does not take into account Post 16 provision and its respective examination outcomes.

Bryncelynnog Comprehensive, Hawthorn High and Pontypridd High Schools have been categorised as **yellow** schools. This defines them as 'effective, already doing well, know the areas needed to improve, and by identifying the right support and taking action have the potential to do even better'. Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School has been categorised as a **green** school.

FE Colleges are not subject to categorisation.

Key Stage 5 Outcomes

The table below sets out the performance of the sixth form pupils over the past four years for each of the main qualifications undertaken in KS5.

	2014				2015			
School	No on Roll	No entering a volume equivalent to 2 A Levels	% entering a volume equivalent to 2 A Levels who achieved the Level 3 threshold	Average wider points score	No on Roll	No entering a volume equivalent to 2 A Levels	% entering a volume equivalent to 2 A Levels who achieved the Level 3 threshold	Average wider points score
Bryncelynog Comprehensive	83	71	97.2	663.9	80	72	98.6	670.2
Cardinal Newman RC	40	35	91.4	804.2	87	79	96.2	832.4
Hawthorn High	71	65	89.23	758.5	60	57	98.25	772.7
Pontypridd High	40	39	87.18	820.1	66	63	95.24	856.8

	2016				2017			
School	No on Roll	No entering a volume equivalent to 2 A Levels	% entering a volume equivalent to 2 A Levels who achieved the Level 3 threshold	Average wider points score	No on Roll	No entering a volume equivalent to 2 A Levels	% entering a volume equivalent to 2 A Levels who achieved the Level 3 threshold	Average wider points score
Bryncelynog Comprehensive	63	58	100	823.8	54	53	94.3	787.5
Cardinal Newman RC	79	75	98.7	812.1	74	68	95.6	774.8
Hawthorn High	47	42	97.62	772.3	48	Not available	100	739.9
Pontypridd High	52	51	100	928.4	57	Not available	100	820.9

The Level Three Threshold is achieved by pupils through passing the equivalent of two or more A Levels and this includes BTEC qualifications.

Of those sixth form students who studied A Levels, the examination performance over the past three years is set out below: Source - All Wales Core Data Sets

School	% A* to E grades at A Level			% A* to C grades at A Level			% A* and A grades at A Level		
	2015	2016	2017	2015	2016	2017	2015	2016	2017
Hawthorn High	98.2	97.6	100	59.6	61.9	41.7	1.8	0	2.1
Pontypridd High	95.2	100	100	68.3	64.7	42.6	3.2	5.9	5.6
Cardinal Newman	96.2	98.7	95.6	73.4	68	58.8	3.8	2.7	4.4
Bryncelynnog	98.6	100	94.3	34.7	67.2	52.8	5.6	8.8	18.9
Highest performing RCT	100	100	100	74.2	89.5	76.9	5.6	9.2	18.9
Lowest performing RCT	89.2	92.2	86	27	40.2	16.3	0	0	0
RCT average	97	97	96.3	57.9	65.2	45.1	3.1	4	5.5
Welsh average	97	98	97.1	68.1	70.6	54.7	7.9	6.7	10.5

The tables above do not contain information in respect of Coleg Y Cymoedd or St David's College, Cardiff as the current arrangements for measuring performance in sixth forms and in further education colleges are entirely separate. They are derived from different data systems, which means that Welsh Government, Estyn, or individual organisations are unable to measure outcomes in a meaningful way across learning settings. As a result, learners and parents do not have access to transparent information to inform their choices. Welsh Government recognises this and in January 2018 committed to developing a set of consistent measures for further education institutions and sixth forms to enable them to publish headline and provider level information on an annual basis.

Financial Information

Sixth forms and all post 16 provision are funded directly from Welsh Government based on the mix and type of qualifications being studied by each student. The more subjects a student studies the greater the funding. For a school to ensure that its sixth form funding covers the costs of delivering the respective subject, it requires an average of 18 students per the course provided.

If you consider that most schools provide greater than 12 A Level courses, most students would be expected to enter 2 A Levels, and a minimum number of students in each subject should be at least 18, you would need at least 90 students in each year group. All the schools were significantly below this figure and it is evident that class sizes are very small, and inefficient.

The table below shows that there are insufficient students opting for post 16 provision in each school.

	Post 16 students on roll (September)			Number of A Level courses offered			Number of courses with 5 or fewer students		
School	2015	2016	2017	2015	2016	2017	2015	2016	2017
Bryncelynnog	162	142	150	18	20	16	8	9	8
Cardinal Newman	195	154	78	24	20	22	13	8	11
Hawthorn High	119	118	123	17	19	19	10	13	14
Pontypridd High	141	134	135	20	23	20	9	15	11

The table also shows that student numbers are falling with students choosing alternative provision at Coleg Y Cymoedd or one of the other neighbouring FE colleges which provide a wider post 16 offer and by having greater numbers, offer a different student experience. This in turn has had a significant impact on the finances of three of the four schools as illustrated in the table below.

	Average Class Sizes, A Level courses (rounded to nearest whole number)			Cross-phase subsidisation per 6th form pupil	Current budget deficit	Projected budget deficit
School	2015	2016	2017	April 2017	April 2018	April 2019
Hawthorn High	5	5	4	£680	£400k	£415k
Pontypridd High	7	6	6	£790	£520k	£518k
Cardinal Newman	6	9	7	£799	£324k	£707k
Bryncelynnog	8	8	6	£776	£215k surplus	£104k surplus

If the proposal was to proceed, the post 16 funding would be removed from Cardinal Newman RC, Hawthorn and Pontypridd secondary schools. Revised funding would be provided to the sixth form in Bryncelynnog and Coleg Y Cymoedd or any other post 16 provider according to the Programmes of Study being undertaken by the students.

Proposed Changes to the Catchment Areas

Secondary schools are responsible for admissions to their sixth forms and can accept students from across the County Borough. However, the Council applies notional catchment areas for post 16 provision for the purpose of managing home to school transport. Students that attend sixth form outside their catchment area are not eligible for home to school transport unless the Programme of Study of their choice is not available in the catchment school. For example, some students travel to Bridgend College to study Agricultural Studies which is not available locally and the Council provides suitable transport.

If these proposals are agreed, we would amend the catchment areas of both Pontypridd and Hawthorn High Schools for post 16 provision, to place these areas in the sixth form catchment area of Bryncelynog Comprehensive School, Beddau. Bryncelynog is located just over 5 miles from Hawthorn High and 6 miles from Pontypridd High. The post - 16 facilities of Bryncelynog would be improved and upgraded as part of these proposals.

Students from Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School, Hawthorn High School and Pontypridd High School will have the option of attending another school's sixth form provision of their choice, or the local college, Coleg y Cymoedd, Nantgarw, for their post 16 education. Pupils who wish to continue their post 16 education through the Catholic faith could choose to attend St David's 6th Form College, Cardiff. The Council will provide free transportation to the nearest provision that offers the chosen selection of courses for RCT-resident students, providing that they meet the initial qualifying distance criteria of residing more than 2 miles from their provision of choice.

It is proposed that the 11-16 catchment areas will also change. The changes all directly relate to the new 3-16 School at Hawthorn which will:

- Include the catchment area of Gwauncelyn Primary School, Tonteg (which is currently in the catchment area of Bryncelynog Comprehensive).
- Exclude the Graig area of Pontypridd that is in the catchment area of Maesycloed Primary School, which will be included in the catchment area of the new Pontypridd 11-16 school. Currently 91% of the 11-16 aged pupils in this area choose to go to Pontypridd High School;
- Exclude the catchment area of Coedpenmaen Primary School, which will be included in the catchment area of the new Pontypridd 11-16 school. Currently 54% of the 11-16 aged pupils in the area choose to go to Hawthorn High School and 46% choose Pontypridd High School. With surplus places in both new 3-16 schools for the foreseeable future, the choice of both schools will remain for pupils and parents.

These adjustments are being made to the catchment areas of pupils aged 11-16 to match the demand for places with the available supply across the secondary school provision in East Taf Ely. The additional demand for places is driven by housing development in the south east of the County Borough.

The timetable for the Sixth Form changes and the management of the transition

In September 2022 it is proposed that the sixth forms of Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School, Hawthorn High School and Pontypridd High School will close. Prior to September 2022, the Council will ensure that the Year 12 students, who will be most affected by the change, will be undertaking Programmes of Study that will be continued in the new sixth forms. This approach has been adopted by the Council recently in the Rhondda Valleys and Tonyrefail, where three sixth forms closed and two sixth forms extended.

SECTION 3

The proposed changes to primary and secondary school provision in Hawthorn

Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council proposes to:

- Close Hawthorn High School sixth form and transfer the post-16 provision to either Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School or Coleg y Cymoedd, Nantgarw, dependent on student choice. The catchment area school for sixth form provision will be Bryncelynnog;
- Close Hawthorn High School, Hawthorn Primary School and Heol-Y-Celyn Primary School and create a new 3-16 'all through' school on the adjoining sites of the current Hawthorn High and Hawthorn Primary Schools. In respect of Heol-Y-Celyn Primary School, which is a dual language provision, only the pupils that are educated through the medium of English will transfer to the 3 – 16 school; those pupils that are educated through the medium of Welsh will transfer the new Welsh Medium Primary school that will be constructed on the current Heol y Celyn site. Details of this particular proposal can be found in Section 5 of this document;
- Provide a 1,260 capacity 3-16 School for Hawthorn, for 540 pupils aged 3-11 (including Nursery provision) and 720 pupils aged 11-16; the local authority designated ALN class will also be accommodated in the new school.

To achieve this change the Council is proposing to invest £12m to improve the buildings at Hawthorn High and Hawthorn Primary to ensure they meet the learning and safeguarding requirements of a 3-16 school.

The investment will also include a review of the safe routes to school, and improvements to walkways, road crossings and road speed management measures will be made to ensure the required safety standards are met. This is the approach we have implemented in other communities in earlier school reorganisation proposals with significant improvements being made to safe routes to schools.

What are the reasons for the proposed changes?

Across Wales there is a recognition that whilst educational standards have improved, when compared internationally they are still too low and need to be improved and quickly. In this environment of rapid change and increasing pressures on schools and local authorities to improve learning standards, the sustainability and performance of the present educational provision in Rhondda Cynon Taf is being challenged and reviewed.

The Welsh Government sets the overall policy and legislative framework for school organisation however, local authorities have a responsibility for the planning and management of school places and must secure efficient and effective provision so as to focus resources on improving educational outcomes for young people.

The Council has been considering the way forward for education in the County Borough and in Hawthorn for some time and the reasons for change are both educational and financial:

- Hawthorn High has 362 (32.9%) surplus places and this is not forecast to change significantly over the next 5 years;
- The costs of providing the sixth form provision in Hawthorn High are very high, with an average of only 9.25 pupils per class (Post 16 - Level 3 courses), including those classes shared with other schools;
- The small sixth form classes are partially funded by the financial resources which were intended and should be made available to pupils in Key Stage 3 (11-14 years old) and Key Stage 4 (14-16 years old). This has an adverse impact on the quality of the education provision for Key Stage 3 and 4 pupils;

- A further consequence of the financially inefficient sixth form is that Hawthorn High School has a financial deficit in excess of £400,000;
- Hawthorn Primary School is currently operating almost at full capacity and has very few surplus places, there is no opportunity to expand the accommodation on its existing site. This proposal will allow the use of surplus accommodation in the Secondary school that is located next door to the Primary to cater for the demand in Primary age places;
- Heol-Y-Celyn Primary School has 72 surplus places, equating to 18.5% of its total capacity. It must also be noted that 97 children resident in the Heol-Y-Celyn catchment currently attend Hawthorn Primary School due to parental choice; this large number of out-catchment pupils represents almost 40% of the total pupil population of Hawthorn Primary and demonstrates that parents in this area are already choosing to send their children to Hawthorn instead of their designated catchment school;
- The two buildings that comprise Heol-Y-Celyn Primary are 1960's CLASP constructions, which consist of steel frames, concrete sectional walls and flat felt roofs. Both buildings are in a relatively poor condition overall and have reached the end of their useful life.

Background to the proposal

Information on the Schools

The schools included within the proposal and the pupil numbers over the past four years are shown below. The pupil numbers are obtained from the statutory annual pupil count (PLASC) which must be undertaken in January each year. The numbers shown exclude nursery age pupils, as we are required to exclude these from the table by the Welsh Government's Statutory School Organisation Code, however we have shown the nursery numbers separately. The data for Heol-Y-Celyn is that for the English Medium element of the school only, that will transfer to this 3 – 16 school; the Welsh medium pupils will transfer to the new proposed Welsh Medium Primary school. Total capacity of the school is 388 pupils, the current percentage 'split' of pupils attending this school is 69% English: 31% Welsh (218 English medium pupils and 98 Welsh), capacity has been split using the same percentages.

School	Type of School	Age Range	School Capacity	Jan 2014	Jan 2015	Jan 2016	Jan 2017	Jan 2018	% Surplus Jan 2018
Hawthorn Primary	Primary	3 - 11	240	221	223	238	240	224	6.6
Heol-Y-Celyn Primary (English Dept)	Primary	3 - 11	268	183	187	184	200	218	18.5
Hawthorn High	Secondary	11 - 19	1098	856	816	755	729	736	32.9

Nursery numbers (total numbers of pupils attending):

School	Jan 2014	Jan 2015	Jan 2016	Jan 2017	Jan 2018
Hawthorn Primary	28	30	36	31	23
Heol-Y-Celyn Primary (English Dept)	30	34	42	46	35

Pupil projections

Over the next five years the pupil projections for the three schools, which are calculated in accordance with guidance issued by Welsh Government, are as follows. The projections take into account previous trends together with predicted demographic changes and average birth rates. It is important to note that this cannot take account of any unforeseen deviations in local trends.

School	School capacity (excluding nursery)	Jan 2019	Jan 2020	Jan 2021	Jan 2022	Jan 2023	% surplus in Jan 2023
Hawthorn Primary	240	215	206	200	198	194	19.2
Heol-Y-Celyn Primary	268	226	238	254	259	262	2.2
Hawthorn High							
11-19 – No.	1098	746	742	756	754	775	29.4
11-16 – No.	983	648	635	656	662	670	31.8

If the proposal was to be implemented in the future and parents/carers choose to transfer their children to the new Hawthorn 3-16 School the forecast for the first year for the new school will be as follows:

School 3-16	School capacity (excluding nursery)	Jan 2022	Surplus in Jan 2022
Primary 3-11	480	430	50
Secondary 11-16	720	636	84
Total	1200	1066	134

Proposed Primary Education provision

The plans for the new 3-16 school are at RIBA stage 0, site feasibility studies have been completed and detailed briefs will be worked up in collaboration with the pupils, Governing Body and staff of the schools. It is anticipated that the early years and Foundation Phase pupils will be accommodated in the existing primary school, with Key Stage 2 pupils being accommodated, with Key Stage 3 pupils in the adjacent classroom extension block, which will be refurbished and remodelled together with separate and segregated outdoor play facilities. The Key Stage 3 and 4 sections of the school will be remodelled and refurbished to provide modern 21st Century classrooms, which will future proof the learning environment for the new curriculum for Wales, as described on pages 8 to 9 of this document.

The dedicated ALN provision (KS3) currently accommodated at Hawthorn High School shall transfer to the new school, with consideration being given to ensure flexibility of accommodation, to allow possible expansion of this provision in the future if there is recognised demand. The Council is currently undertaking a separate consultation exercise on the proposed closure of the two ALN classes at Heol Y Celyn Primary, due to a fall in the number of pupils attending the two classes – of the 20 places available at the school, only 1 pupil is currently in attendance. If these proposals are agreed, there will be no dedicated ALN provision at the new school for pupils of either Foundation Phase, or KS2 age.

The primary age pupils will also have supervised and timetabled access to share the specialist resources and facilities available in the secondary school, including the astro turf pitch, new sports hall, playing fields, swimming pool, drama facilities, and science and technology areas.

Current condition of the existing schools

Property condition information on all school buildings is held by the Council, this information is regularly updated to reflect any changes or improvements to the buildings and reported to Welsh Government each year. The overall condition ratings of the school buildings are as follows:

School	Building Condition Survey Result	Suitability Survey Result
Hawthorn Primary	B	A
Heol-Y-Celyn Primary	B	B
Hawthorn High	C-	B

Quality and standards

As part of a national programme of school inspection, Estyn inspects all schools in Wales, a comparison between the quality and diversity of education provided at the three schools during their last inspections is as follows.

School	Date Inspected	Judgement – Current Performance	Judgement – Prospects for Improvement
Hawthorn Primary	January 2012	Adequate	Good
Heol-Y-Celyn Primary	June 2014	Adequate	Adequate
Hawthorn High	March 2014	Adequate	Good

As a result of receiving 'adequate' ratings, all three schools were placed in the category of requiring monitoring by Estyn following inspection. Following further Estyn inspection, Hawthorn Primary School and Hawthorn High School were both deemed to have made sufficient improvement and were removed from the list of schools requiring Estyn monitoring in April 2013 and October 2015 respectively.

Heol-Y-Celyn Primary School was re-inspected in November 2015 and found not to have sufficiently improved; it was, as a consequence, placed by Estyn in the category of requiring significant improvement. Following further inspection in January 2017, the school was deemed to have made sufficient progress and was duly removed from the list of schools requiring Estyn monitoring.

Since 2014, schools have been categorised according to a four-point 'traffic light' system, (green, yellow, amber and red) with a 'green' school having the highest rating and a 'red' school the lowest. This National Schools Categorisation System introduced by the Welsh Government provides a systematic view of a school's performance, based on publicly available data and the school's own self-evaluation in respect of leadership, learning and teaching. The aim of this system is to determine the level of support a school requires to support it to improve.

Hawthorn High School and Hawthorn Primary School are both currently categorised as **yellow** schools. This defines them as 'effective, already doing well, know the areas needed to improve, and by identifying the right support and taking action have the potential to do even better'.

Heol-Y-Celyn Primary School is also currently categorised as a **yellow** school, having previously been red and then amber.

Information and data relating to YGG Pont Sion Norton can be found in Section 5 of this document.

Primary School Standards

The tables below set out the performance of the two primary schools for the key measures of educational performance over the past three years and compare the schools to similar schools across Wales based on free school meals. Data for Heol-Y-Celyn is for pupils attending the English department only:

Foundation Phase Outcomes						
	2015 %		2016 %		2017 %	
Subjects	Hawthorn Primary	Heol-Y-Celyn Primary	Hawthorn Primary	Heol-Y-Celyn Primary	Hawthorn Primary	Heol-Y-Celyn Primary
Foundation Phase Indicator	81.25 (3)	88.46 (1)	84.85 (3)	78.26 (3)	80.65 (3)	72.73 (4)
Personal and social development wellbeing and cultural diversity	100 (1)	88.46 (4)	100 (1)	95.65 (2)	87.1 (3)	81.82 (4)
Language literacy and communication skills English	81.25 (4)	92.31 (1)	87.88 (2)	78.26 (4)	80.65 (3)	75.76 (4)
Mathematical development	81.25 (4)	88.46 (2)	90.91 (2)	82.61 (3)	80.65 (3)	75.76 (4)

The figures in brackets in the table above, compare the schools to similar schools across Wales based on free school meals. The performance is compared using benchmarked quartiles, with 1 being the highest and 4 the lowest.

Key Stage Two Outcomes						
	2015 %		2016 %		2017 %	
Subjects	Hawthorn Primary	Heol-Y-Celyn Primary	Hawthorn Primary	Heol-Y-Celyn Primary	Hawthorn Primary	Heol-Y-Celyn Primary
English	88.24 (3)	76.67(4)	85.71 (4)	78.57 (4)	92.11 (1)	76.47 (4)
Maths	85.29 (3)	80 (3)	88.57 (3)	85.71 (3)	92.11 (2)	76.47 (4)
Science	85.29 (4)	80 (3)	88.57 (3)	85.71 (3)	89.47 (2)	76.47 (4)
Core Subject Indicator (CSI)	82.35 (3)	76.67 (3)	80 (4)	78.57 (3)	89.47 (2)	76.47 (3)

The figures in brackets in the table above, compare the schools to similar schools across Wales based on free school meals. The performance is compared using benchmarked quartiles, with 1 being the highest and 4 the lowest.

Secondary School Standards

The tables below set out the performance of Hawthorn High School for the key measures of educational performance at Key Stages 3 & 4 over the past four years and compare the school to similar schools across Wales based on free school meals:

Hawthorn High	Key Stage Three Outcomes			
Subjects	2014 %	2015 %	2016 %	2017 %
English	83.7 (2)	86.81 (2)	86.96 (3)	94.33 (1)
Maths	89.6 (1)	91.67 (1)	88.7 (3)	98.58 (1)
Science	96.3 (1)	93.06 (2)	93.04 (2)	96.45 (1)
Welsh (second language)	76.3 (3)	79.17 (2)	85.22 (2)	92.2 (1)
Core Subject Indicator (CSI)	80.0 (1)	84.72 (1)	82.61 (3)	92.91 (1)

The figures in brackets in the table above compare the school to similar schools across Wales based on free school meals. The performance is compared using benchmarked quartiles, with 1 being the highest and 4 the lowest.

Hawthorn High	Key Stage Four Outcomes			
Subjects	2014 %	2015 %	2016 %	2017 %
Level 1 Threshold	95.09 (3)	96.58 (3)	100 (1)	94 (3)
Level 2 Threshold	92.64 (1)	93.84 (1)	97.06 (1)	65.4 (1)
Level 2 Threshold including English/Welsh & Maths	40.49 (4)	49.32 (3)	61.76 (1)	45.1 (2)
Core Subject Indicator (CSI)	36.81 (4)	41.1 (4)	55.88 (2)	42.9 (3)
Capped Average Points Score	348.12 (2)	362.39 (1)	373.15 (1)	Not available
Average Wider Points Score	674.57	726.21	693.79	Not available

The figures in brackets in the table above compare the school to similar schools across Wales based on free school meals. The performance is compared using benchmarked quartiles, with 1 being the highest and 4 the lowest.

The attendance of the pupils of the three schools over the past three years is set out below:

Percentage of half-day sessions attended by pupils of statutory school age during the academic year						
School	2015	2015 Benchmark Quartile	2016	2016 Benchmark Quartile	2017	2017 Benchmark Quartile
Hawthorn Primary	96.14%	1	95.96%	1	95.14%	No primary benchmark
Heol-Y-Celyn Primary	93.99%	2	93.04%	4	92.66%	No primary benchmark
Hawthorn High	93.02%	3	92.33%	4	93.32%	3

Figures for Heol-Y-Celyn are for the whole school

Financial Information

A move from a position of 'three schools - three budgets', to a single school with a single budget does result in a number of budgets being removed, or reduced, for example, there will only be one budget for a headteacher not three, but conversely the new single school is able to make significant savings from which it benefits. Although it is not possible to be precise about figures related to savings, as much would depend on future decisions of the Governing Body of the new Hawthorn 3-16 School, a summary of the known budgetary impacts is set out below:

	Hawthorn Primary	Heol-Y-Celyn Primary	Hawthorn High (excluding sixth form budgets)	New Hawthorn 3-16 School	Revenue Savings
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Annual Revenue Budget based on 2018/19 budget	741	925	3,125	4,614	177

** the sixth form budgets are set by Welsh Government based on Programmes of Study and are outside the control of the Council. Therefore, only those budgets within the Council's responsibility have been included.*

Savings that do arise initially benefit the new school, as they will enable the school building improvements to be made, through use of Prudential Code Borrowing, and then schools as a whole will benefit through redistribution of the savings across the County Borough.

An investment of £12m will be made to the existing Hawthorn High and Hawthorn Primary sites and buildings, to create a single site and to improve the facilities for all pupils attending the 3 – 16 school to 21st Century Schools standard.

Catchment Area of the New Hawthorn 3-16 School

The catchment area of the New Hawthorn 3-16 School will be as follows:

- Admission for 3-11 pupils – the combined existing catchment areas of Hawthorn Primary and Heol-Y-Celyn Primary (English Medium)
- Admission for 11-16 pupils – the existing Hawthorn High catchment area to:
 - Include the catchment area of Gwauncelyn Primary School, Tonteg (which is currently in the catchment area of Bryncelynnog Comprehensive).
 - Exclude the Graig area of Pontypridd that is in the catchment area of Maesycod Primary School, which will be included in the catchment area of the new Pontypridd 11-16 school;
 - Exclude the catchment area of Coedpenmaen Primary School, which will be included in the catchment area of the new Pontypridd 11-16 school.

These adjustments are being made to the catchment areas of pupils aged 11-16 to match the demand for places with the available supply across the secondary school provision in East Taf Ely. The additional demand for places is driven by housing development in the south east of the County Borough.

In the case of oversubscription at any school, published admissions criteria are applied to all applications received for places, to determine which pupils are successful in obtaining the places available. These criteria, which are outlined in our school admission policy booklet entitled 'Starting School' and listed in priority order are:

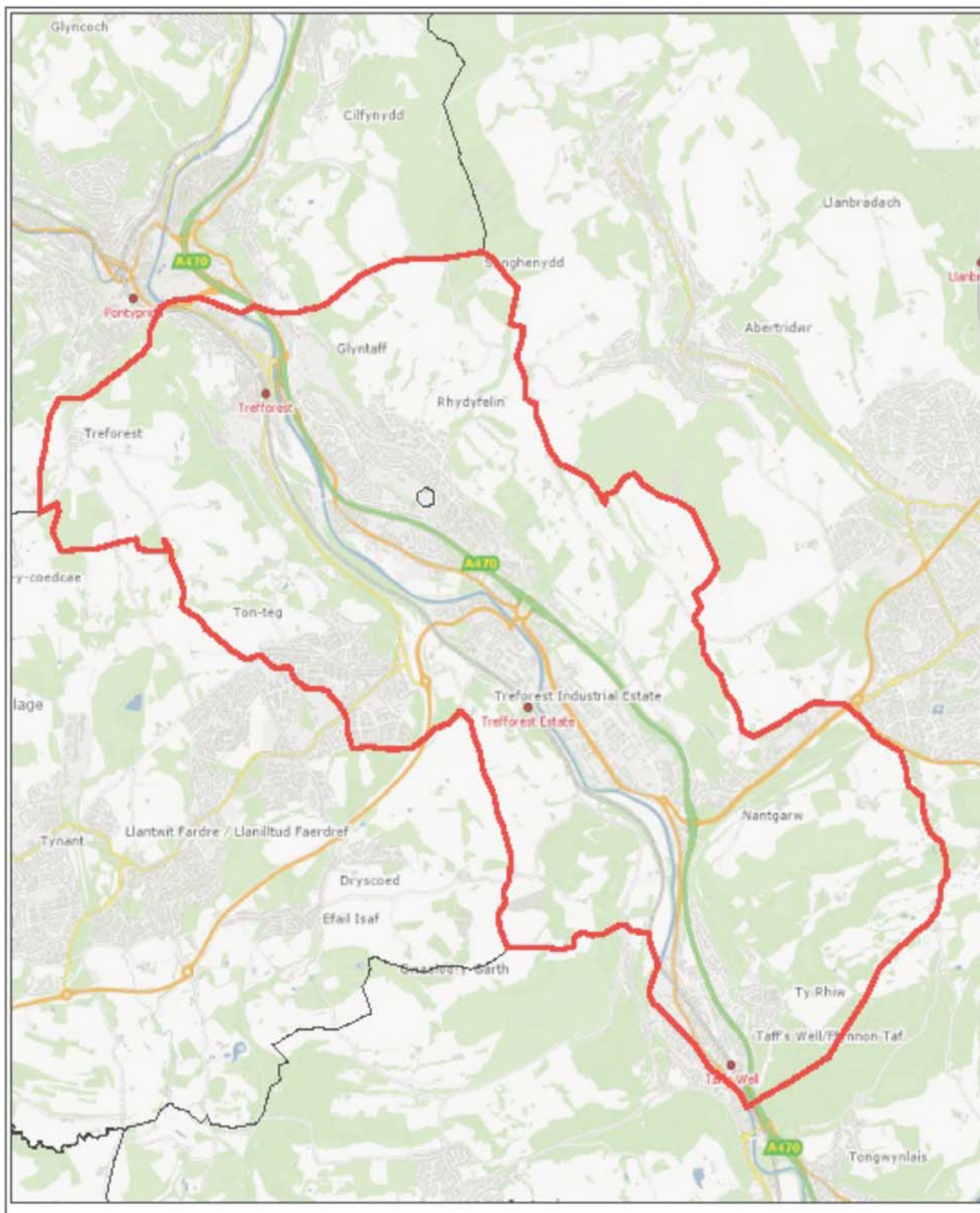
- Category 1 – 'Looked after' children (children in public care) and previously 'looked after' children.
- Category 2 – Children whose home is inside the school's catchment area and have an older sibling attending the school from the same address, who will continue to attend that school on the expected date of admission of the younger child.
- Category 3 – Children whose home is inside the school's catchment area who do not have an older sibling attending the school.
- Category 4 – Children whose home is outside the school's catchment area and have an older sibling attending the school from the same address, who will continue to attend that school on the expected date of admission of the younger child.
- Category 5 – Children whose home is outside the school's catchment area who do not have an older sibling attending the school.

The term 'home' in the categories above refers to the actual location of the residential dwelling in which the child lives.

Children will be admitted up to the published Admission Number in the order of priority as outlined above. If within any one of the priority categories listed all of the applicants cannot be offered a place, preference will be given to children living nearest to the school. Distance will be measured using the shortest, safe walking route between the home address and the nearest open school gate. In areas where no safe walking route has been identified, the shortest driving route between the home address and the nearest open school gate will be used. This distance will be measured using the Mapinfo System only, measurements calculated by any other system will not be considered. The home address in instances where parents have shared responsibility for children, will be the address to which Child Benefit is paid.

For the purpose of applying admissions criteria, any child living in the areas to be transferred from the Hawthorn catchment area, as detailed on the map enclosed in this document and who has an older sibling still attending Hawthorn High in the July prior to the opening of the new school, i.e. in September 2022 will have their application considered as if they still resided in the Hawthorn catchment area, i.e. their application will fall in to Category 2 of the aforementioned criteria and not Category 4. This protection will continue until all older siblings have left the school. This will only cover siblings attending Years 7 to 11 in July 2022, any attending the sixth form, namely Years 12 and 13 will not be eligible (as they can be dual registered in more than one school). In the case of Gwauncelyn pupils, they will receive the same protection regarding being resident in the Bryncelynnog catchment if they have elder siblings attending that school on the same dates detailed above.

Pupils aged over 16 will transfer to the catchment area of Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School for sixth form provision. They may of course attend Coleg y Cymoedd, or another school sixth form centre of their choice, but free transportation will only be provided to either Bryncelynnog, or Coleg Y Cymoedd, or the nearest centre that offers the selection of subject choices that they choose, providing that they reside more than 2 miles from this provision.



Drawing Title
Proposed Hawthorn High

Date

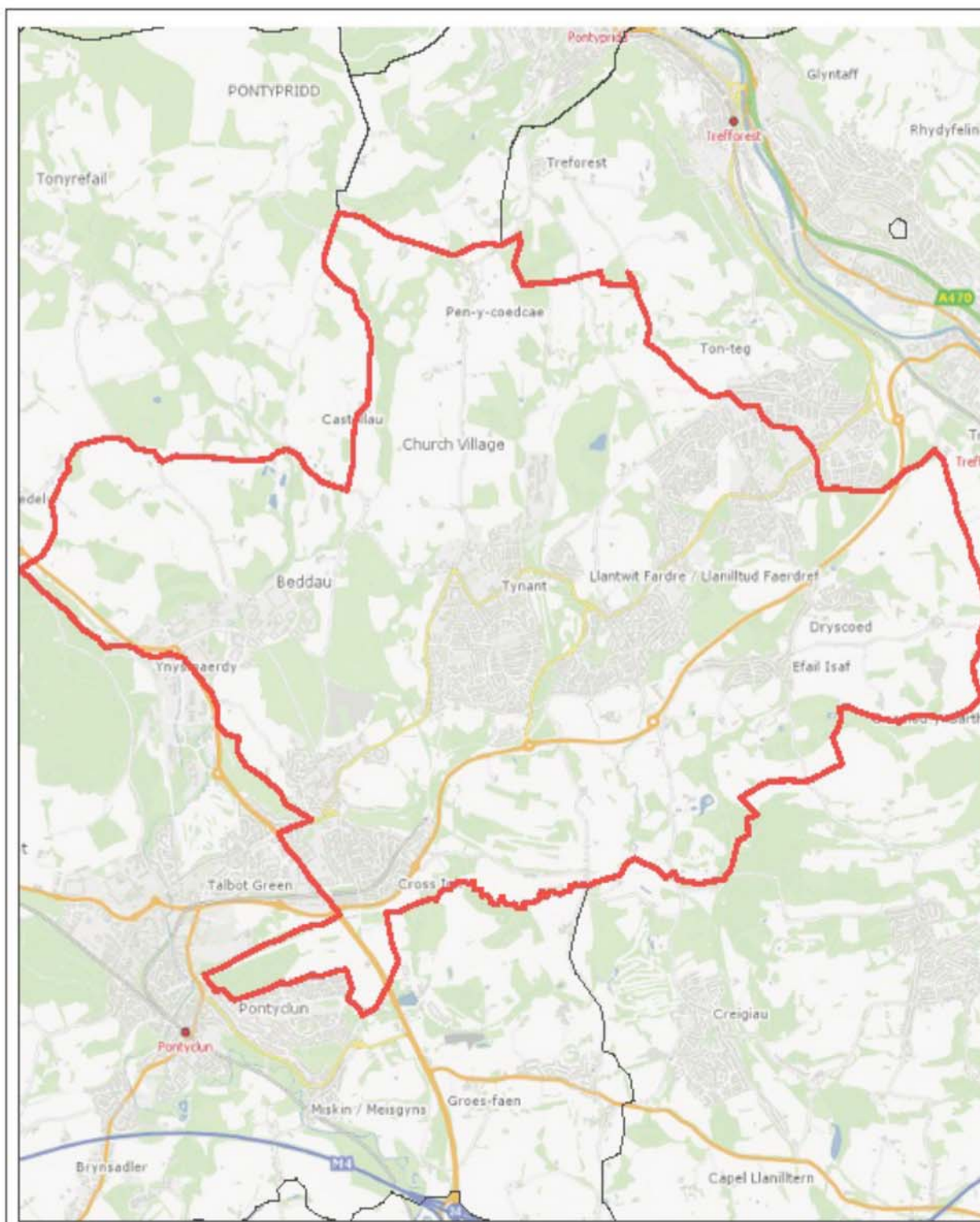
Scale

Location

e: 000000, n: 000000

(C) Crown copyright.
All rights reserved LA 100023458, 2006

(C) Hwlfnest y Gorn.
Cedwir pob hawl LA 100023458, 2006



Drawing Title
Proposed Bryncelynog

Date

Scale

Location
e: 000000, n: 000000

(C) Crown copyright.
All rights reserved LA 100023458. 2006

(C) Haflliniat y Gorn.
Cedwir pob hawl LA 100023458. 2006

SECTION 4

The proposed changes to primary and secondary school provision in Pontypridd

Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council proposes to:

- Close Pontypridd High School sixth form and transfer the post-16 provision to either Bryncelynog Comprehensive School or Coleg y Cymoedd, Nantgarw, dependent on student choice;
- Close Pontypridd High School and Cilfynydd Primary School and create a new 3-16 'all through' school on the site of the current Pontypridd High School;
- Provide a 1,200 capacity 3-16 School for Pontypridd, for 210 pupils aged 3-11 (including Nursery provision) and 990 pupils aged 11-16.

To achieve this change the Council is proposing to invest £4.7m to improve the buildings at Pontypridd High to ensure they meet the learning and safeguarding requirements of a 3-16 school. The investment will also include a review of the safe routes to school, and improvements to walkways, road crossings and road speed management measures will be made to ensure the required safety standards are met. This is the approach we have implemented in other communities in earlier school reorganisation proposals with significant improvements being made to safe routes to schools.

What are the reasons for the proposed changes?

Across Wales there is a recognition that whilst educational standards have improved, when compared internationally they are still too low and need to be improved and quickly. In this environment of rapid change and increasing pressures on schools and local authorities to improve learning standards, the sustainability and performance of the present educational provision in Rhondda Cynon Taf is being challenged and reviewed.

The Welsh Government sets the overall policy and legislative framework for school organisation however, local authorities have a responsibility for the planning and management of school places and must secure efficient and effective provision so as to focus resources on improving educational outcomes for young people.

The Council has been considering the way forward for education in the County Borough and in Pontypridd for some time and the reasons for change are both educational and financial:

- Pontypridd High has 428 (31.9%) surplus places and this is not forecast to change significantly over the next 5 years;
- The costs of providing the sixth form provision in Pontypridd High are very high, with an average of only 11 pupils per class (Post 16 - Level 3 courses), including those classes shared with other schools;
- The small sixth form classes are partially funded by the financial resources which were intended and should be made available to pupils in Key Stage 3 (11-14 years old) and Key Stage 4 (14-16 years old). This has an adverse impact on the quality of the education provision for Key Stage 3 and 4 pupils;
- A further consequence of the financially inefficient sixth form is that Pontypridd High has a financial deficit of almost £520,000;

- Cilfynydd Primary School is a relatively small Primary school (its total capacity is 188 pupils), that currently has just 136 pupils on roll, meaning that almost 28% of its capacity is surplus. A relatively large number (30) of pupils' resident within the Cilfynydd catchment choose to attend Coedpenmaen Primary School, which is 1.7 miles away. This represents over 10% of the total pupil roll of Coedpenmaen. The school is accommodated in three separate Victorian buildings on a steeply sloping site which is just a few hundred metres walk away from Pontypridd High School, via a footbridge over the A470 trunk road. The driving distance by car, which is considerably longer than the safe walking route, is just 0.9 of a mile.

Background to the proposal

Information on the Schools

The schools included within the proposal and the pupil numbers over the past four years are shown below. The pupil numbers are obtained from the statutory annual pupil count (PLASC) which must be undertaken in January each year. The numbers shown exclude nursery age pupils, as we are required to exclude these from the table by the Welsh Government's Statutory School Organisation Code, however we have shown the nursery numbers separately.

School	Type of School	Age Range	School Capacity	Jan 2014	Jan 2015	Jan 2016	Jan 2017	Jan 2018	% Surplus Jan 2018
Cilfynydd Primary	Primary	3 - 11	188	120	118	128	126	136	27.6
Pontypridd High	Secondary	11 - 19	1338	1003	1031	967	945	910	31.9

Nursery numbers (total numbers of pupils attending):

School	Jan 2014	Jan 2015	Jan 2016	Jan 2017	Jan 2018
Cilfynydd Primary	32	23	27	20	21

Pupil projections

Over the next five years the pupil projections for the two schools, which are calculated in accordance with guidance issued by Welsh Government, are as follows. The projections take into account previous trends together with predicted demographic changes and average birth rates. It is important to note that this cannot take account of any unforeseen deviations in local trends.

School	School capacity (excluding nursery)	Jan 2019	Jan 2020	Jan 2021	Jan 2022	Jan 2023	% surplus in Jan 2023
Cilfynydd Primary	188	143	142	141	136	124	34.0
Pontypridd High							
11-19 – No.	1338	863	880	884	904	936	46.6
11-16 – No.	1205	752	768	772	796	831	31.0

If the proposal was to be implemented in the future and parents/carers choose to transfer their children to the new Pontypridd 3-16 School the forecast for the first year for the new school will be as follows:

School 3-16	School capacity (excluding nursery)	Jan 2022	Surplus in Jan 2022
Primary 3-11	180	125	55
Secondary 11-16	990	879	111
Total	1170	1004	166

Proposed Primary Education provision

The plans for the new 3-16 school are at RIBA stage 0, site feasibility studies have been completed and detailed briefs will be worked up in collaboration with the pupils, Governing Body and staff of the schools. It is anticipated that the primary aged pupils will be accommodated in the Year 7/8 (Lower School) block which will be refurbished and remodelled together with separate and segregated outdoor play facilities. A secure soft play area for early year's children will be created at the front of the building. A new environmental outdoor classroom will also be created.

External play areas across the school site will be upgraded and improved, to also include the installation of a 3G pitch. Works to reconfigure the existing car park, to provide a dedicated pick up/drop off area for parents will also be undertaken.

The dedicated ALN class already in operation at Pontypridd High will transfer to the new school, with consideration being given to ensure flexibility of accommodation, to allow possible expansion of this provision in the future if there is recognised demand.

The primary age pupils will also have supervised and timetabled access to share the specialist resources and facilities available in the secondary school, including the new 3G pitch, sports hall, playing fields, tennis courts, music and drama facilities, and science and technology areas.

Current condition of the existing schools

Property condition information on all school buildings is held by the Council, this information is regularly updated to reflect any changes or improvements to the buildings and reported to Welsh Government each year. The overall condition ratings of the school buildings are as follows:

School	Building Condition Survey Result	Suitability Survey Result
Cilfynydd Primary	C	B
Pontypridd High	C+	B

Quality and standards

As part of a national programme of school inspection, Estyn inspects all schools in Wales, a comparison between the quality and diversity of education provided at both schools during their last inspections is as follows.

School	Date Inspected	Judgement – Current Performance	Judgement – Prospects for Improvement
Cilfynydd Primary	May 2014	Adequate	Adequate
Pontypridd High	January 2014	Adequate	Good

As a result of receiving 'adequate' ratings, both schools were placed in the category of requiring monitoring by Estyn following inspection. Following further Estyn inspection, both schools were both deemed to have made sufficient improvement and were removed from the list of schools requiring Estyn monitoring in July 2015 and November 2016 respectively.

Since 2014, schools have been categorised according to a four-point 'traffic light' system, (green, yellow, amber and red) with a 'green' school having the highest rating and a 'red' school the lowest. This National Schools Categorisation System introduced by the Welsh Government provides a systematic view of a school's performance, based on publicly available data and the school's own self-evaluation in respect of leadership, learning and teaching. The aim of this system is to determine the level of support a school requires to support it to improve.

Pontypridd High School is currently categorised as a **yellow** school. This defines them as 'effective, already doing well, know the areas needed to improve, and by identifying the right support and taking action have the potential to do even better'. Cilfynydd Primary became a **green** school for the first time in 2018; this defines them as 'highly effective and has a track record of sustaining a high level of outcomes, has the capacity to lead and contribute to supporting other schools'.

Primary School Standards

The tables below set out the performance of Cilfynydd Primary School for the key measures of educational performance over the past three years and compare the school to similar schools across Wales based on free school meals:

Cilfynydd Primary	Foundation Phase Outcomes		
Subjects	2015 %	2016 %	2017 %
Foundation Phase Indicator	76.19 (4)	90.48 (1)	83.33 (3)
Personal and social development wellbeing and cultural diversity	100 (1)	100 (1)	94.44 (3)
Language literacy and communication skills English	76.19 (4)	90.48 (2)	83.33 (3)
Mathematical development	80.95 (4)	100 (1)	83.33 (4)

The figures in brackets in the table above, compare the schools to similar schools across Wales based on free school meals. The performance is compared using benchmarked quartiles, with 1 being the highest and 4 the lowest.

Cilfynydd Primary	Key Stage Two Outcomes		
Subjects	2015 %	2016 %	2017 %
English	86.67 (3)	81.82 (4)	94.44 (1)
Maths	86.67 (3)	81.82 (4)	94.44 (2)
Science	86.67 (3)	81.82 (4)	100 (1)
Core Subject Indicator (CSI)	86.67 (2)	81.82 (4)	88.89 (2)

The figures in brackets in the table above, compare the schools to similar schools across Wales based on free school meals. The performance is compared using benchmarked quartiles, with 1 being the highest and 4 the lowest.

Secondary School Standards

The tables below set out the performance of Pontypridd High School for the key measures of educational performance at Key Stages 3 & 4 over the past four years and compare the school to similar schools across Wales based on free school meals:

Pontypridd High	Key Stage Three Outcomes			
Subjects	2014 %	2015 %	2016 %	2017 %
English	82.94 (3)	82.42 (3)	88.05 (2)	87.27 (4)
Maths	89.41 (1)	86.81 (2)	91.19 (1)	90.30 (3)
Science	90.59 (2)	85.71 (4)	94.34 (2)	93.94 (3)
Welsh (second language)	68.82 (4)	77.47(3)	73.58 (4)	75.76 (4)
Core Subject Indicator (CSI)	78.24 (2)	76.37 (4)	84.91 (2)	85.45 (3)

The figures in brackets in the table above, compare the school to similar schools across Wales based on free school meals. The performance is compared using benchmarked quartiles, with 1 being the highest and 4 the lowest.

Pontypridd High	Key Stage Four Outcomes			
Subjects	2014 %	2015 %	2016 %	2017 %
Level 1 Threshold	90.48 (4)	98.37 (2)	100 (1)	95.5 (4)
Level 2 Threshold	78.57 (3)	92.93 (1)	98.24 (1)	60.8 (4)
Level 2 Threshold including English/Welsh & Maths	52.38 (1)	53.26 (2)	61.76 (1)	51.1 (3)
Core Subject Indicator (CSI)	48.21 (2)	50 (2)	61.18 (1)	48.9 (3)
Capped Average Points Score	329.69 (3)	364.40 (1)	375.92 (2)	Not available
Average Wider Points Score		584.78	596.24	Not available

The figures in brackets in the table above, compare the school to similar schools across Wales based on free school meals. The performance is compared using benchmarked quartiles, with 1 being the highest and 4 the lowest.

The attendance of the pupils of the two schools over the past three years is set out below:

Percentage of half-day sessions attended by pupils of statutory school age during the academic year						
School	2015	2015 Benchmark Quartile	2016	2016 Benchmark Quartile	2017	2017 Benchmark Quartile
Cilfynydd Primary	93.81%	4	93.21%	4	94.44%	No benchmark
Pontypridd High	93.16%	2	93.60%	2	94.07%	3

Financial Information

A move from a position of 'two schools - two budgets', to a single school with a single budget does result in a number of budgets being removed, or reduced, for example, there will only be one budget for a headteacher not two, but conversely the new single school is able to make significant savings from which it benefits. Although it is not possible to be precise about figures related to savings, as much would depend on future decisions of the Governing Body of the new Pontypridd 3-16 School, a summary of the known budgetary impacts is set out below:

	Cilfynydd Primary	Pontypridd High (excluding sixth form budgets)	New Pontypridd 3-16 School	Revenue Savings
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Annual Revenue Budget based on 2018/19 budget	550	3541	4051	40

** the sixth form budgets are set by Welsh Government based on Programmes of Study and are outside the control of the Council. Therefore, only those budgets within the Council's responsibility have been included.*

Savings that do arise initially benefit the new school, as they will enable the school building improvements to be made, through use of Prudential Code Borrowing, and then schools as a whole will benefit through redistribution of the savings across the County Borough.

An investment of £4.7m will be made to the existing Pontypridd High site and buildings to accommodate the primary aged pupils in 21st Century facilities and to improve the 11-16 facilities at the School.

Any capital receipts from the future sale of vacated school sites will be used by the Council to invest in capital projects across the County Borough.

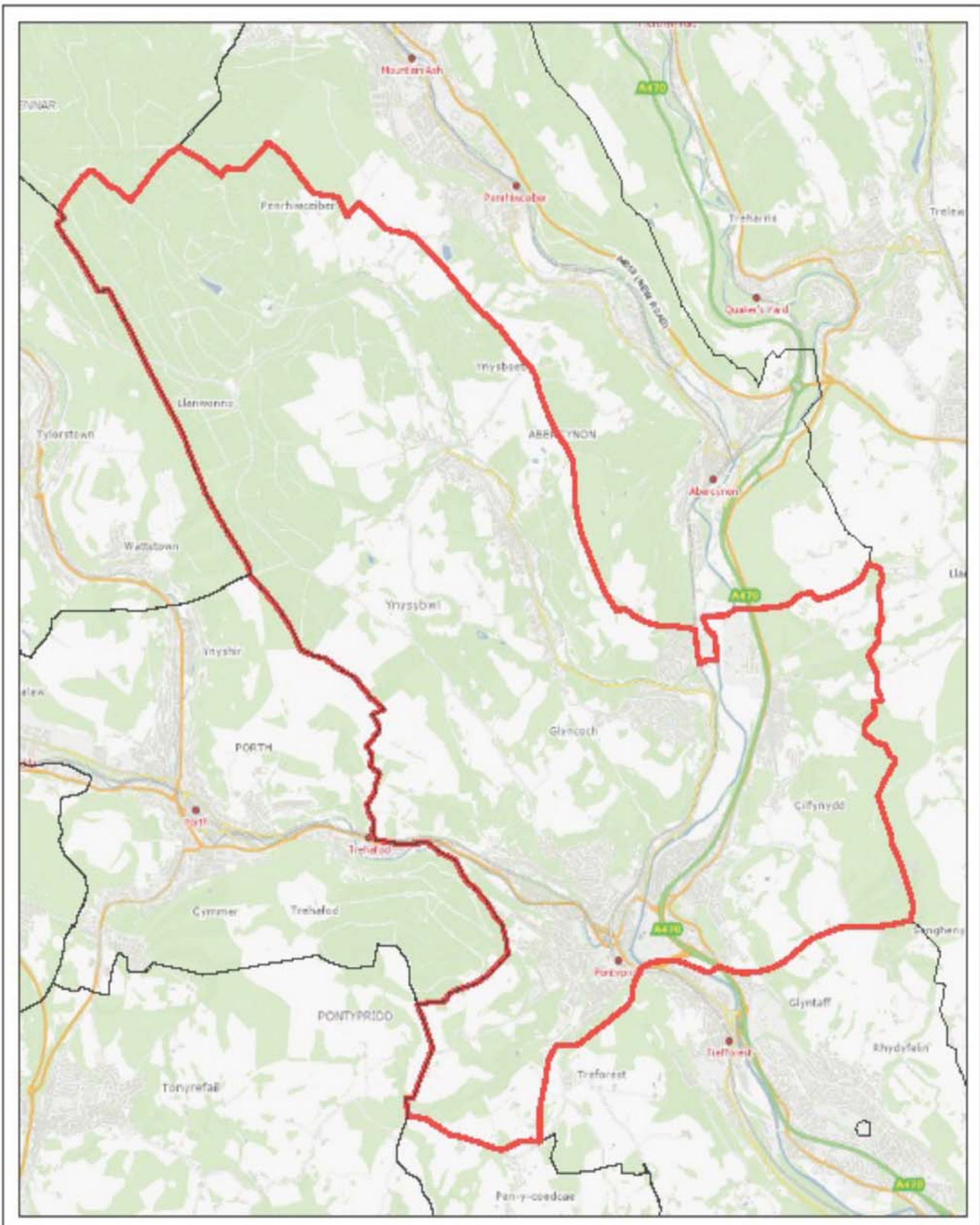
Catchment Area of the New Pontypridd 3-16 School

The catchment area of the New Pontypridd 3-16 School will be as follows:

- Admission for 3-11 pupils – the existing catchment area of Cilfynydd Primary School.
- Admission for 11-16 pupils – the existing Pontypridd High School catchment area, with the addition of the following areas that are currently part of the catchment area of Hawthorn High School:
 - The Graig area of Pontypridd, that is currently in the catchment area of Maesycloed Primary School;
 - The catchment area of Coedpenmaen Primary School.

The criteria for admission to schools in Rhondda Cynon Taf, in the case of oversubscription is outlined in detail on page 44 of this document. As no areas are being removed from this catchment area there is no requirement to put in place any protection for siblings of existing pupils, although the protection to be put in place for those pupils who were formerly in the Hawthorn catchment, but will transfer to the Pontypridd High catchment as a result of these proposals should be noted.

Pupils aged over 16 will transfer to the catchment area of Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School for sixth form provision. They may of course attend Coleg y Cymoedd, or another school sixth form centre of their choice, but free transportation will only be provided to either Bryncelynnog, or Coleg Y Cymoedd or the nearest centre that offers the selection of subject choices that they choose, providing that they reside more than 2 miles from this provision.



Drawing Title
Proposed Pontypridd High

Date

Scale

Location

e: 000000, n: 000000

(C) Crown copyright.
All rights reserved LA 100023458, 2006

(C) Hafwlad y Gorn.
Cedwir pob hawl LA 100023458, 2006

SECTION 5

The closure of YGG, Pont Sion Norton and the Welsh Medium stream of Heol y Celyn Primary School, and the creation of a new, Welsh Medium Community Primary school to replace both provisions.

Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council proposes to:

- Improve and increase Welsh medium provision by building a new school that will replace the provision of YGG, Pont Sion Norton and the Welsh Medium stream of Heol y Celyn Primary School (currently a dual language school).

To achieve this, the proposal is to construct a new, purpose built school building that will be constructed on the current site of Heol-Y-Celyn Primary School, Rhydyfelin, Pontypridd. The planned investment in this new school is £10.7 million. YGG Pont Sion Norton is a Welsh Medium Community Primary School located near Cilfynydd, Pontypridd, in poor condition buildings that are difficult to access. Heol-Y-Celyn Primary School is a dual language school and it is proposed that the pupils educated through the medium of Welsh in this school shall transfer to the new school, along with the pupils attending YGG, Pont Sion Norton; Heol-Y-Celyn Primary will subsequently close and the pupils educated through the medium of English will transfer to the new proposed 3 – 16 school at Hawthorn, details of this proposal are outlined earlier in Section 3 of this document.

What are the reasons for the proposed changes?

YGG Pont Sion Norton is a Welsh Medium Community School located at the rear of Pont Sion Norton Road, Pontypridd. The school site consists of three separate traditional stone Victorian buildings with slate roofs, built on a steeply sloping site, constructed in 1893. The school is built on a steep hillside, all of the external play areas are sloping which makes playing of ball games, for example, extremely difficult; the external areas are all tarmac yards and the school does not have access to any grassed playing fields or garden areas.

Access to the school site is via flights of stone steps and the school does not have the necessary facilities to enable any persons who use wheelchairs to access the school. There is no dedicated car parking on the site; staff and visitors have to park in a lane that serves the rear of the residential properties in Pont Sion Norton Road. School buses are unable to drive up to the school site and have to pick up and drop off pupils on the busy main road below the school.

The school has received considerable investment in recent years to repair and improve the learning environment but is still only currently categorised as a grade C according to the Welsh Government's Property Condition data in respect of building condition.

The school is currently operating at 96% of its published capacity and pupil numbers are not forecast to reduce in the next few years. There is no scope to extend the existing school buildings should demand for Welsh Medium places rise and the nature of the site would make provision of temporary accommodation very difficult to achieve. Of more concern is the inaccessibility of the school to children and adults who may have mobility problems, it is simply not possible to undertake any reasonable adjustments to improve access at the current site. Even with further major capital investment at this school it would not be possible to create a 21st Century learning environment for all children.

If the proposal to close, and relocate the provision of YGG Pont Sion Norton to the current Heol-Y-Celyn Primary School site in a new building is agreed, then the current YGG Pont Sion Norton school site will become surplus to requirements.

Based on the results of the Welsh Government commissioned building survey of all schools YGG Pont Sion Norton is graded a C for condition and a B for suitability, where A is the highest and D is the lowest performing building respectively. The current figure for the maintenance work that would be desirable to undertake at this school is £136,000.

The new school building will create a teaching and learning environment that will be fit for the purpose to provide education in the 21st Century, as opposed to a building that was constructed for 19th Century requirements. The new proposed site is flat and the building will be fully accessible to all, meeting all of the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. The new site will also incorporate extensive outdoor play facilities that are lacking at the current location. It will also include those pupils currently educated through the medium of Welsh at Heol-Y-Celyn Primary School, which is currently a dual language school. The new school will be a larger, and thus more educationally and financially viable Welsh Medium school where all pupils will receive their education fully immersed in the Welsh language.

Background to the proposal

Information on the Schools

The pupil numbers in YGG Pont Sion Norton and the Welsh Language Department of Heol-Y-Celyn Primary School over the past four years are shown below and are obtained from the statutory pupil level annual school census (PLASC) which must be undertaken in January each year. The numbers shown exclude nursery age pupils, as we are required to exclude these from the table by the Welsh Government's statutory School Organisation Code, however we have shown the nursery numbers separately. The capacity of the Welsh Department of Heol-Y-Celyn is calculated as 31% of the total, this being the same percentage of the total number of pupils that attend the Welsh Department of the school.

School	Type of School	Age Range	School Capacity	Jan 2014	Jan 2015	Jan 2016	Jan 2017	Jan 2018	% Surplus Jan 2018
YGG Pont Sion Norton	Primary	3 - 11	267	222	231	244	250	256	4.1
Heol-Y-Celyn Welsh medium pupils	Primary	3 - 11	120	125	111	111	96	98	18.3

Nursery numbers (total numbers of pupils attending)

School	Jan 2014	Jan 2015	Jan 2016	Jan 2017	Jan 2018
YGG Pont Sion Norton	36	43	37	43	39
Heol-Y-Celyn Welsh medium pupils	26	22	15	21	11

Pupil projections

Over the next five years the pupil projections for the school, which are calculated in accordance with guidance issued by Welsh Government, are as follows. The projections take into account previous trends together with predicted demographic changes and average birth rates. It is important to note that this cannot take account of any unforeseen deviations in local trends.

School	School capacity (excluding nursery)	Jan 2019	Jan 2020	Jan 2021	Jan 2022	Jan 2023	% surplus in Jan 2023
YGG Pont Sion Norton	267	253	247	239	235	226	15.4
Heol-Y-Celyn Welsh medium pupils	120	95	87	80	81	73	39.1

Proposed new school site and building

Plans for the new school on the Heol-Y-Celyn school site are still at a formative stage, but it is planned that the accommodation will be in a new building on the site at Holly Street, Rhydyfelin, with separate outdoor play facilities. It will have at least 16 classrooms of approximately 60 square metres, able to accommodate 30 pupils per class, plus a Nursery unit with facilities to cater for up to 60 pupils. The proposed capacity of the new school will be 480 plus 60 Nursery places. The expected cost of the new building will be £10.7 m.

The school will be constructed to cater for the pupils currently attending YGG Pont Sion Norton and the pupils educated through the medium of Welsh at Heol-Y-Celyn Primary School.

Quality and standards

As part of a national programme of school inspection, Estyn inspects all schools in Wales. A comparison between the quality and diversity of education provided at the three schools detailed above during their last inspections is as follows.

School	Date Inspected	Judgement – Current Performance	Judgement – Prospects for Improvement
YGG, Pont Sion Norton	September 2014	Adequate	Good
Heol-Y-Celyn Primary	June 2014	Adequate	Adequate

As a result of receiving one 'adequate' rating, YGG Pont Sion Norton was placed in the category of requiring monitoring by Estyn following inspection. Following further Estyn inspection, the school was deemed to have made sufficient improvement and was removed from the list of schools requiring Estyn monitoring in April, 2016.

Heol-Y-Celyn Primary School was re-inspected in November 2015 and found not to have sufficiently improved; it was, as a consequence, placed by Estyn in the category of requiring significant improvement. Following further inspection in January 2017, the school was deemed to have made sufficient progress and was duly removed from the list of schools requiring Estyn monitoring.

Since 2014, schools have been categorised according to a four-point 'traffic light' system, (green, yellow, amber and red) with a 'green' school having the highest rating and a 'red' school the lowest. This National Schools Categorisation System introduced by the Welsh Government provides a systematic view of a school's performance, based on publicly available data and the school's own self-evaluation in respect of leadership, learning and teaching. The aim of this system is to determine the level of support a school requires to support it to improve.

YGG Pont Sion Norton is currently categorised as a yellow school. This defines it as 'effective, already doing well, know the areas needed to improve, and by identifying the right support and taking action have the potential to do even better'.

Heol-Y-Celyn Primary School is also currently categorised as a yellow school, having previously been red and then amber.

Primary School Standards

The tables below set out the performance of YGG Pont Sion Norton and Heol-Y-Celyn Primary School for the key measures of educational performance over the past three years and compare the schools to similar schools across Wales based on free school meals. Data for Heol-Y-Celyn is for the Welsh Department only:

Foundation Phase Outcomes						
	2015 %		2016 %		2017 %	
Subjects	YGG Pont Sion Norton	Heol-Y-Celyn Primary	YGG Pont Sion Norton	Heol-Y-Celyn Primary	YGG Pont Sion Norton	Heol-Y-Celyn Primary
Foundation Phase Indicator	87.8 (3)	94.44 (1)	80.56 (4)	81.25 (3)	94.44 (2)	80 (3)
Personal and social development wellbeing and cultural diversity	93.9 (3)	100 (1)	100 (1)	93.75 (2)	100 (1)	90 (4)
Language literacy and communication skills English	95.9 (2)	100 (1)	88.89 (3)	87.5 (2)	100 (1)	80 (3)
Mathematical development	93.9 (2)	94.44 (1)	86.11 (4)	93.75 (1)	94.44 (2)	80 (4)

The figures in brackets in the table above, compare the schools to similar schools across Wales based on free school meals. The performance is compared using benchmarked quartiles, with 1 being the highest and 4 the lowest.

Key Stage Two Outcomes						
	2015 %		2016 %		2017 %	
Subjects	YGG Pont Sion Norton	Heol-Y-Celyn Primary	YGG Pont Sion Norton	Heol-Y-Celyn Primary	YGG Pont Sion Norton	Heol-Y-Celyn Primary
English	96.55 (1)	75 (4)	100 (1)	100 (1)	92 (4)	92.31 (2)
Maths	100 (1)	83.33 (4)	100 (1)	100 (1)	92 (4)	92.31 (2)
Science	96.55 (2)	66.67 (4)	100 (1)	100 (1)	88 (4)	92.31 (2)
Core Subject Indicator (CSI)	93.1 (2)	66.67 (4)	100 (1)	100 (1)	84 (4)	92.31 (2)

The figures in brackets in the table above, compare the schools to similar schools across Wales based on free school meals. The performance is compared using benchmarked quartiles, with 1 being the highest and 4 the lowest.

The attendance of the pupils of the two schools over the past three years is set out below:

Percentage of half-day sessions attended by pupils of statutory school age during the academic year						
School	2015	2015 Benchmark Quartile	2016	2016 Benchmark Quartile	2017	2017 Benchmark Quartile
YGG Pont Sion Norton	95.2%	2	94.35%	4	94.5%	No benchmark
Heol-Y-Celyn Primary	93.99%	2	93.04%	4	92.66%	No benchmark

Financial Information

There will be no savings made as a result of this proposal, as a new school will be created to replace the ones that are closing. The formula budget allocated to the school will reflect the increased floor area of the new building, the area of the grounds and the increased number of pupils on roll.

There may be some additional transport costs for pupils as a result of the relocation and because of the catchment changes also. These will not be known until these proposals are finalised and we become aware of the demographic changes to the pupils attending the school. All pupils resident within the existing YGG Pont Sion Norton catchment area will qualify for free home to school transport to the new school site as it is more than 1.5 miles from their home addresses.

Catchment area of the new school

The catchment area of the new school will comprise that of the existing YGG Pont Sion Norton, together with that of the current Welsh Medium stream of Heol-Y-Celyn Primary School.

CONSULTATION RESPONSE PRO-FORMA

In order to comply with its legal duty under the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and help the Council reach a decision on the proposal below, it would be very helpful if you could answer the following questions. Please note, any personal information given by you will not be shared and only used to provide you with feedback, should you request it. Any comments that could identify you will be anonymised in the consultation report produced. Completed questionnaires should be returned to:

Director of Education and Inclusion Services
21st Century Schools Team
Ty Trevithick
Abercynon
CF45 4UQ

or email schoolplanning@rctcbc.gov.uk

The Proposals

Proposal 1: Removal of the sixth forms of Hawthorn High, Pontypridd High and Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive, with post 16 students attending an alternative school or college that offers the choice of courses they require.

1 Do you agree with proposal 1? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure

Please let us know the reasons for your choice

Proposal 2: Create a new, 3 – 16 ‘all through’ school for Hawthorn

2 Do you agree with proposal 2? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure

Please let us know the reasons for your choice

Proposal 3: Create a new, 3 – 16 ‘all through’ school for Pontypridd

3 Do you agree with proposal 3? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure

Please let us know the reasons for your choice

Proposal 4: Close YGG Pont Sion Norton and relocate its pupils to a new Welsh Medium Primary School, to be constructed on the current site of Heol-Y-Celyn Primary School (which will close as part of Proposal 2). Welsh Medium pupils attending Heol y Celyn will also transfer to the new school.

4 Do you agree with proposal 4? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure

Please let us know the reasons for your choice

Proposal 5: Amendment of the catchment areas of Hawthorn High and Pontypridd High Schools and the 6th form catchment area of Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School, as outlined in this document.

5 Do you agree with proposal 5? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure

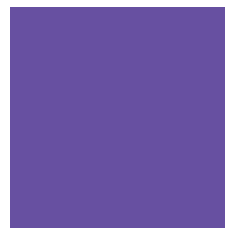
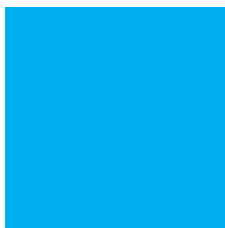
Please let us know the reasons for your choice

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

The Council is committed to keeping your personal information safe and secure and keeping you informed about how we use your information. To learn about how your privacy is protected and how and why we use your personal information to provide you with services, please visit our Consultation privacy notice here: www.rctcbc.gov.uk/serviceprivacynotice and the Council's **data protection** pages here: www.rctcbc.gov.uk/dataprotection.

Additional Information Sheet

Additional Information Sheet



Appendix 2

- Community Impact Assessments x4
- Equality Impact Assessment
- Welsh Language Impact Assessment

Proposal to create a Sixth Form 'Centre of Excellence' at Bryncelynnog, utilise post 16 provision at Coleg y Cymoedd and St David's College, Cardiff, and to remove sixth form provision at Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive, Hawthorn and Pontypridd High Schools

Community Impact Assessment

This assessment is prepared in accordance with guidance contained within Annex C of the new statutory guidance circular 011/2018, the School Organisation Code, which will be implemented with effect from 1st November 2018

This proposal is being consulted on between 15th October 2018 and 31st January 2019, as part of a wider consultation regarding the reorganisation of school provision in the Hawthorn and Pontypridd areas of Rhondda Cynon Taf. A detailed consultation document has been circulated to all prescribed consultees. Copies have been forwarded to the WG in compliance with consultation and publication guidelines. The document advises of the availability of all required Impact Assessments and informs all consultees as to how they can obtain copies if they require them.

The reasons for consideration of this particular proposal are fully outlined in the consultation document that has been widely distributed; this document clearly outlines the background to the proposal and why it has been necessary to bring it forward at this point in time.

It must be noted that we are not closing any secondary school provision as a consequence of this particular proposal. The three schools that may lose 6th form provision will remain in situ, albeit with changes made to the age range of pupils they wish to admit (amended from 11 – 19 years to 3 – 16 years or 11 – 16 in the case of Cardinal Newman). Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School will have additional accommodation and facilities provided. Separate Community Impact Assessments have been prepared in respect of all other proposals being consulted upon at the current time.

Taking into account the information provided above, it is considered that the 6th form element of our Hawthorn and Pontypridd School Reorganisation Proposals will have a neutral effect on the communities they serve. All facilities and services provided by these schools to their communities will remain in place. It is for this reason that a more detailed Community Impact Assessment has not been prepared for this proposal, as it is not deemed to be applicable or appropriate in the circumstances.

The only potential impact will be on the pupils who may require 6th form education in the future, in that they may have to travel longer distances to access this provision. There are far too many different 'permutations' to outline the distances involved for individual pupils in this report.

Transportation for pupils will be provided in accordance with the Council's Learner Travel Policy in force at the time of the transfer of the post-16 provision to their new locations. Assessments will be undertaken in accordance with legislation in force and will involve the application of both distance and dangerous route criteria, if applicable.

Proposal to close Hawthorn Primary, Heol y Celyn Primary and Hawthorn High Schools and to create a new 3 – 16 school on the adjacent sites of the current Hawthorn Primary and Hawthorn High Schools

Community Impact Assessment

This assessment is prepared in accordance with guidance contained within Annex C of the new statutory guidance circular 011/2018, the School Organisation Code, which will be implemented with effect from 1st November 2018.

This proposal is being consulted on between 15th October 2018 and 31st January 2019, as part of a wider consultation regarding the reorganisation of school provision in the Pontypridd and Hawthorn areas of Rhondda Cynon Taf. A detailed consultation document has been circulated to all prescribed consultees. Copies have been forwarded to the WG in compliance with consultation and publication guidelines. The document advises of the availability of all required Impact Assessments and informs all consultees as to how they can obtain copies if they require them.

At the current time, the percentage of pupils attending the respective schools who reside within the catchment areas of those schools are as follows:

- Hawthorn Primary – 46%
- Heol y Celyn Primary – 75%
- Hawthorn High – 85%

A significant percentage (40%) of the children attending Hawthorn Primary School, or 97 children in total actually reside in the adjacent catchment area of Heol y Celyn Primary; some actually live in the same street that Heol y Celyn is situated in. We do not consider therefore that transferring the English Medium stream of Heol y Celyn to the new 3 -16 provision at Hawthorn will have an adverse effect on either the children or the local community, as many parents are already exercising their right to choose this school for their children.

The two Primary schools offer breakfast clubs to all pupils at present; we will recommend that this provision should continue in the new 3 - 16 school if these proposals are agreed.

Neither of the two Primary schools are used outside of school hours by community organisations; any usage made is by school based groups such as the PTA. Both offer after school clubs to their pupils, Heol y Celyn has football, netball and gymnastics clubs on three evenings a week and Hawthorn has various clubs running on three evenings a week.

The Secondary school runs a full programme of extra-curricular activities after school each day. The full facilities of the current Secondary school will be available for the younger children to use, under supervision, so the programme of after school activities available to them can in fact be enhanced and extended.

There is a swimming pool on the High school site that is also open to the public; the organisation and running of this facility will not change as a result of these proposals.

This proposal seeks to enhance the school accommodation and facilities available to both Primary and Secondary aged pupils resident in the Hawthorn area , to cater for all children who may attend the school in the future from its catchment area (which will differ for the Primary and Secondary departments of the new proposed 3 – 16 School). This is not a rural area, and the existence of so many other schools and other community facilities within a short distance means that it is not deemed necessary to consider the enhancement of other community facilities that may exist in the local area.

The catchment area for Primary aged pupils who may attend the new 3 – 16 school will be that of the current Hawthorn Primary and the English medium stream of Heol y Celyn, combined. The distance between the Heol y Celyn site and the site of the new school is just 1 mile; this is the driving distance, the walking distance is shorter. Hawthorn Primary School is located immediately adjacent to the Hawthorn High School site and the distance between them is just a few metres.

No address within the extended Primary age catchment area will qualify for free home to school transport on the grounds of distance, as the furthest addresses from the new school site are all within the qualifying distance, which is 1.5 miles for Primary aged pupils in Rhondda Cynon Taf. The furthest address on the eastern side of the catchment area is 0.9 miles; on the upper western side of the catchment area it is 1.2 miles. It is not considered that these distances will be a barrier to any child who wishes to participate in the pre, and after school provision that will be offered at the new 3 - 16 School in the future; all pupils will be given equal access and encouragement to participate in as many activities as they wish. Having all Primary aged pupils in the Hawthorn area in one school, along with their elder siblings who may attend the Secondary department is considered to be of benefit to parents in future, as their children's school provision will be located on one site, as opposed to being a mile apart as it is at present

The catchment area of the Secondary section of the new school will remain as it is for the existing Hawthorn High School, with the addition of the catchment area of Gwauncelyn Primary School, Tonteg, and the omission of the catchment area of Coedpenmaen Primary School, Pontypridd. The Graig area of Pontypridd will also be omitted. Transportation for children will be provided in accordance with the Council's Learner Travel Policy in force at the time of the transfer of school provisions to the new 3 - 16 School. Assessments will be undertaken in accordance with legislation in force and will involve the application of both distance and dangerous route criteria, if applicable.

Proposal to close YGG, Pont Sion Norton and Heol y Celyn Primary School (dual language) and to open a new, enlarged Welsh Medium Community Primary School on the former Heol y Celyn site.

Community Impact Assessment

This assessment is prepared in accordance with guidance contained within Annex C of the new statutory guidance circular 011/2018, the School Organisation Code, which will be implemented with effect from 1st November 2018.

This proposal is being consulted on between 15th October 2018 and 31st January 2019, as part of a wider consultation regarding the reorganisation of school provision in the Pontypridd and Hawthorn areas of Rhondda Cynon Taf. A detailed consultation document has been circulated to all prescribed consultees. Copies have been forwarded to the WG in compliance with consultation and publication guidelines. The document advises of the availability of all required Impact Assessments and informs all consultees as to how they can obtain copies if they require them.

At the current time, the percentage of pupils attending the respective schools who reside within the catchment areas of those schools are as follows:

- YGG Pont Sion Norton – 91%
- Heol y Celyn (Welsh Unit only) – 88%

A relatively large number of children (30) who reside in the Heol y Celyn catchment area choose to attend other Welsh Medium schools in the area, including YGG Pont Sion Norton and YGG Evan James. These pupils may possibly choose to return to their catchment school if a new, full Welsh Medium school is constructed on the Heol y Celyn site.

Both schools offer breakfast club to all pupils at present; we will recommend that this provision should continue in the new Welsh Medium Primary school if these proposals are agreed.

Heol y Celyn Primary is not used outside of school hours by community organisations; any usage made is by school based groups such as the PTA. The school offers after school clubs to its pupils on three evenings each week.

YGG Pont Sion Norton hosts Welsh for Adults classes on one evening a week, organised by the University of South Wales. Menter Iaith also host their 'Clwb Carco' after school provision for pupils on two evenings each week, in addition the school itself offers their own after school clubs on two evenings each week.

The new school will be strongly encouraged to continue with the after school and adult education provision currently offered, with opportunity to expand and extend this if there is recognised demand.

This proposal seeks to enhance the school accommodation and facilities available to pupils who require a Welsh Medium education in the Pontypridd area. In addition to improving provision, it is hoped that a new school with 21st Century Schools facilities will encourage parents to choose a Welsh Medium education for their children, thus assisting the Council in achieving one of the key aims outlined in its Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP). This is not a rural area, and the existence of so many other schools and other community facilities within a short distance means that it is not deemed necessary to consider the enhancement of other community facilities that may exist in the local area.

The catchment area of the new school will encompass that of the existing two schools. The relocation of YGG Pont Sion Norton to the Heol y Celyn site will mean that all pupils resident within this school's current catchment area will qualify for, and receive free home to school transport, as they will reside more than 1.5 miles from the new school. No child resident in the Heol y Celyn part of the catchment will qualify as none will reside more than 1 mile from the school. It is not considered that distance to school will be a barrier to any child who wishes to participate in the pre and after school provision that will be offered in the new school; the maximum length of time any child will have to take to travel to the school will be 20 minutes.

Transportation for children will be provided in accordance with the Council's Learner Travel Policy in force at the time of the transfer of school provisions to the new site. Assessments will be undertaken in accordance with legislation in force and will involve the application of both distance and dangerous route criteria, if applicable.

Proposal to close Cilfynydd Primary and Pontypridd High Schools and to create a new 3 – 16 school on site of the current Pontypridd High School

Community Impact Assessment

This assessment is prepared in accordance with guidance contained within Annex C of the new statutory guidance circular 011/2018, the School Organisation Code, which will be implemented with effect from 1st November 2018.

This proposal is being consulted on between 15th October 2018 and 31st January 2019, as part of a wider consultation regarding the reorganisation of school provision in the Pontypridd and Hawthorn areas of Rhondda Cynon Taf. A detailed consultation document has been circulated to all prescribed consultees. Copies have been forwarded to the WG in compliance with consultation and publication guidelines. The document advises of the availability of all required Impact Assessments and informs all consultees as to how they can obtain copies if they require them.

At the current time, the percentage of pupils attending the respective schools who reside within the catchment areas of those schools are as follows:

- Cilfynydd Primary – 90%
- Pontypridd High – 68%

A relatively large number of children (30) who reside in the Cilfynydd catchment area choose to attend Coedpenmaen Primary School, which is approx. 1 mile from Cilfynydd Primary. This number of children represents 27% of the total number of statutory age children who currently attend Cilfynydd Primary.

Cilfynydd Primary School offers breakfast club to all pupils at present; we will recommend that this provision should continue in the new 3 - 16 school if these proposals are agreed.

Cilfynydd Primary is not used outside of school hours by community organisations; any usage made is by school based groups such as the PTA. The school offers after school clubs to its pupils on two evenings each week.

The Secondary school runs a full programme of extra-curricular activities after school each day. The full facilities of the current Secondary school will be available for the younger children to use, under supervision, so the programme of after school activities available to them can in fact be enhanced and extended.

There is a sports hall on the High school site that is widely used by community groups outside of school hours; the organisation and running of this facility will not change as a result of these proposals.

This proposal seeks to enhance the school accommodation and facilities available to both Primary and Secondary aged pupils resident in the Pontypridd area , to cater for all children who may attend the school in the future from its catchment area (which will differ for the Primary and Secondary departments of the new proposed 3 – 16 School). This is not a rural area, and the existence of so many other schools and other community facilities within a short distance means that it is not deemed necessary to consider the enhancement of other community facilities that may exist in the local area.

The distance between the existing school and new school sites for Primary aged pupils who may attend the new 3 – 16 school is just 0.9 of a mile; this is the driving distance, the walking distance is much shorter, via a footbridge over the A470 trunk road.

No address within the Primary age catchment area will qualify for free home to school transport on the grounds of distance, as the furthest addresses from the new school site are all within the qualifying distance, which is 1.5 miles for Primary aged pupils in Rhondda Cynon Taf. The furthest address on the eastern side of the Cilfynydd catchment area to the site of Pontypridd High (Albion Court) is 1.4 miles by car and 1.1 miles on foot. It is not considered this distance will be a barrier to any child who wishes to participate in the pre, and after school provision that will be offered at the new 3 - 16 School in the future; all pupils will be given equal access and encouragement to participate in as many activities as they wish. Having all Primary aged pupils in the Cilfynydd area of Pontypridd in one school, along with their elder siblings who may attend the Secondary department is considered to be of benefit to parents in future, as their children's school provision will be located on one site, as opposed to being almost a mile apart as it is at present

The catchment area of the Secondary section of the new school will remain as it is for the existing Pontypridd High School, with the addition of the catchment area of Coedpenmaen Primary School. The Graig area of Pontypridd will also be included. Transportation for children will be provided in accordance with the Council's Learner Travel Policy in force at the time of the transfer of school provisions to the new 3 - 16 School. Assessments will be undertaken in accordance with legislation in force and will involve the application of both distance and dangerous route criteria, if applicable.

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Directorate: Education

Service Area: 21st Century Schools

Responsible officer: Julie Hadley

Date: 22nd November 2018

1. Name of policy/procedure/practice/project: Reorganisation of School Provision in the Pontypridd and Hawthorn areas

The Project is to:

- Develop post 16 centres of excellence based at Bryncelynog Comprehensive School, Beddau and Coleg y Cymoedd, Nantgarw.
- Create two new 3-16 schools, in Pontypridd and Hawthorn, which will take a radically different approach to education in the areas, by sharing both primary and secondary sector resources;
- Improve and increase Welsh Medium primary provision by closing Heol y Celyn Primary School, which is a dual language school, and YGG Pont Sion Norton; Welsh Medium pupils attending both schools will transfer to a new, full Welsh Medium school, that will be constructed on the former site of Heol y Celyn;
- Amend the catchment areas of Pontypridd High, Hawthorn High and Bryncelynog Comprehensive Schools to better meet and match the demand for school places;
- Improve the learning environments for pupils with additional learning needs (ALN).

To achieve these changes, the Council, in partnership with Welsh Government, will invest £37.4m in building new or refurbishing/remodelling existing buildings to ensure the pupils have a high quality, viable and sustainable 21st Century learning environment.

To achieve this, the proposal is to:

- Close the sixth forms of Hawthorn High School, Pontypridd High School and Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School and transfer the post-16 provision to Bryncelynog Comprehensive School or Coleg y Cymoedd, Nantgarw. For those students who opt for a Roman Catholic education, sixth form provision will be available at St David's College, Cardiff;
- Close Pontypridd High School and Cilfynydd Primary School and create a new 3-16 'all through' school on the site of the current Pontypridd High School;
- Close Hawthorn High School, Hawthorn Primary School and Heol-Y-Celyn Primary School and create a new 3-16 'all through' school on the site of the current Hawthorn High and Hawthorn Primary Schools. The local authority designated ALN specialist class located Hawthorn High School will also transfer to the new school.
- Closing Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Pont Sion Norton and opening a new Welsh Medium Primary School to be constructed on the site of the current Heol-Y-Celyn Primary School. The pupils educated through the Welsh Medium at Heol-Y-Celyn will transfer to the new school and the Heol-Y-Celyn pupils educated through the English Medium will transfer to the new 3 – 16 school at Hawthorn, see above);
- Amend the catchment areas for pupils aged 11-16 of the three LA maintained Secondary schools by:
 - Transferring the Graig area of Pontypridd (that is part of the catchment area of Maesycloed Primary School) to the new 3-16 school for Pontypridd (currently part of the Hawthorn High School catchment)
 - Transferring the catchment area of Coedpenmaen Primary School to the new 3-16 school for Pontypridd (currently part of the Hawthorn High School catchment)
 - Transferring the catchment area of Gwauncelyn Primary School to the new 3-16 school for Hawthorn (currently part of the Bryncelynog Comprehensive School catchment).

To achieve these changes, the Council, in partnership with Welsh Government, is planning to invest £37.4m in new or refurbished/remodelled school buildings and facilities.

2. Policy Aims, you need to consider why is the policy needed? What does the Council hope to achieve by it?
How will the Council ensure it works as intended?

In recent years, Estyn has sharpened its approach to inspection of schools and local authorities and has raised the bar in respect of what it considers to be good and excellent provision. Furthermore, Estyn has taken a very hard line on local authorities in Wales that have weaknesses in key areas such as corporate governance, educational standards, attendance levels, surplus places and safeguarding.

Following the last formal inspection of Rhondda Cynon Taf's Education Service in 2012, Estyn also highlighted that the Council had the highest number of surplus places in Wales and that action had to be taken to address this issue. This was followed up by a letter from the Welsh Government Minister for Education and Skills in November 2012 that instructed the Council to take action in respect of surplus places or the Welsh Government would take responsibility for removing the surplus places.

The Elected Members accepted Estyn's recommendations and have been continually reviewing school provision in Rhondda Cynon Taf ever since. The criteria that has been used for selecting schools for review is one or more of the following:

- Surplus places in excess of 25% of published capacity;
- Buildings that are beyond economic repair/not fit for purpose;
- Financially unviable (usually due to a sharp fall in pupil numbers);
- Schools considered to be 'small' schools, i.e. schools with 90 or fewer pupils;
- Separate infant and junior schools in close proximity;
- 'Paired' schools, i.e. where children progress from one of the schools to the other;
- Mixed aged classes where there are more than two age groups in one class;
- Schools considered to be at risk, based on their academic Key Stage data and the quality of the leadership, of meeting Estyn's criteria as a school in need of significant improvement or special measures.

The 3 primary schools and 2 secondary schools included within these proposals have been assessed against the aforementioned criteria:

- 4 of the 5 schools have surplus places in excess of 25%;
- The combined maintenance backlog of the 5 schools is £4,352,000 which equates to £1,804 per pupil;
- The educational performance and pupil attendance of the 2 LA maintained secondary schools at Key Stage 4 is consistently in the third and fourth quartiles when compared to similar schools in Wales;

In addition Hawthorn and Pontypridd High Schools combined have small sixth forms of less than 250 pupils (the national recommended minimum number for an efficient and effective sixth form), and with relatively poor educational performance. Please refer to the data contained in sections 2 and 3 of this document for the evidence to support this statement.

Pupil numbers attending the sixth form at Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School have also fallen dramatically in the last three years; in September 2015 there were 195 pupils in the sixth form, this fell to just 80 in January 2018, a reduction of 60%. Having such small post 16 numbers has a significant impact on the post 16 provision available and on the wider sixth form experience for the students. Numbers are forecast to fall even further in September 2018. This reduction in pupil numbers and consequent reduction in post 16 funding from the Welsh Government has meant that the Cardinal Newman School budget is predicted to fall into a deficit balance of over £700k.

The opportunity exists to reconfigure the primary and secondary schools, including post-16 provision to create educationally and financially viable schools that serve the local communities. These proposals seek to achieve this.

Educational Considerations –

School organisational change should point to the educational benefits that any change will offer, particularly in relation to overall improvements in standards, but also in terms of the social and emotional development of children, which would usually impact beneficially on their overall achievement and outcomes.

It is the Council's view that creating larger sixth forms and 3-16 schools will:

- **Improve educational outcomes;**
 - Create larger school departments or faculties that will promote the sharing of skills and expertise across more viable teams;
 - Provide teaching and support staff with more opportunity to develop professionally;
 - Enable greater opportunities for staff to move between key stages and further develop expertise;
 - Provide a more appropriate skills-based curriculum and wider extra-curricular opportunities which should improve attendance and educational outcomes;
 - Reduce the anxiety caused by transition

- **Improve educational provision;**

- Provide the conditions that will enable a broader and more diverse curriculum to be developed to better meet the needs of the school's young people and in ways that will be viable and sustainable over the longer term;
- Improve the range and quality of facilities and learning resources available to the benefit of all pupils;
- Enable greater continuity of support for vulnerable groups of pupils;
- Allow for the potential for financial savings in terms of staffing structures and purchase of services, which accrue to a larger school;
- Broaden the range of extra-curricular and out-of-school activities and develop them in ways that are sustainable over the longer term;
- Deliver the future capital investment benefits that would arise from the modernisation of a small number of institutions rather than many;
- Create schools of a sustainable size for their catchment area by removing surplus capacity, providing greater educational and financial stability;
- Release resources that will be reinvested in improving the buildings and in improving standards of teaching and learning, which otherwise would not have been available;
- Enable schools to build better relationships with parents and carers.

- **Improve leadership and management;**

- Provides the opportunity for the headteacher to distribute key leadership tasks such as child protection, literacy, numeracy, special educational needs etc to a greater number of staff. Often in a small Primary school, the headteacher takes responsibility for the vast majority of these tasks;
- Creates leadership opportunities for other staff, and for others to specialise in key areas, which will enhance educational provision and outcomes and improve succession planning;
- Allow teaching and support staff access to a wider range of responsibilities:
 - Improved career prospects;
 - Improved curriculum co-ordination;
 - The opportunity to teach across a wider age range;

- An increased range of expertise;
- Improved opportunities for staff interaction /co-ordination.

These benefits apply equally to the mainstream and the pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) in the schools. This argument is supported by Estyn in its report “School Size and Educational Effectiveness” (Dec 2013), which stated:

- *“Pupils’ standards are good or better in a higher proportion of large primary schools than small and medium-sized primary schools. This may be because large schools tend to have more expertise and capacity to address the needs of more vulnerable pupils and the more able and talented pupils.”*
- *“Examination results for large secondary schools are better than those for small and medium-sized secondary schools for nearly all measures”;*
- *“In general, curriculum provision is broader and better balanced in large secondary schools. Nearly all large secondary schools provide good or better learning experiences for their pupils. Large secondary schools are able to offer a wider range of options due to economies of scale”.*

What is the educational case for creating larger sixth forms?

Over the past few years secondary schools have sought to collaborate to meet the requirements of the Learning and Skills Measure 2009 and to offer a good quality post 16 learning experience to their pupils. Despite the best efforts of the headteachers, schools and the Council:

- There are too many small sixth forms and a rationalisation would better meet the educational needs of the students by strengthening management arrangements, improving the effective and efficient use of resources, and better ensuring a quality educational experience. A viable sixth form, both educationally and financially should, ideally, have at least 250 students; In January 2018 (source : PLASC return), Hawthorn High had 114 sixth form students attending and Pontypridd High 131, just 245 in total between the two schools. Bryncelynog Comprehensive had 147 sixth form students at the same point in time. Numbers at Cardinal Newman have fallen from 195 in 2015 to just 80 in January 2018, a fall of almost 60%.

- The delivery of post-16 education is inefficient and for many the educational experience could be considerably better. There is still unnecessary post 16 duplication of provision between schools and colleges, choice for many learners is restricted, class sizes are too small, and secondary school surplus places in the County Borough are projected to be almost 3,500 by 2022 and over 775 in the Pontypridd area alone. This leads to valuable education funds being directed at additional staff costs and infrastructure when they would be better directed at the learners and the learner experience. Currently, across Rhondda Cynon Taf, funds amounting to over £600 per pupil that were originally provided to educate 11-16 pupils are redirected at sixth form learners, to subsidise loss making courses due to small class sizes. This amount increases to an average of over £600 per pupil across both Hawthorn and Pontypridd High Schools; at Cardinal Newman this figure is almost £800.
- Small class sizes found in many sixth forms leads to limited student interactions, which diminishes the effectiveness of learning. Across the four secondary schools, 44 post-16 courses were delivered in 2017 with less than 5 pupils per course. This poor learning experience for students is impacting on the numbers of students continuing their post 16 education in the four schools. The percentage of students opting, to stay on in their respective school, for a sixth form education in September 2017, was very low, being 31% in Cardinal Newman, 36% in Pontypridd HS, 46% in Hawthorn and 51% in Bryncelynog. Where providers have made the greatest progress in collaborating to reduce inefficiencies and improve effectiveness, learner opportunities and student interactions increase. However, travel between providers is seen by some students as a barrier to access a wider choice of courses.
- Choice is often dependent upon learner postal code. There is no equitable post 16 options entitlement for the County Borough;
- The educational achievement and success at Key Stage 4 (in relation to the Average Capped Wider Points Score) and Key Stage 5 (in relation to the Average Wider Points Score) in the County Borough are below Welsh averages and are amongst the lowest in Wales. A step change is still required to raise the number of young people participating in education post 16 and improve the quality of learning outcomes by raising attainment, retention and progression.

Creating a larger sixth form at Bryncelynog, together with the existing comprehensive post 16 provision at Coleg y Cymoedd creates the capacity and economies of scale to be able to improve:

- **Standards and Achievement** – raising standards of success and achievement and increasing progression to Higher Education and employment.

- **Choice** – improving the breadth and depth of curriculum creating greater choice for all young people to choose learning pathways that best enable them to mix and match vocational, academic and occupational qualifications and experience.
- **Participation** – increasing participation and attendance rates.
- **Equality** – to ensure every sixth form student in the Pontypridd area is able to access the curriculum of choice.
- **Ability to respond to future learners, community and business needs** – Re-skilling and up-skilling the population of Rhondda Cynon Taf as the commercial environment changes, to allow people to compete effectively in the job market.
- **Financial viability and effectiveness** – providing a cost effective and efficient model for delivery, removing unnecessary duplication, aligning capacity with demand (in light of demographic change), generating economies of scale and expanding economies of scope. This will result in the removal of surplus places, the reduction in the number of small sixth form classes, and the duplication of provision between providers.

What is the educational case for creating 3-16 schools?

The great strength of all-through education is the continuity of educational experience which negates the transition “dips” in pupil performance. A 3-16 school provides the opportunity to provide a “bridge” between key stages in order to create a seamless transition for pupils in terms of curriculum planning, learning and teaching. It can allow for a significant sharing of subject expertise and primary pedagogy in particular across key stages 2 and 3.

In 2012, the Council established a new 3-19 school at Ysgol Llanhari and to date the school is making excellent progress, with pupil attainment and development outcomes improving year on year. The cross phase learning and communication with staff is having a positive effect on pupils.

The all through school eases the transition process between the key stages and staff and teachers know the children well as they progress through the year groups and this enables them to assist pupils where additional support is required.

The School has strong leadership, which creates a vision that resonates with all phases, all staff are fully engaged and the school benefits from ‘coherence and continuity’ which assists pupils learning progression.

Another important benefit of all-age schooling is being able to achieve greater effectiveness through the sharing of resources, and being able to target these resources, whether financial, physical or human, at key areas of school improvement. Some reported benefits include:

- Provision of specialist teaching in KS2 or extending literacy and numeracy programmes into KS3;
- Access for primary phase pupils to the facilities of secondary phase;
- Providing scope for acceleration programmes for more able and talented pupils;
- Joint Professional Development;
- Directing resources at early intervention;
- Planning a joint curriculum;
- Sharing equipment, hardware and accommodation;
- Increasing the range and capacity for extra-curricular/after school learning;
- Creating common administrative appointments.

What will be the impact on the other “partner” primary schools in the community?

Other partner/associated primary schools in each community will also benefit from the proposal. Pupil transition is important and the Council, through its 21st Century Band A programme has instigated some innovative programmes to ensure the quality of integration at Year 7 was seamless regardless of where they have received their primary experience. No pupil will be disadvantaged when they join the new school at Year 7.

What is the likely impact of the proposals on school pupils?

In making the proposed changes, many things will be different for the pupils from the Pontypridd area, depending on parents’ exercising their right of choice, but some things will remain the same:

- Some may have a longer or a different route to school, and some may be transported to school by bus. Some children may lose their entitlement to free transport, but others could gain entitlement;
- Being in classes with predominantly their own age group, the teacher will be better able to offer the primary pupils a wider and more varied curriculum to support all learners, including the least and most able;

- The teachers and teaching assistants may be different, however, the majority of teachers and teaching assistants should be able to transfer between the schools, if they wish to do so;
- For sixth form students there will be less, probably no travelling during the school day to access the curriculum and therefore there will be greater opportunities for more unstructured/informal interaction between students and teachers during the school day. The time saved from not travelling can also be used to focus on studying or completing course work;
- There will be more competition for pupils in and outside the classroom which is what children require if they are to achieve good educational outcomes;
- Being part of a larger school creates opportunity to run school sports teams, debating team etc. The children attending the ALN Classes will also have the opportunity to engage in a wider range of curricular and extra-curricular activities.

The principal change will be an improvement in the quality of the educational provision, and this should have a significant impact on educational performance of the pupils. This will bring about improvements for **all** pupils, irrespective of gender, ethnicity or disability. It should be noted that of the approx 5,500 pupils attending schools in the area under consideration (Pontypridd and Hawthorn), **none** are indicated as being Gypsy or Traveller children; to reiterate, these proposals are not seen as being detrimental to any particular group of pupils, they are intended to improve educational provision for all.

Pupils who currently attend Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive Sixth Form will be able to continue their post – 16 education through the Catholic faith, if they choose to do so, at St David’s College, Cardiff. Any pupils resident in Rhondda Cynon Taf who choose this College on faith grounds will receive free transportation to this establishment. Pupils resident outside of RCT will need to check their entitlement with their home local authority.

There is a statutory duty placed upon the local authority (LA) to provide learners with free transport to their nearest suitable school if they reside beyond safe “walking distance” to that school. The term suitable school applies to the catchment area English, Welsh or dual language mainstream school or special school/class as appropriate. The law relating to safe “walking distance” is defined as two miles for learners of compulsory school age receiving primary education and three miles for learners of compulsory school age receiving secondary education.

Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council has exercised the discretionary powers afforded to it under the provisions of the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008 to make a more generous provision to learners as set out below:

- The eligibility criterion for walking distance for learners receiving compulsory primary education at their nearest suitable school has been set at 1½ miles, instead of 2 miles as required by the Measure;
- Free transport to their nearest suitable school, where places are available, is provided to children who meet the 1½ mile eligibility criterion from the start of the Foundation Phase (the start of the school term after their third birthday), rather than from the start of compulsory education (the start of the school term after their fifth birthday) as required by the Measure.
- The eligibility criterion for walking distance for learners receiving compulsory secondary education at their nearest suitable school has been set at 2 miles instead of 3 miles as required by the Measure.
- Free transport is provided to post 16 learners who meet the 2 mile eligibility criterion for two years after the end of compulsory education, rather than until the end of compulsory education as required by the Measure. This provision applies to full time attendance at the nearest school or college to the learner's home at which the approved course of study that they wish to pursue is offered.
- Free transport to their nearest suitable school is provided to learners (as set out above) in accordance with their preferred religious denomination.
- The term suitable school applies to the catchment area English, Welsh, dual language or voluntary aided (faith) mainstream school or special school/class as appropriate.

With regard to the proposed alternative sixth form centres for Hawthorn and Pontypridd High School pupils at Bryncelynog Comprehensive School and Coleg y Cymoedd being put forward for post - 16 provision, students will receive free transport, providing they meet the qualifying criteria (2 miles walking distance from home to school/college), to the nearest post-16 establishment that offers the choice of courses that they require. If they choose a centre that is not the closest to their home address, they may of course attend but will not receive any assistance towards the cost of transportation from the Council.

Pupils resident in Rhondda Cynon Taf attending Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School, will be able to select the most appropriate sixth form provision that offers the choice of courses that they require or if they choose a Roman Catholic post 16 provision this will be made available at St David's College, Cardiff. In doing so they will receive free transportation, providing they meet the distance criteria to the nearest provision that meets their subject choices. Students resident in Caerphilly County Borough will need to check this issue with their local authority.

The Welsh Government and the Council has adopted the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child which is expressed in seven core aims that all children and young people:

1. have a flying start in life;
2. have a comprehensive range of education and learning opportunities;
3. enjoy the best possible health and are free from abuse, victimisation and exploitation;
4. have access to play, leisure, sporting and cultural activities;
5. are listened to, treated with respect, and have their race and cultural identity recognised;
6. have a safe home and a community which supports physical and emotional wellbeing;
7. are not disadvantaged by poverty.

We consider that this proposal benefits the children in the communities of the Pontypridd and Hawthorn in accordance with the seven core aims set out above.

All of the Primary schools under consideration as part of these proposals have breakfast club provisions, which are not only considered to be of benefit to the pupils but can greatly assist working parents as well. These clubs will continue if the new 'all through' 3 - 16 schools are created. Many schools also offer some after school provision which has the same benefits as the breakfast clubs; it is hoped that transferring Primary aged pupils to school sites that have improved facilities will allow for the expansion of this provision.

Benefits of a new school building for YGG, Pont Sion Norton

To comply with Welsh Government guidance and its initiative to create a million Welsh speakers by 2050, which includes an expectation on local authorities to promote Welsh Medium education, the Council is reviewing its Welsh Medium school provision, to ensure that evidenced demand for places is met and that wherever possible, provision is expanded and improved to encourage parents to select a Welsh Medium education for their children. The proposal to close YGG Pont Sion Norton and construct a brand new, purpose built school, with additional pupil capacity is one of the schemes being planned to assist in achieving this aim.

All local authorities in Wales now have to produce a Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP). This document indicates how the local authority intends to promote the teaching of the Welsh Language, how it intends working towards increasing the number of children taught through the medium of Welsh and how it can assist achieving the Welsh Government's target of having one million people in Wales speaking Welsh by

2050. The WESP for RCT can be viewed and downloaded from the Council website via this link <https://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/EN/Council/WelshServices/Relateddocs/WelshinEducationStrategicPlan201720.pdf>.

Included among the list of actions and outcomes the Council will undertake to help achieve the targets set out in the WESP, by increasing the number of seven year-old children being taught through the medium of Welsh are the following:

- New and improved school buildings with appropriate capacity levels to fully meet forecasted demand for WM provision in their catchment areas
- Consideration of making dual language Primary schools in to full WM schools

This part of the overall proposal, which is to close YGG Pont Sion Norton and build a brand new school, constructed to 21st Century Schools standards and with an increased capacity of 360 pupils plus Nursery provision, will work towards achieving these targets in this area of the County Borough.

What is the likely impact of the proposal on the staff of the schools?

As previously stated, all schools involved in the proposal in the Pontypridd and Hawthorn area will close and new schools will be opened with a new governing body, these include the new welsh medium primary school, and both 3-16 schools. Should the proposal proceed, all the proposed new schools will need to appoint temporary governing bodies for the interim period until the new schools open. These temporary governing bodies will be responsible for establishing the school, agreeing new staff structures and undertaking the appointment process for all the staffing posts.

The temporary governing bodies will firstly need to appoint new headteachers, who will then formulate and propose the leadership, management and staffing structures for the new schools. The staffing structure for the Hawthorn and Pontypridd 3-16 schools will need to be developed for the school taking into account a number of factors, including delivering a curriculum without sixth form provision.

The Council recommends that if the proposal is accepted that the temporary governing bodies of new schools “ring fence” the appointment process for all teaching and associated staff posts to staff within the existing schools in the first instance.

No changes will be required to the governing body of Cardinal Newman, but a revision to their staffing structure will be required due to the loss of the sixth form provision.

The Council has well established Human Resource policies and procedures that give reassurance to staff and employers about the management of organisational change, as illustrated by the recent school organisation changes in the Rhondda and Aberdare.

3. Who does it apply to? Please indicate by highlighting or deleting as appropriate

Members of the public School Staff Other Please state: children aged 3-19 years in the communities of Pontypridd and Hawthorn, parents and carers of the children.

4. Indicate whether this is a new proposal, a review or a proposed cessation: All 3

5. Identifying Impacts – Please choose whether the policy/practice will have a positive, negative or neutral effect on **each** issue below: Think about the key questions included in the manager's guidelines.

People / issues to consider	Impact policy / practice will have			If a positive or negative impact is identified, explain why:
	Positive	Negative	Neutral (No impact)	
Age (young and old)	Yes	Yes		<p>Improved learning facilities and environments for all.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure that all the children in the larger Primary education provisions feel safe and secure, • make the learning environments comfortable and attractive for all children and young people who access them. • Primary pupils being able to access specialist facilities at their own school site, Secondary pupils being able to access work experience and assist the learning of their younger counterparts. • access services to improve the lives of children and their families. • improved facilities will enable the pupils to access learning and cultural activities which can help develop relationships within communities. • improved transition between the Primary and Secondary school sectors • promotion of more independent learning for post-16 pupils to better prepare them for higher education and employment, reduction in number of young people who become NEET. • Larger sixth forms will reduce the need for consortia arrangements and travelling between sites; time can be better spent learning than travelling.

People / issues to consider	Impact policy / practice will have			If a positive or negative impact is identified, explain why:
	Positive	Negative	Neutral (No impact)	
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The changing curriculum, life long learning opportunities and use of ICT will provide the opportunity to enable all learners to reach their potential. More choice of learning pathways at post-16, more subject options which will improve the higher education and employment prospects of all learners Increased travel distances for some primary school pupils and some sixth form pupils
Disability (remember to consider the different types of disability)	Yes			New build and refurbished school facilities will be fully compliant with all disability legislation and will be accessible to all users; refurbished and remodelled premises will have reasonable adjustments undertaken to make them as compliant as it is possible to do.
Gender			Yes	
Gender Reassignment			Yes	
Race			Yes	
Religion or Belief		Yes		Pupils attending the sixth form provision at Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive school will have to travel to St David's College,

People / issues to consider	Impact policy / practice will have			If a positive or negative impact is identified, explain why:
	Positive	Negative	Neutral (No impact)	
				Cardiff, if they wish to receive post 16 education through the Catholic faith. To mitigate this potentially negative impact, free transportation will be provided for pupils resident in RCT; pupils who reside in other County Boroughs will need to check their entitlement with their home local authority.
Sexual Orientation			Yes	
Welsh Language	Yes			A new Welsh Medium school, built to 21 st Century Schools standards, with additional capacity provided to allow more choice for parents as to which language medium they can choose for their children.
Carers			Yes	

EVIDENCE

6. What evidence is there to support your conclusions? Please indicate below

Reports of the Director of Education to Cabinet - October 2018.
Public Consultation Document on the Proposal

7. In areas where a negative impact has been identified are there any ways that the negative effect could be reduced or removed? Please indicate below and include the evidence on which you have based your conclusion.

The only negative impact that could be identified is that some Primary Schools pupils will have to travel longer distances to schools, likewise sixth form pupils may have longer journeys to the new post-16 provisions. In the case of the Primary pupils it is highly unlikely that any child will have further than 1.5 miles to travel to their new school; this is the distance at which RCTCBC currently provides home to school transport, which is more generous than that provided for by legislation, i.e. 2 miles. It is the full responsibility of parents to transport their children to school where they do not qualify for free provision, they also have to determine and provide appropriate supervision for children and decide the mode of transport to be used. Free provision will be made available where pupils meet the qualifying criteria.

No sixth form pupil will have to undertake any journey, whether by public or private transportation that will take longer than 40 minutes to undertake, which is within the Council's target of ensuring that secondary aged learners do not have journey times exceeding 60 minutes. This would include those pupils who wish to continue their post 16 education through the Catholic faith, at St David's College, Cardiff. Full assessments of all available walking routes will be undertaken to ensure that they meet all safety criteria and standards laid down in the Learner Travel Measure 2014. Appropriate improvements will be made where identified.

INVOLVEMENT & CONSULTATION

9. What involvement and consultation has been done in relation to this (or similar) policy and what are the results?

The following consultation meetings/ open events are being held.

School Affected	Group	Time/Date	Venue
Hawthorn High School	Governors and Staff Meeting	Monday, 12 th November 2018, 3.30 pm	Hawthorn High School
Pontypridd High School	Governors and Staff Meeting	Monday 12 th November 2018, 3.30 pm	Pontypridd High School
Heol-Y-Celyn Primary School	Governors and Staff Meeting	Wednesday 14 th November 2018, 4 pm	Heol-Y-Celyn Primary School
Hawthorn Primary School	Governors and Staff Meeting	Wednesday 14 th November 2018, 4 pm	Hawthorn Primary School
Cilfynydd Primary	Governors and	Monday, 19 th November	Cilfynydd Primary

School Affected	Group	Time/Date	Venue
School	Staff Meeting	2018, 4pm	School
YGG, Pont Sion Norton	Governors and Staff Meeting	Tuesday, 20 th November 2018, 4pm	YGG, Pont Sion Norton
Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School	Governors and Staff Meeting	Thursday, 22 nd November 2018, 3.30pm	Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School
Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School	Governors and Staff Meeting	Thursday, 22 nd November 2018, 3.30pm	Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School
Hawthorn High School	School Council	Monday, 12 th November 2018, 2 pm	Hawthorn High School
Pontypridd High School	School Council	Monday, 12 th November 2018, 2 pm	Pontypridd High School
Heol-Y-Celyn Primary School	School Council	Wednesday 14 th November 2018, 2.30pm	Heol-Y-Celyn Primary School
Hawthorn Primary School	School Council	Wednesday 14 th November 2018, 2.30pm	Hawthorn Primary School
Cilfynydd Primary School	School Council	Monday, 19 th November 2018, 2.30 pm	Cilfynydd Primary School
YGG, Pont Sion Norton	School Council	Tuesday, 20 th November 2018, 2.30 pm	YGG, Pont Sion Norton
Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School	School Council	Thursday, 22 nd November 2018, 2 pm	Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School
Cardinal Newman RC	School Council	Thursday, 22 nd	Cardinal Newman RC

School Affected	Group	Time/Date	Venue
Comprehensive School		November 2018, 2 pm	Comprehensive School
Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School	Parents and public drop in session	Tuesday, 15 th January 2019, 3 – 6 pm	Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School
Bryncelynog Comprehensive School	Parents and public drop in session	Wednesday, 16 th January 2019, 3 – 6pm	Bryncelynog Comprehensive School
YGG Pont Sion Norton and Heol-Y-Celyn Primary Welsh Department – both schools and members of the local community	Parents and public drop in session and exhibition	Thursday, 17 th January 2019, 4 – 6pm	Rhydyfelin Children's Centre (tbc)
Hawthorn High, Hawthorn Primary and Heol-Y-Celyn Primary– all three schools and members of the local community	Parents and public drop in session and exhibition	Tuesday, 22 nd January 2019, 3 – 6 pm	Hawthorn High School
Pontypridd High and Cilfynydd Primary – both schools and members of the local community	Parents and public drop in session and exhibition	Thursday, 24 th January 2019, 3 – 6 pm	Pontypridd High School

Interested parties are also welcome to put their views in writing to:

Director of Education
Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council
Ty Trevithick
Abercynon CF45 4UQ

e-mail schoolplanning@rctcbc.gov.uk

MONITORING AND REVIEW

10. What arrangements have you put in place to review the actual impact of the policy once it has been implemented?

The Council's school improvement team will be fully engaged in supporting all head teachers, school staff and the governing bodies of all schools involved during the first year or so, or for however long they require such support. Support with staff recruitment and for the temporary governing bodies, including a clerking service will be provided by the HR Division and the Governor Support service.

ADDRESSING THE IMPACT

11. What option have you chosen as a result of your impact assessment?

- Continue the Policy

Please indicate and provide reasons for your decision.

The evidence outlined in our consultation document clearly recommends that this is the right approach.

12. ACTION PLAN

You now need to complete the EIA action plan to outline how you will act on any impacts identified. You may need to prioritise in terms of what actions you choose to take and the timescales to complete them in. In general terms, you should try to act on all negative impacts unless there is a clear reason as to why this is not possible. You could also identify actions for positive or neutral impacts where appropriate i.e. to outline and further promote a positive impact or to outline how to make something have a positive impact instead of a neutral one.

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT ACTION PLAN

Action	Responsible Officer	Timescale for Actions	Timescale and actions for Review	Measures to be taken to evaluate effects of actions
To finalise the plans for school building construction and repair/refurbishment of existing buildings	Director of Corporate Estates	By September 2020		
To undertake any highways works that are identified as required to improve walking routes and to make arrangements for any transport provision that may be identified.	Director of Highways and Transportation	By September 2022		

13. Please outline below any negative impacts that have been identified in the EIA questionnaire but not addressed in the action plan. You will need to explain your reasons for not addressing them.

None

Please keep a copy of the questionnaire and action plan and send copies to:

Equality, Diversity & Social Justice Team
The Pavilions
Cambrian Park
Clydach
CF40 2XX

Email: equality@rctcbc.gov.uk

Tel: 01443 424075

Signed: Gaynor Davies Date: 15/10/18
Job Title: Director of Education

Proposals to Reorganise School Provision in the Pontypridd and Hawthorn Areas

Welsh Language Impact Assessment

This assessment has been undertaken in accordance with the guidelines outlined in Annex C of the School Organisation Code.

As part of our proposals in respect of the above, we are planning to undertake some reorganisation of Welsh Medium Primary education provision in this area of Rhondda Cynon Taf, which will not only improve and enhance the learning environment but also increase Welsh Medium pupil capacity. We are proposing to close the Welsh Medium stream of Heol y Celyn Primary School, which is a dual language school and YGG Pont Sion Norton; Welsh Medium pupils attending both schools will transfer to a new, full Welsh Medium school, that will be constructed on the former site of Heol y Celyn, in a new building that will be constructed to 21st Century School standards. This will of course be subject to parental preference.

Our proposals in respect of the Hawthorn area involve the closure of Hawthorn High School, Hawthorn Primary School and Heol y Celyn Primary School, and the creation of a new, 3 – 16 ‘all through’ school on the sites of Hawthorn High and Hawthorn Primary, which are immediately adjacent to each other. The pupils from these schools, together with the pupils from the English Medium stream of Heol y Celyn will transfer to the new school, subject to parental preference.

The vacated Heol y Celyn site will be cleared and a new Welsh Medium Community Primary school will be constructed in its place. This new building will be constructed to 21st Century Schools standards and will be a much improved provision compared with the two current school buildings. Information on current building condition and suitability is contained within the consultation document. The capacity of the new school building will be 480 pupils, plus 60 Nursery places, which represents an increase over the existing YGG Pont Sion Norton combined with the Welsh stream of Heol y Celyn of almost 100 places. We consider that this capacity will be sufficient to cater for current and forecasted pupil demand and it will also allow for growth in the Welsh Medium sector.

Any services provided by both YGG Pont Sion Norton and Heol y Celyn outside of school hours, such as breakfast clubs, after school clubs and other community facilities will continue in the new building. Any links with outside organisations such as the Urdd, Menter Iaith etc will be maintained and hopefully strengthened and expanded. The new school building will have a community room facility and the headteacher will be encouraged to consider using this facility to increase participation in the Welsh Language, such as offering opportunities to parents and other community members to learn Welsh.

Information on the standards of provision at both of the existing schools is again contained within the consultation document. It must be stressed that YGG Pont Sion Norton is a well-established, successful school and whereas this proposal involves its closure, its provision will in fact be relocated to a brand new building to be constructed less than 2 miles away from its current site. We would therefore expect this new school to closely replicate and, hopefully improve upon the current provision and high standards currently available at YGG, Pont Sion Norton.

One of the main targets outlined in the Council's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) is to increase the number of children receiving education through the medium of Welsh, which will assist the local authority in working towards the Welsh Government target of having 1 million people in Wales able to speak Welsh by 2050. One of the ways highlighted to work towards achieving this is to consider making our three dual language schools, of which Heol y Celyn is one, in to full Welsh Medium provisions. We consider that this proposal will achieve this aim and in addition, the extra pupil capacity in a new, state of the art building will hopefully encourage more parents to choose a Welsh Medium education for their children.

Appendix 3

Notes of consultation meetings

**Notes of a meeting held with the school council
at Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School**

22nd November 2018 at 2 pm

**Meeting to discuss the Council's proposals to reorganise school provision
in the Pontypridd area**

Present:

Esther Thomas, Temporary Service Director for Access & Inclusion Services,
Lisa Howell, 21st Century Team Officer
Martin Silezin, 14-19 Strategy Officer
Sophie Nicholls, Graduate Officer 21st Century Team
Gavin Tranter, Governor Support Service Officer
47 pupils present

Esther Thomas (ET) welcomed everyone to the meeting and outlined the proposal, the reasons for the proposal, the purpose of the meeting, the consultation process and timescales relating to the consultation process and the proposals themselves, should they be implemented.

Q. Would Key Stage 3 and 4 be affected?

A. Pupils who are in Gwauncelyn Primary School would go to Hawthorn High School instead of Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School. That will change the composition of the pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4. There are also proposals to build more houses in this area. In the consultation document there are maps which show you the catchment areas of these schools.

Q. Will the works be noisy?

A. There will be minimal noise disruption and work won't go ahead while exams are being sat. The Council and the contractors are experienced in minimising all disruption and risk.

Q. What will be the benefits to Key Stage 3 and 4?

A. You will be able to work in the specialist rooms and we will be looking at the whole site when deciding upon key areas for the improvement works so that all pupils benefit.

A. The works proposed to be undertaken won't only benefit years 12/13. There could be new science laboratories and DT facilities etc. that will be used by everyone. The Council has already invested over a million pounds in the 3G pitch and the running track to benefit all pupils and the community.

A. You will also have some curriculum opportunities as the school would have the opportunity to introduce some new subjects at GCSE level.

A. A school receives more funding if it has more pupils. They can therefore employ more staff to possibly introduce additional new subjects.

Q. *How will this affect transport?*

A. Anyone who has to travel over two miles will still be entitled to free transport.

Q. *Will this affect the school uniform and price?*

A. That would be up to the governors.

A. In Treorchy, we have increased their sixth form but as they are the same school in terms of governance, the school name, badge and uniform is still the same. If things were to change it would be a decision for the school and I'm sure they would consult with you.

Q. *Where will the sixth form be?*

A. We are still looking at this as it is still very early in the process. These proposals are still under consultation and therefore still under discussion. You may see some of our technical advisors undertaking surveys over the next few weeks to decide how we best use this site. The budget that we have is based on the work we have conducted in Treorchy. The exact details of the works are still to be established.

Q. *What subjects will be offered and how competitive will we be in comparison to colleges?*

A. Hopefully more staff would mean more subjects but this is a decision for the school. The school would work closely with businesses and skills shortage areas to bridge any gaps and create a sixth form that is the best stepping stone for your futures.

A. There are two levels here. The choice of subjects is down to the schools and governors and they would consult with pupils. There is also a trend moving towards applied sciences at present and schools need to keep up with this. The new performance indicators will soon be the same as the college and we can then undertake direct comparisons.

Q. *Will teaching staff be stretched?*

A. Some will want to be stretched to be able to teach sixth form classes. There will be others who prefer to teach Key Stages 3 and 4. You have good results here now and you clearly have the teachers deliver this. In terms of the numbers of pupils per teacher, there are currently small classes of pupils which are not viable at the moment. For your A-levels you need interaction to prompt more independent learning and finding a balance for this is needed.

A. The quality of your teachers will probably get even better if there is a large sixth form to teach. You will have more pupils and more opportunities for performing arts or sports too.

Q. Will there be a curriculum change?

A. There will possibly be more choice, however, that is a decision for governors. We are anticipating that there will be more choice.

Q. Where is the £10m being spent?

A. It won't just be spent on the sixth form. We are looking at the whole site. We haven't got plans yet because we cannot undertake extensive surveys at present as the proposal needs to be considered by Cabinet. Should the proposals proceed, we will share the proposals with the school and we would welcome your opinions.

Q. Where is the £10m being spent specifically?

A. We have £168m funding. We can move some of this around if needed and use the wider envelope as much as possible to make the best use of the sites. We cannot be that specific at this point in time until the architects assess the site.

Q. How much bigger will the site be?

A. The site will be the same size but we may have to relocate areas within the site.

A. There may be some extensions etc. but within the current site boundary.

Q. What facilities or courses will be offered to attract additional sixth formers to our school?

A. That will depend on what the school can offer and the staff that are here.

A. In terms of facilities we usually provide sixth form areas such as ICT suites, informal coffee shop areas, a library etc. We will be asking for your input.

Q. How many students are estimated to attend?

A. There will be an estimated 450 sixth form pupils based on the data we have currently. There is a lot of information in the consultation document explaining how that figure was reached. There are also other options and some pupils may decide to attend Coleg Y Cymoedd.

Q. Will this building be built and then become too small by 2022?

A. No, but with further houses that are being built, we may, in the future need to build another school in the area. This will be monitored and managed by the Local Authority.

Q. Will registering for the sixth form be more selective?

A. No if you have the appropriate qualifications for Key Stage 4. Any changes to this would be brought forward by the school and governing body.

- Q. *Would this affect age 7-11's education whilst the building works are being carried out?***
- A. Part of the site will be a construction site and there may be some mess and noise in the areas of construction works. However, we work very closely with the contractors and they work closely with the school to ensure that they aren't undertaking loud work during exam periods etc. They are experienced contractors and they do all they can to liaise with the school regarding the works being undertaken. There will be safety barriers between the school areas and construction areas. We ensure that the teaching of pupils is not impacted upon, as your learning, health and safety is our paramount concern. Construction works have not impacted upon any of the results of the schools we have completed to date. The contractors also provide opportunities for pupils – for example, sometimes they teach engineering courses or tradesmanship.
- Q. *Will students still visit other schools?***
- A. We will try to minimise this as much as we can. There still may be some movement but we want to try and minimise it.
- Q. *ET asked the pupils - What don't you like about visiting other schools?***
- A. Pupil - The timings - sometimes I don't get a lunch break and have to eat on the bus, or it takes me ages to get home. I like that I can do this subject there but timetable clashes are common too so we have to take even more subjects at Y Pant to minimise this.
- Q. *Would we see more Y Pant students coming here for courses?***
- A. Y Pant's numbers are also increasing so they could also become a standalone sixth form.
- A. We are managing the school places with the houses that are proposed to be built here.
- A. We are hoping this will minimise the amount both sets of pupils have to travel.
- Q. *Will there be additional baguette bars or canteen areas?***
- A. We are looking at putting more facilities here for sixth form pupils. If there are more pupils we need to cater for more people which will probably mean additional food areas.
- Q. *If the site and the building aren't going to grow how will we accommodate extra pupils?***
- A. We will look at the whole site, but there are surplus places here now. There may be some extensions here and we will be looking at efficient use of the space. It is an opportunity to reconfigure this school.
- A. Sometimes we build upwards to limit the floor space used for the footprint of a building.

Q. *In some schools you said classes are too small - there will be more pupils and if you need more staff, will that balance out the pupil/teacher ratio?*

A. We look at staffing across all subjects rather than one subject specifically. We try to make it as manageable as possible and staff are flexible and will provide additional classes if they can. We are looking at roughly 18 pupils per sixth form class to be totally viable and it encourages a new way of learning.

A. We don't know in terms of subjects yet but you will have more staff because the larger the sixth form the larger the school's budget. The ideal 18 pupils per class means you are likely to be able to fund another teacher.

A. Some schools could be in huge debt if they have low pupil numbers in a class.

Q. *There is a CDU unit here and is very important to us. How will this be affected?*

A. That unit will remain and they do a brilliant job. At the moment they cater for pupils up to 16 years for statutory needs but some pupils may still need support. We will look at this in the future, but there is no plans to grow it at present.

Q. *Some have described this as a centre of excellence - will it be separate from Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4? We work very closely with them now.*

A. No, they will all be in the same school and most pupils will have come from Key Stages 3 and 4 in this school. The continuity between staff and pupils shouldn't change with this sixth form. There will be additional pupils at sixth form but we encourage sixth forms to work with younger pupils.

A. There will be more pupils with more skills to offer to the lower school community and it is an exciting opportunity.

Q. *The Council's budget has been decreasing due to Westminster. Is this just money we would have had if the cuts hadn't happened?*

A. We have to apply for this money specifically as a department and compete for this money. We received a large amount of funding from Welsh Government for Band A of the 21st Century Schools Programme which was matched by the Council and Welsh Government have approved (in principle) £168m for Band B. We have indicative costs for this school which is where the initial £10m has been identified.

A. If we didn't do this we wouldn't get this money. This isn't money that we have taken from other schools to fund this.

Q. *Is this EU funding? Will it be retracted?*

A. No it is Welsh Government specific money coming directly to the Council.

All were thanked for their inputs and the meeting closed.

**Notes of a meeting held with staff and governors
at Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School**

22nd November at 3:30 pm

**Meeting to discuss the Council's proposals to reorganise school provision in the
Pontypridd area**

Present

Esther Thomas (ET), Temporary Service Director for Access & Inclusion Services,
Lisa Howell, 21st Century Team Officer
Martin Silezin, 14-19 Strategy Officer
Sophie Nicholls, Graduate Officer 21st Century Team
Gavin Tranter, Governor Support Service Officer
Bethan Davies, Human Resources Adviser
65 members of school staff and governors present

ET welcomed everyone to the meeting and outlined the proposal, the reasons for the proposal, the purpose of the meeting, the consultation process, the timescales relating to the consultation process and the proposals themselves should they be implemented.

Should the proposals be implemented, the Council seeks to:

- Develop post 16 education at Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School, Beddau and Coleg y Cymoedd, Nantgarw;
- Create two new 3-16 schools in Pontypridd and Hawthorn;
- Improve and increase Welsh Medium primary provision by building a new school on the former site at Heol y Celyn, which will incorporate the former provisions at both Heol y Celyn and YGG Pont Sion Norton;
- Amend the catchment areas of Pontypridd High, Hawthorn High and the 6th form catchment of Bryncelynnog Comprehensive Schools, to better meet and match the demand for school places;

These changes will be achieved by:

- Closing the sixth forms of Hawthorn High School, Pontypridd High School and Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School and transferring the post 16 provision to Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School or Coleg y Cymoedd, Nantgarw. For those students who opt for a Roman Catholic education, sixth form provision will be available at St David's College, Cardiff;
- Closing Pontypridd High School and Cilfynydd Primary School and creating a new 3-16 'all through' school on the site of the current Pontypridd High School;

- Closing Hawthorn High School, Hawthorn Primary School and Heol y Celyn School and creating a new 3-16 'all through' school on the site of the current Hawthorn High and Hawthorn Primary Schools. The local authority designated ALN specialist class located in Hawthorn High School will also transfer to the new school.
- Closing Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Pont Sion Norton and opening a new Welsh Medium Primary School to be constructed on the site of the current Heol y Celyn Primary School. The pupils educated through the Welsh Medium at Heol y Celyn will transfer to the new school and the Heol y Celyn pupils educated through the English Medium will transfer to the new 3-16 school at Hawthorn;

Amending the catchment areas for pupils aged 11-16 of the three LA maintained secondary schools by:

- Transferring the Graig area of Pontypridd which is part of the catchment area of Maesycloed Primary School to the new 3-16 school for Pontypridd (currently Hawthorn);
- Transferring the catchment area of Coedpenmaen Primary School to the new 3-16 school for Pontypridd (currently Hawthorn);
- Transferring the catchment area of Gwauncelyn Primary School to the new 3-16 school for Hawthorn (currently Bryncelynnog).

It is proposed that all changes will be in place by September 2022.

ET referred to the detailed information contained within the consultation document which had been circulated and the consultation response pro-forma contained therein (further copies of both were available at the meeting) and referred to page 5 of the consultation document which outlines how people can make comments.

ET explained that the questions/comments/responses would be recorded for inclusion in the consultation report, which would be fed back to Cabinet in early 2019, as would the feedback from pupils. ET stressed that this was a period of consultation and should the proposals proceed to the next stage (statutory notice), objections would be received and recorded at that stage.

The meeting was then opened for questions.

Q One concern we have as a school is that there is an enhanced sixth form for Bryncelynnog but there is one in Nantgarw too. How will you get pupils to come here if they are more likely geographically to go to Nantgarw?

A. It is parental choice or pupil choice ultimately. The range of A-levels at the college may differ to what the schools offer. For some pupils, college may be a better option, but many parents and pupils express an interest in attending a school. Parents haven't been polled on this and I don't think we would get a true reflection on this yet but our experience to date with the Rhondda proposals and in particular Tonyrefail is a positive one with pupils choosing the school as opposed to the college for A-level subjects.

A. It is important to think about what is the best learning pathway for our students. The arrangements that are currently successfully supported and operated in the Rhondda schools will happen in Pontypridd and Hawthorn. The school has a great opportunity to shape a new provision here. We will encourage pupils to attend the appropriate setting that meets their individual needs.

A. Retention rates at Pontypridd High and Hawthorn High are low so we want to encourage more A-level students to attend Bryncelynnog Secondary School, as the school is improving year on year and achieving good results.

Q. But we will lose pupils from Gwauncelyn?

A. Yes, possibly if the catchment changes are agreed. However, it must be noted that there is surplus capacity in the school and as long as there is spare capacity in the school, pupils from Gwauncelyn will not be refused a place. In addition, in the Local Development Plan there are strategic housing sites within the school catchment which could significantly add to the school capacity in the future.

Q. There are currently transport arrangements in place - how will that work for pupils in Pontypridd/Hawthorn?

A. If pupils want to study here then the Local Authority will be funding their transport if they live over two miles away – in accordance with the Council's transport policy.

Q. It's not so much the cost but the amount of time that it will take for them to get here.

A. The majority of pupils are currently in the consortium arrangements and travelling to and from different schools within the school day to access some subjects. It is acknowledged that some pupils may have further to travel but home to school transport as mentioned previously will be provided free of charge.

Q. On the basis we get more children, we may be able to get more staff. What will the £10m be used for?

A. Yes, additional teachers would be required. In terms of the building we will look to

remodel some areas and remove poor quality buildings and this will be undertaken collaboratively with the school. Exact details will be developed should the proposal progress.

Q. Do you have any plans for the buildings?

- A. Officers cannot pre-empt the decision of the Council. We have had to put a bid in to Welsh Government as part of our 21st Century Schools Modernisation Programme Band B funding. Officers do have options to improve the school estates and if the proposals are approved by the Council we will consult fully with the school governors, staff and pupils.

Q. What if the funding isn't enough?

- A. The Council continually review the expenditure. We had good news yesterday as Welsh Government made an announcement to commit to a 65% intervention rate of funding for the next wave of investment. Therefore we will be able to spread the funding further and have more flexibility in terms of finances on future projects.

Q. You said parents often choose a school based on future success. If parents continue to want to send their children to come here, does our capacity then increase? The numbers don't seem to be increasing that much in the document. What happens if age 11-16 pupils don't drop that much but we still get additional sixth form pupils?

- A. At the moment the school has surplus places and we will continue to monitor the supply and demand for pupil places. If additional capacity is required the Council will address this need and provide additional accommodation.

Q. We are currently in consortia with Y Pant. Will that be affected?

- A. Great links have been forged and the two schools will continue to work together for the benefit of pupils. However, if the sixth form numbers improve, more subject options can be offered here and less pupils will need to travel to Y Pant for their curriculum choices.

Q. Would we be leaving Y Pant in a vulnerable position?

- A. No because Y Pant has a successful and growing sixth form.

Q. We could be competing directly with the college if we can offer the same.

- A. Yes it is possible that subjects will be offered by both establishments.

Q. I live in Tonteg and what is the thinking behind sending Gwauncelyn pupils to Hawthorn rather than here?

- A. The Local Authority has to manage schools places and regularly review these to

match supply and demand.

Q. Parents are concerned about travelling to Hawthorn.

A. Most of the streets that form part of that area will qualify for school transport to Hawthorn, but while there is space in this school, parents / pupils can still choose to come here.

Q. Talking about building for the future, there is no guarantee that those housing developments will be built and in Efail Isaf we are being asked to object to those proposals.

A. There is an application going to Cabinet tonight for 400 houses and that would attract a large number of schools places. The Council needs to be pro-active to strategically manage supply and demand for school places.

A. We appreciate that people don't like change and while there are spaces in our existing schools we have a duty to fill these empty spaces before we build new capacity into our schools.

Q. They would be eligible for transport to Hawthorn but not here?

A. Yes because that is their catchment school should this proposal be agreed Hawthorn High is also a good school and we need to have that balance.

Q. As a pupil they would go to Hawthorn for year 7 to 11 and then here for sixth form?

A. Yes, possibly or they may choose an alternative such as college.

Q. The catchment map in the document isn't particularly accurate in terms of defining the catchment area in terms of those streets.

A. We can provide a larger map for reference.

Q I was delighted when I read this document and it says you will improve the areas for ALN. I am asking you to improve the facilities and expand the ALN/CDU unit here for post 16 provision. This is the opportunity to get it right. Has it been considered?

A. To the credit of the School Parliament, they have also asked us to look at this. This will be considered as part of the feedback.

Q. You have five key points and this is one of them and there is no other reference to this in the document - can you keep it a key focus and expand our provision? This will help us be in line with the new ALN proposals too. We don't want to be sidelined and we would love it to be written into the proposals now from the beginning rather than be an add-on. We are often

considered and then it is moved on. If we are going to be a 21st Century School then we need their right to equity to be considered and put in place rather than just be 'adequate'. If it is to be a centre of excellence then you need this to be a centre of excellence for all.

A. Your comments are noted and we would encourage you to complete the questionnaire to formally express your views.

Q. Beyond the strategy, what will the Local Authority do to support the aspirations within the plan? Parents/pupils will influence the proposal by making choices either to come here or go to the college. Could this proposal fail if there is no support to meet this plan?

A. The Council would not have put this proposal forward if we could not support the strategy moving forward. We have a track record of delivering successful projects and our aim is to improve educational standards in a 21st Century learning environment. If the proposal is approved we will support the school with transition to ensure that the school goes from strength to strength.

Q. The Governors are disappointed with the new artificial pitch, as we can't play rugby.

A. You can play rugby on the pitch and it has a shock pad for tackling. The run off area isn't appropriate for senior rugby matches but this is a school based all-weather pitch for multi sports.

Q. You could build on our grass pitch?

A. This is a school based community pitch and we are not building a facility which is just for rugby. The Council invested substantially in providing drainage to the rugby pitch to provide a good quality grass pitch. Therefore the 3G is an addition to the current facilities on offer.

Q. You also can't play hockey on this.

A. Yes you can play hockey on this pitch but not senior league matches.

Q. We would love to promote multiple sports too and to not be able to access this is an issue.

Q. You also can't play full size football on this because of the size. Also with the athletics facilities there are no hammer/discus facilities etc.

A. The Council is investing substantially in the school to improve facilities and the funding is not available to invest in stadium type facilities. The facilities that are being provided will ensure that the school can improve the delivery of the curriculum for PE and encourage sport for all pupils, improving their health and wellbeing.

Q. *We weren't consulted in terms of revenue and the teams won't hire it because of the size. In terms of publicity this won't go well for us if the sixth form can't use it to play sports on.*

A. This has not been the case with 3G facilities provided to other schools. The 3G pitches are a Council asset for pupils and the wider community. However, your points have been noted.

Q. *Following the £24m spent on Y Pant, I spoke to Owen Smith MP who said that Bryncelynnog should be next for a new school. It seems unlikely that this would become a new site with a new school. This will predominantly remain a mid-20th Century School in terms of buildings.*

A. The Council cannot comment on Owen Smith MP's conversation with the school. Planning of school places is a management issue for the Council. The Council has undertaken successful projects to remodel schools within our estate to develop them to provide 21st Century facilities. Therefore we do not agree with this comment.

Q. *On that basis £10m isn't that much is it?*

A. The Council will ensure that appropriate investment is made in the school and if additional funding is required Members will consider the matter further.

Q. *Will you consult with us on those changes?*

A. Yes, consultation will be undertaken throughout the process.

Q. *Will the sixth form centre be part of the school or separate?*

A. It will certainly be part of the school. The site will be looked at holistically and improvements made across all curriculum areas that will benefit all students not just the sixth form students.

Q. *Can you give me an assurance that the school will be involved at the earliest stage for the planning of the building?*

A. This is a two stage process. This is currently the consultation for school organization and the school will be fully involved in the development of the site if the proposal proceeds.

Q. *It will be down to the school to decide what they offer in terms of curriculum, then surely the school needs to lead on the facilities we need?*

A. As mentioned previously we will engage with the school and you will be heavily involved in designing and refurbishing the facilities. However, the school need to understand that schools need to be designed to a certain standard and meet certain regulations and the Council will ensure this is undertaken.

Q. Were they consulted in Ferndale in terms of their 3G?

A. I am disappointed that you are not happy with the 3G pitch. As we have other schools in RCT that would have been delighted with over £1m of investment in a 3G pitch and athletics track. This is a Council facility and we need to ensure that there is parity of provision across the county borough.

Q. For staff who may have to make career choices at the other schools involved in the consultation process, are there any plans to have them redeployed here?

A. They will all be in redundancy positions if this goes ahead but that is not the case here. If there are vacant posts here we would encourage them to apply for posts.

Q. If there are people who want to come here, will we be forced to take them?

A. We would ask you to consider them and if they are the best person for the job then you could appoint them. It will be a matter for the governing body.

All were thanked for their time and inputs and the meeting concluded.

Notes of a meeting held with school council
at Cardinal Newman Roman Catholic Comprehensive School

Thursday 22nd November 2018 at 2 pm

Meeting to discuss the Council's proposals to reorganise school provision in
the Pontypridd area

Present:

Grace Zecca-Hanagan, 21st Century School Officer
Andrea Richards, Head of 21st Century Schools
Gaynor Davies, Director of Education and Inclusion Services
Sarah Corcoran, Senior Challenge Adviser - CSC
15 members of the school council

Welcome and introduction from school council.

Introduction from Council officers.

Gaynor Davies (GD) welcomed everyone to the meeting and outlined the proposal, the reasons for the proposal, the purpose of the meeting, the consultation process and timescales relating to the consultation process and the proposals themselves, should they be implemented.

GD opened the meeting up to questions from the school council.

Q. We feel that there is more of a focus on making financial savings. Cardinal Newman Roman Catholic Comprehensive School's sixth form offers an environment that is comfortable for pupils and supports their wellbeing.

A. GD acknowledged the comments made and replied that any changes made would be made with support offered to pupils.

GD also commented that a change in 6th form provision can help to prepare pupils for when they move into Higher Education.

It was confirmed that the change was not just financial but because the breadth and depth of subject choice could not currently be offered at Cardinal Newman Roman Catholic Comprehensive School's sixth form due to its small size – at present only 36% of pupils return to year 12 from year 11 – we need to question why 64% aren't returning and where they are going.

Q. Cardinal Newman Roman Catholic Comprehensive School's sixth form has only been in place for two years and needs to be in place for longer for the benefit of the pupils of Cardinal Newman Roman Catholic Comprehensive School.

A. The Local Authority looks at a Rhondda Cynon Taf wide approach, not just Cardinal Newman Roman Catholic Comprehensive School approach.

- Q. Years 7, 8 and 9 are large year groups that would in turn mean larger sixth forms.**
- A. This is not necessarily the case as the data demonstrates that pupils are choosing a different learning pathway already.
- Q. The teaching at Cardinal Newman Roman Catholic Comprehensive School is very high quality; by taking away, the sixth form you are taking away high quality teachers.**
- A. It was acknowledged that Cardinal Newman is a good school.
- Q. Having a larger sixth form means that pupils can get lost in the system and will not be supported by staff with whom they have formed close relationships.**
- A. New relationships with new members of staff in new settings could be formed. Officers talked about the sixth forms at Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School and St. David's Sixth Form College.
- A. Officers also explained about the pastoral and wellbeing systems currently in place in Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School and the college.
- Q. In 2016, Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School underwent an Estyn Inspection where they were graded 'adequate' for current performance and 'good' for prospects for improvement. Is this good enough for Cardinal Newman Roman Catholic Comprehensive School pupils?**
- A. Officers discussed the results of Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School. Officers also discussed how the proposals are not about how well and badly a school performs but are also based on the size of the sixth form. The current size of Cardinal Newman Roman Catholic School's sixth form is very small and unsustainable.
- Q. There are transport implication to St. David's Sixth Form College. Would the long journey time be justifiable when you consider the other pressures facing young people?**
- A. When you have a future pathway that you are keen to follow you are incentivised to travel to achieve it. It is a further distance to travel and many students currently choose this option to attend a quality provision.
- Q. The pupils at Cardinal Newman Roman Catholic School's sixth form currently run a 'buddy system', which brings a family ethos to the school.**
- A. The officers outlined that these systems are in place in schools throughout Rhondda Cynon Taf that do not currently have sixth forms, so there are new opportunities to develop different systems.

Q. We feel that Cardinal Newman Roman Catholic School is the best performing school in Rhondda Cynon Taf – why are these proposals being made?

A. GD confirmed that Cardinal Newman Roman Catholic School is a very good school, however it is not the best performing sixth form in Rhondda Cynon Taf currently.

GD explained to the School Council why these proposals were being made – namely, a small sixth form being subsidised by Key Stage 3 and 4 which is run at a high cost per pupil head and offering a limited subject range. We need to look at offering a greater choice of subjects with larger teaching groups, which is not subsidised by Key Stages 3 and 4.

Q. Why was Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School chosen?

A. Officers outlined that Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School is a good, improving school with strong outcomes and is led by a strong Senior Management Team. The percentage of learners that return from year 11 to year 12 is nearly 45%.

Q. Why is Cardinal Newman Roman Catholic Comprehensive School not being refurbished in any way?

A. Faith Schools are voluntary aided and funded differently to maintained schools. However, the Local Authority support the school with investment and will continue to maintain the buildings in partnership with the Diocesan.

All were thanked for their attendance and inputs and the meeting closed at 3pm.

**Notes of a meeting held with staff and governors
at Cardinal Newman Roman Catholic Comprehensive School**

Thursday 22nd November 2018 at 3:30 pm

**Meeting to discuss the Council's proposals to reorganise school provision in
the Pontypridd area**

Present:

Grace Zecca-Hanagan, 21st Century School Officer
Andrea Richards, Head of 21st Century Schools
Gaynor Davies, Director of Education and Inclusion Services
Catrin Edwards, Head of Service Transformation and Data Systems
Chris Bradshaw, Chief Executive
Richard Evans, Director of Human Resources
Sarah Corcoran, Senior Challenge Adviser - CSC
Ellen Williams, Human Resources Adviser
32 members of staff and governors

The headteacher welcomed Council officers.

Introduction from Council officers in attendance.

GD welcomed everyone to the meeting and outlined the proposal, the reasons for the proposal, the purpose of the meeting, the consultation process, the timescales relating to the consultation process and the proposals themselves should they be implemented.

Should the proposals be implemented, the Council seeks to:

- Develop post 16 education at Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School, Beddau and Coleg y Cymoedd, Nantgarw;
- Create two new 3-16 schools in Pontypridd and Hawthorn;
- Improve and increase Welsh Medium primary provision by building a new school on the former site at Heol y Celyn, which will incorporate the former provisions at both Heol y Celyn and YGG Pont Sion Norton;
- Amend the catchment areas of Pontypridd High, Hawthorn High and the 6th form catchment of Bryncelynnog Comprehensive Schools, to better meet and match the demand for school places;

These changes will be achieved by:

- Closing the sixth forms of Hawthorn High School, Pontypridd High School and Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School and transferring the post-16 provision to Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School or Coleg y Cymoedd, Nantgarw. For those students who opt for a Roman Catholic education, sixth form provision will be available at St David's College, Cardiff;

- Closing Pontypridd High School and Cilfynydd Primary School and creating a new 3-16 'all through' school on the site of the current Pontypridd High School;
- Closing Hawthorn High School, Hawthorn Primary School and Heol y Celyn School and creating a new 3-16 'all through' school on the site of the current Hawthorn High and Hawthorn Primary Schools. The local authority designated ALN specialist class located in Hawthorn High School will also transfer to the new school.
- Closing Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Pont Sion Norton and opening a new Welsh Medium Primary School to be constructed on the site of the current Heol y Celyn Primary School. The pupils educated through the Welsh Medium at Heol y Celyn will transfer to the new school and the Heol y Celyn pupils educated through the English Medium will transfer to the new 3-16 school at Hawthorn;

Amending the catchment areas for pupils aged 11-16 of the three LA maintained secondary schools by:

- Transferring the Graig area of Pontypridd which is part of the catchment area of Maesycod Primary School to the new 3-16 school for Pontypridd (currently Hawthorn);
- Transferring the catchment area of Coedpenmaen Primary School to the new 3-16 school for Pontypridd (currently Hawthorn);
- Transferring the catchment area of Gwauncelyn Primary School to the new 3-16 school for Hawthorn (currently Bryncelynnog).

It is proposed that all changes will be in place by September 2022.

GD referred to the detailed information contained within the consultation document which had been circulated and the consultation response pro-forma contained therein (further copies of both were available at the meeting) and referred to page 5 of the consultation document which outlines how people can make comments.

GD explained that the questions/comments/responses would be recorded for inclusion in the consultation report, which would be fed back to Cabinet in early 2019, as would the feedback from pupils. GD stressed that this was a period of consultation and should the proposals proceed to the next stage (statutory notice), objections would be received and recorded at that stage.

GD explained that there had been a meeting earlier that afternoon with the student council where the proposals had been explained to them and a question and answer session followed. GD expressed her thanks for their time and inputs.

The meeting was then opened for questions.

Q. *How and why has no funding been allocated to improvements within the school?*

A. Responsibility for the building is with the Roman Catholic Diocese who should make proposals to the Welsh Government as the funding stream differs from that of non-Faith Schools.

It was explained that officers of the Council work in partnership with the Roman Catholic Diocese to look at options. However, now this proposal has been made further engagement has taken place with the Diocese and meetings have taken place between parties. The Council and the Diocese are developing a business case for future improvements to the school.

Capital improvements and maintenance works have been carried out to Cardinal Newman Roman Catholic School and the Council is committed to providing on-going support to the school in terms of assisting the school to maintain the building.

Cardinal Newman Roman Catholic School is one of the Council's family group of schools and the Local Authority will continue to support the school in the future.

Officers explained that Cardinal Newman Roman Catholic School is a voluntary aided school and the implications associated with this.

The headteacher outlined that a positive aspect of these proposals is that it has started action towards improvements.

A. It was commented that judgments about the condition of Cardinal Newman Roman Catholic School are potentially being made by comparison against schools that have received funding through 21st Century Schools Band A funding.

Q. *Why was Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School, Coleg y Cymoedd and St. David's Sixth Form College chosen?*

A. It was based on retention rates, data and location.

The Council is trying to offer a range of options for young people. Cardinal Newman Roman Catholic Comprehensive School is currently in a deficit budget position and the sixth form is currently being subsidised from Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 funding.

When looking at the data, learners are currently opting to receive post-16 education elsewhere for numerous reasons.

Financially it is challenging for a sixth form to be delivered in Cardinal Newman Roman Catholic Comprehensive School. Only 36% of learners are returning to sixth form – they are already deciding to go elsewhere i.e. St. David's and Coleg y Cymoedd.

Officers are not disputing the quality of education in Cardinal Newman Roman Catholic School. We need to address the budget deficit and part of this involves deciding whether to continue with sixth form courses etc.

Q. *Pastoral care is not maintained with pupils moving from one school to another. How can you guarantee that this aspect of education will be maintained?*

A. There is the capacity to provide more specialist teachers and a greater number of teachers offering pastoral care in larger schools. Improvements and systems will be put in place for transition arrangements to ensure the emotional needs of pupils are met.

Part of sixth form studies is about preparing learners for change and benefits can be gained from change in advance of entering Higher Education.

Q. *Son has Asperger's and is anxious about change already. He is excelling at Cardinal Newman Roman Catholic School because he feels safe and is supported pastorally. From an ALN point of view I feel that this is putting a barrier in his future learning.*

ALN provision at Bryncelynnog is well developed with an ASD Learning Support Class. New ALN reforms focus on person centred planning and input. Support will be provided to ensure that the transition for pupils works well. The college is also fully inclusive and currently supports many learners with specific needs.

Q. *Transition opportunities for staff involved in sixth form transition.*

A. Decisions around staffing will be made by the governing body. There may be capacity in Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School, as a larger school to offer further opportunities for staff.

Q. *Concerned about pupils who live far away from St. David's Sixth Form College who currently attend Cardinal Newman Roman Catholic School and want to continue their education in a Roman Catholic setting – transport.*

A. Transport would be provided to St. David's Sixth Form College at no costs to pupils living in Rhondda Cynon Taf – the logistics of this are yet to be agreed.

Q. *Catchment area for Cardinal Newman Roman Catholic School is Rhondda Cynon Taf wide. How would the organisation of this be made?*

A. It would depend on the volume of students and where they live. Transport may decide to use taxis, mini buses or larger buses. Parents will not be charged for this home to school transport.

Q. *Have discussions with St. David's Sixth Form College taken place to accommodate sixth form numbers?*

A. A conversation with the Principal of St. David's Sixth Form College has taken place and there certainly is space available.

The headteacher echoed the above comments of the Chief Executive. Cardinal Newman Roman Catholic School would become an associated school and it would be written into the Admission Policy of St. David's Sixth Form College and pupils would have same rights as other associated schools.

Q. *We are the only school where pupils do not just live in Pontypridd. This may mean that lots of our learners may go to other sixth form establishments nearer their homes. In terms of the logistics of where the pupils will go and someone being in charge of transition of this it could be a complex task?*

A. The current retention rates are not good with pupils going to various settings. Each Sixth Form will have open days for pupils and parents to engage in and make choices.

A. Based on previous data, the vast majority of pupils go to the settings that have already been put forward.

Q. *Wellbeing of Future Generations Act – how will this affect consideration being made for sports within schools?*

A. Officers explained that they work closely with colleagues in Leisure Services. Schools use leisure centres during the day with members of the public using the centres in the evening. There is an opportunity for schools to use local leisure facilities and more opportunities can be created in the future.

A. The Council has invested hugely in leisure centres recently and use has increased.

Q. *Do we have any data on where Ferndale Community School, Porth County Community School and Ysgol Nant Gwyn Sixth Form students have gone?*

A. This is tracked to ensure pupils have access to the sixth form options that they want.

Q. *Does extra money being spent on schools mean that the schools will be better and provide more successful outcomes for pupils?*

A. Providing schools with a first class environment assists teachers and pupils to improve.

Q. *In a perfect world, I would like the Sixth Form to remain in Cardinal Newman Roman Catholic School. However, we have to be realistic of the climate in which we are in and we want what is best for Cardinal Newman Roman Catholic School and its pupils. There is a partnership with Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council and a desire to move forward together ensuring the protection of our pupils with their best interests in mind.*

- A. Statement noted and confirmed the positive relationship with Cardinal Newman Roman Catholic School and Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council. However, there is a large deficit budget and we would prefer to intervene and support now to protect and develop the school for future learners. We are undertaking this for the right reasons, and when you look at schools that have been through this process the outcome is always positive.

Officers thanked the staff, and outlined the work that will take place with the Council over the coming months.

The meeting closed at 4:45pm.

Notes of a meeting held with the school council of Cilfynydd Primary School

Monday 19th November 2018 at 2:30 pm

Meeting to discuss the Council's proposals to reorganise school provision in the Pontypridd area

Present

Esther Thomas (ET), Temporary Service Director for Access & Inclusion Services
Lisa Howell (LH), Senior 21st Century Schools Officer
Tim Britton (TB), Senior Challenge Advisor
Sophie Nicholls (SN), Graduate Officer 21st Century Schools
10 pupils – members of the Cilfynydd Primary School Council

ET explained that the Council are looking to reorganise some of the schools in Pontypridd. The changes would include new 3-16 schools, in Pontypridd and Hawthorn, a new Welsh primary school in Rhydyfelin and moving the school sixth forms into larger sixth forms in Bryncelynnog and the college.

ET went into more detail about the proposal that would directly affect the pupils in Cilfynydd Primary, as the school would close and become part of the Pontypridd 3-16 School. The pupils would be part of a larger school and would not have to move when they reach secondary school age. ET explained that although the children would be part of one school, the younger pupils would be separate from the older pupils and would have their own yard to play on. Pupils would have new or refurbished classrooms and would be able to use some specialist facilities in the school such as the P.E sports hall, playing fields, science laboratories and ICT rooms from a younger age.

ET explained that the purpose of the meeting with the pupils today was for the Council to hear and record what the pupils think about the proposals, as their views are very important to the Council.

ET asked pupils if they had any questions about the proposals.

Q. How are you going to make sure we receive a 21st Century education in the new school?

- A. We would be spending a lot of money on the buildings, but we haven't yet decided exactly what will happen to the buildings because this is the start of the process. If this is passed by the elected members, pupils would move to the new school in 2022. We would put lots of new ICT equipment into the school and you would have access to the other facilities such as the science laboratories. You would also have access to your own large play area and the grass playing fields.
- A. You would have nice new classrooms and we would ensure that you have the best teachers, as you have good teachers now. You would have excellent new resources in your classes.
- A. We also look at the environment and if we can, we try to put energy efficient

technology into the building too.

Q. *What outdoor resources will you be putting in the new school?*

- A. Firstly, we need to go and have a look what is there now. The facilities there now are for older children so we would need to do a lot of work to make sure it was safe for younger pupils. In other similar schools, we have put fencing, outdoor classrooms, and soft play for the younger pupils. There are also facilities there for you to use such as the grass pitches. What would you like us to put there?

Pupils - A netball court. Football field. We have a trim trail that we would like too. We would like some grass too. I like exercising so maybe you could put things outside that we could exercise on.

Q. *How will you make sure the younger children are safe in the new school?*

- A. That is a question that many parents asked us when we built the new schools. All of the play areas will be completely separate. There is a big building there now and we could possibly move some of the areas around to make sure the school suits you and that primary aged pupils would have your own play areas, toilets and hall.
- A. There would be some areas that you can share but only when your teachers are with you.

Q. *There are lots of roads there. How will you make sure we are all safe walking to and from the new school?*

- A. We ask experts to come and look at everyone's routes to school. They look at pavements, the number of cars and where you would cross the road. They will make sure that it is safe for you to get to school. They have put speed bumps in Porth to make sure cars go slow by the school. There are two separate zebra crossings in Porth too. Sometimes they would make us put a puffin crossing in with the green and red man lights. They are already looking at this and they will advise us on how we can make it as safe as possible for you. Whatever they say we will have to do because your safety is the most important for us.

ET - Do any of you currently cross the road when you come to school?

Pupil - Yes and we have to look both ways.

ET - There are pavements on the road and you have to make sure you are crossing safely too and use any new crossings that are put in place, or traffic calming measures.

Q. *At break time and dinnertime, how will you make sure that younger children feel safe?*

- A. There will be specific playgrounds for you to play in with fencing too. Your teachers and support staff will also be with you looking after you. In many of our 3-16 schools, younger pupils actually have different play times to the older pupils. There will always be supervisors too. There are also children that you can go to

if you are worried about something, like you have the buddy bench here. There won't be anything to make you feel uncomfortable and if you did how would you deal with that?

Pupil - Tell a teacher.

TB - Yes that is the best way to deal with this. You have to say something if you don't feel safe and your teachers can deal with it.

ET – Secondary school age pupils have lessons all afternoon usually so it would be down to the Head teacher and staff to decide when play times are for the younger pupils.

Q. *Where will the primary department be situated on the site?*

- A. We don't know yet. We will go to the school and have a look at the site. We need to make sure that it has nice outdoor space and that we can make it safe for you. We may need to build new parts of the buildings such as a new hall or canteen area. We are looking at this and if this proposal goes through we have a planning consultation, which is an open event for your families to come to and then you can tell us what you think about it and if you have any ideas to contribute.

We want to hear your ideas then too.

Q. *What will the new school be called?*

- A. That isn't for us to decide. The new governing body will put ideas forward and then the local elected members will decide what the name will be. It could have Pontypridd in the name, in the same way that Tonyrefail have kept their name. Tonypany have changed their name to Nantgwyn School. You could put ideas forward to your governors.

The new governors at Cwmaman asked the pupils what they would like to call the school and then there was a vote. The Council then voted on the final option.

ET - Do you think it should remain as Pontypridd?

Pupils - Yes.

Q. *How will you make sure that the new school is at the heart of the community at Cilfynydd?*

- A. When we build new schools we make sure that we build new community spaces. We call them community schools but that means that we want to make sure people from the community can use them. They need their own space that is separate from the school to make sure you are safe. We have outdoor space like 3G pitches and community teams book them to use for training and parties. It will be up to community groups and the schools to decide how they use it.

The Welsh Government are giving us half of the money for the school and they make sure that we put those facilities in place.

Teacher - There are no groups that use this school now.

Q. *What will happen to this school after we move?*

- A. This proposal would have to be approved first, but we do not know what will happen to it yet. What do you think should happen?

Pupil - I think it should stay as a school.

ET - We don't know what will happen yet. Some schools are being used for other things like clubs. Sometimes they are knocked down and the land used to build houses. It depends on the condition of the building and the Council's Estates Department decide what to do with it. They wouldn't leave it empty because it could become vandalised.

Q. *Why are you knocking the school down?*

- A. We don't know what we will do yet, but as I said we are looking at the condition of the schools and there are currently spaces in Pontypridd High which are costing lots of money. The buildings there are much newer. I know that this school looks lovely and it is historic, but there are better buildings in Pontypridd High that could be better for your education and could be used better by you. We don't think that this is a bad school, but the building isn't very good.

Q. *What happens at post 16?*

- A. The school-based option would be Bryncelynnog, or pupils could choose to go to Coleg Y Cymoedd.

Q. *How will you make sure all of the children like the new school?*

- A. There will probably be many of the same teachers. Also, you said you like your classrooms but there will probably be better classrooms there. There will be easier transitions for pupils that go to year 7 as they are already in the school. We will try to make sure everyone is happy there.

We come and speak to you to make sure we get your opinions. If you discuss this with your class, you can let us know what you and all of your friends think of the plans.

A pupil thanked the officers present for answering the pupils' prepared questions.

**Notes of a meeting held with the staff and governors
of Cilfynydd Primary School**

Monday 19th November 2018 at 4:00 pm

**Meeting to discuss the Council's proposals to reorganise school provision in
the Pontypridd area**

Present

Esther Thomas (ET), Temporary Service Director for Access & Inclusion Services
Lisa Howell (LH), Senior 21st Century Schools Officer
Tim Britton (TB), Senior Challenge Advisor
Sophie Nicholls (SN), Graduate Officer 21st Century Schools
Catrin Edwards (CE), Head Of Service Transformation And Data Systems
Ellen Williams (EW), Human Resources Advisor
Richard Evans (RE), Director of Human Resources
25 members of schools staff/governors

Esther Thomas (ET) welcomed everyone to the meeting and outlined the proposal, the reasons for the proposal, the purpose of the meeting, the consultation process, the timescales relating to the consultation process and the proposals themselves, should they be implemented.

Should the proposals be implemented, the Council seeks to:

- Develop post 16 education at Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School, Beddau and Coleg y Cymoedd, Nantgarw;
- Create two new 3-16 schools in Pontypridd and Hawthorn;
- Improve and increase Welsh Medium primary provision by building a new school on the former site at Heol y Celyn, which will incorporate the former provisions at both Heol y Celyn and YGG Pont Sion Norton;
- Amend the catchment areas of Pontypridd High, Hawthorn High and the 6th form catchment of Bryncelynnog Comprehensive Schools, to better meet and match the demand for school places;

These changes will be achieved by:

- Closing the sixth forms of Hawthorn High School, Pontypridd High School and Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School and transferring the post 16 provision to Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School or Coleg y Cymoedd, Nantgarw. For those students who opt for a Roman Catholic education, sixth form provision will be available at St David's College, Cardiff;
- Closing Pontypridd High School and Cilfynydd Primary School and creating a new 3-16 'all through' school on the site of the current Pontypridd High School;
- Closing Hawthorn High School, Hawthorn Primary School and Heol y Celyn School and creating a new 3-16 'all through' school on the site of the current

Hawthorn High and Hawthorn Primary Schools. The local authority designated ALN specialist class located in Hawthorn High School will also transfer to the new school;

- Closing Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Pont Sion Norton and opening a new Welsh Medium Primary School to be constructed on the site of the current Heol y Celyn Primary School. The pupils educated through the Welsh Medium at Heol y Celyn will transfer to the new school and the Heol y Celyn pupils educated through the English Medium will transfer to the new 3 – 16 school at Hawthorn.

Amending the catchment areas for pupils aged 11-16 of the three LA maintained Secondary schools by:

- Transferring the Graig area of Pontypridd which is part of the catchment area of Maesycoed Primary School to the new 3-16 school for Pontypridd (currently Hawthorn)
- Transferring the catchment area of Coedpenmaen Primary School to the new 3-16 school for Pontypridd (currently Hawthorn)
- Transferring the catchment area of Gwauncelyn Primary School to the new 3-16 school for Hawthorn (currently Bryncelynnog)

It is proposed that all changes will be in place by September 2022.

ET referred to the detailed information contained within the consultation document which had been circulated and the consultation response pro-forma contained therein (further copies of both were available at the meeting) and referred to page 5 of the consultation document which outlines how people can make comments.

ET explained that the questions/comments/responses would be recorded for inclusion in the consultation report, which would be fed back to Cabinet in early 2019, as would the feedback from pupils. ET stressed that this was a period of consultation and should the proposals proceed to the next stage (statutory notice), objections would be received and recorded at that stage.

The meeting was then opened for questions.

Q. *Where is the academic research to show that an all through school is actually a good idea? There is not any in the English language and I cannot see any evidence of this happening in other countries. They stick to the primary/middle/high school model. There were 13 out of 2300 schools in Wales that were all through schools but we have no evidence of this being a good idea. Scottish head teachers do not agree with this as younger pupils can be bullied by older pupils and teenage issues being issues for younger pupils. Can you comment please?*

A. We have one all through school in Llanhari but that was a decision taken for different reasons due to the new comprehensive school in Maesteg. Llanhari School is now growing from the bottom. We have recently created three new 3-16 schools in the Rhondda with Porth, Nantgwyn and Tonyrefail. There is no longitude data that says this model is a good idea. We have not seen any issues

with bullying in Llanhari. One of the key things for us is the safeguarding of young people and we make sure that when we build 3-16 schools that safeguarding is the highest priority. We would want them to use the same facilities e.g. Science labs, games areas, specialist rooms for DT etc. but they would be under supervision. There is no evidence yet however that this is a better model.

Q. What is the process for staff who are already here?

A. The process will be the same as the previous schools. Providing this proposal is accepted there will be a temporary governing body comprising governors of this school and Pontypridd High about two years before the new school opens. They would then appoint a head teacher and then together, the temporary governing body and headteacher would create a staffing structure. It is difficult to anticipate what this will look like but in the schools we have just opened, there are year groups but no primary or secondary phase. We ask the governing body to ring fence the application process for current staff in the first instance, which, based on what we have already done would likely involve an interview. No roles would be advertised externally unless a role could not be filled internally. Another element is that technically all staff are in a redundancy situation. If there are staff who want to take redundancy or early retirement, they are able to do so. They would not put themselves through a recruitment process, redundancy would happen first.

Q. The school is the centre of the village and is accessible for everyone. The new site is quite a long way from the top of the village. There are a few issues such as road safety. How are you going to get the pupils to the school? I can foresee there being queues of traffic going to the school.

A. We appreciate your concerns about this and safety is paramount in this process.

A. We will undertake a safe routes analysis for this project, which is going to be funded by a separate budget. We will have to create a safe route for pupils.

Q. There is only one bridge, which is stepped, and if parents have buggies etc. they may not be able to get their (possibly four) children to school safely.

A. We have done some extensive traffic calming in some areas where the new schools are. We can create crossings and speed humps etc. to minimise risk. For example in Porth we found that within a few weeks of the school opening, we were having complaints from residents. They have now staggered the school day to make sure that the pupils are not all being dropped off at the same time. This is working much better and the changes were made very quickly. Until the new school is in operation, there may be issues that we cannot foresee, but any issues will be addressed.

Q. I guess there will be schools that are three or four years down the line that we could learn from and take on any advice that they have.

A. Yes, we would like to get one of the Headteachers to attend our open evenings to answer some of your questions too. It is helpful for you to see how it works and to speak to people who deal with this every day.

Q. The leader of the Council has said to me that there will not be any experts appointed to survey this. There is literature that shows that, due to the proximity to the road there are difficulties for pupils with asthma, heart issues and even cognition. If we were building a school in 1980 we would not know this, but now we do and maybe we would not build a school there?

A. We are going to undertake environmental testing of the site to provide assurances.

S/G comment - Can we have an independent expert to conduct this survey and advise that it is a safe idea to do this?

A. There is a school there already.

Q. Maybe they would say that we should not do that. Are the Council afraid of what the result may be of that survey?

A. The Council conducts regular monitoring of air quality and as previously mentioned there is a study ongoing on the A470.

Q. This is a school and we lost many pupils to Coedpenmaen. We take many children from out of catchment and I was wondering are there any plans to make it more viable to operate on this site for the 21st Century or was the funding specifically for 3-16?

A. No it was not specific to 3-16 but if we look at this site there are hardly any outdoor spaces for the these pupils to play in.

A. There are 149 pupil here and it is reception to year 6 pupils that receive more funding.

Q. If there was some money spent here, I think we could make this school fit for the 21st Century. Was there any consideration given to close any other schools in the locality that have buildings in a bad state?

Staff/governor comment - If there are parents that are 50/50 about Welsh medium, they often send their children to Cilfynydd.

A. The majority of pupils who attend Pont Sion Norton do not live in Cilfynydd.

Staff/governor comment - Even if half of them came here, we would not have a surplus.

A. ET - You are then assuming that parents aren't choosing Welsh medium

Staff/governor comment - We had a community meeting on Thursday and the overwhelming response from people there said that if their children had to catch a bus for Welsh medium then they would change to English to be able to walk to school.

Staff/governor comment - I am concerned about them walking to school. Cars come through at 70mph even though it is a 30mph road. If there is a camera or surveyor there then people will slow down and it will not be accurate. A young girl was injured recently, which I am sure you would know about.

- A. All work would be done before the school opens. We often drop the speed limit to be around 20mph near schools and we put physical barriers in place such as speed humps etc.

Q. What happens at night when the A470 is closed and the traffic comes through Cilfynydd? Sometimes there are huge vehicles that come through here. There is no alternative diversion so I do not think that we can say that there will be a speed hump on that road because I have done research and this is unlikely to happen.

- A. We do not know what the recommendations will be for traffic calming. Currently there are no primary school age pupils crossing that road every day, so that will change and the highways team need to make sure that the road is safe and used appropriately.

Q. Would you have the traffic report before the Cabinet meeting regarding the proposal in January?

- A. No, but there will also be a planning consultation and if the plans were not appropriate then it would fail at the planning stage on this issue. The planning process will help shape this. We have previously had planning open evenings, and the traffic management comes under here. Although it is obviously linked, they are separate processes.

Q. You know you said that if staff wanted a job and could apply; does that happen for LSAs and dinner staff?

- A. Yes, it is for all staff. It will be a new structure and the difficulty is trying to look ahead when we do not know the future structure.

- A. We also look wider so if there are no vacancies in these new schools we can look at vacancies elsewhere. We try our best to ensure you all have jobs.

Q. Can you clarify in terms of leadership roles how it is ring-fenced? I know that headship roles have to go external.

- A. Assistant Headteacher level and below are ring-fenced for existing staff in the first instance, but Headteachers posts are advertised externally.

Q. Is the closure of Cilfynydd linked directly to Pontypridd High pupils leaving after sixth form?

- A. The proposals are linked, but we know there is already surplus capacity at Pontypridd High School and Cilfynydd Primary School.

Q. How much information will we get about the plans before the January meeting? Will the site be split?

- A. There may be a need for a small new block or extension or remodelling. This is very early and we want to try to assure you that it will work. We have changed the layouts of schools following consultation before. We have listened and learned about this and we want to have your views too.

Staff/governor comment - There would be around 150 primary age pupils but almost 800 comprehensive pupils.

- A. We look at the flow of the school and see where we can create good outdoor facilities and make sure it flows.

Q. Is there a possible name yet?

- A. Tonyrefail stayed the same but Tonypandy changed its name to Nantgwyn. Governors put proposals forward and Cabinet make the final decision.
- A. We are currently doing this with Garth Olwg and the decision has just been made to retain the name as Garth Olwg.

Q. If someone wanted to go through interview and they were unsuccessful, would they still get redundancy?

- A. Yes of course. You can ask for figures and not proceed, or apply and if you are unsuccessful then you still get the redundancy option.

Q. What support would be in place in terms of staff wellbeing during the process?

- A. We have a people development team who could work with the staff, or if people just want to talk on a welfare aspect, we could link with occupational health. Colleagues from HR will come out, spend time with the staff and address all concerns. If we do this right now it may be a 'what if' scenario and give examples from other schools, but we will work with you through the whole process.

Q - The packing up of the school, will we get time to do this?

- A. Yes, we have closure days and there will be no lifting and carrying by staff as we employ a company to do this. We ask the school to declutter beforehand and we hire skips too. The Data Team will help in terms of disposing of information etc.

Staff/governor comment - We want to make sure the children do not suffer and we do not want staff welfare to impact on them. We have a fantastic school and we do not want their welfare to suffer because of this process. We feel like we have been chosen because of surplus places and the building condition.

- A. We will support staff through this and children should not see any impact from this.

Staff/governor comment - We have massive community links for harvest and Christmas services and I am not sure you would get the same kind of community interaction when it moves.

A. The other side of that is that there are more facilities in Pontypridd High e.g. the games areas and the ICT suites. The children we spoke to here said that there are currently no classes here in the evening and you could have an opportunity to do that. I realise that this is not in the heart of the community geographically but it is only a few minutes' walk to the High School and I cannot argue with that but it will be down to school management to ensure that this happens.

A. We try to build in community spaces where possible and Welsh Government insist on this. We design separate access for the community space too, so that it can be completely segregated from the pupils. For example, if we put a 3G pitch at a new school, then we would expect it to be open to the community.

Q. I saw in the document that the projections for pupil numbers are dropping off. What are the plans to increase pupil numbers in the primary phase? What hit us the hardest was losing our nursery. We lose children to other facilities due to that.

A. You may be able to attract people to run a childcare setting on the new site.

A. The new schools tend to be attractive for parents due to the new facilities. I understand that this is not guaranteed.

Q. I understand the proposal and our children deserve the best, but I would not want us to move and have a falling number on roll. We hope that it will increase but I wondered if there was a secret plan for this.

A. We get the birth rates, which are quite accurate, and these form the projections.

Q. Would you be looking at closing Trallwn Infants' school and moving it to Pontypridd?

A. That is not part of this proposal.

Staff/governor comment - So the infants then would go to Trallwng rather than going to Pontypridd High. I live here and I hear so many parents saying they will send them there instead.

A. We had the same issue in Porth and Tonyrefail where parents said they would not send their children there. The Headteacher opened up the school to expect 50 parents to turn up and more than 200 turned up. The additional facilities encourage so many to go once they are in place.

A. Through schools minimise transition for pupils too.

A. We have undertaken a lot of work for transition into year 7 for the other

primary schools that join the through schools to make it easier for all and this is ongoing.

Q. *Following on about the future and numbers - The intergovernmental panel on climate change (the gold standard for climate change) on the 8th of October said that humanity has about a decade to make changes to stop humanity dying out. I do not see how generating extra traffic is in anyway consistent for our commitment to the Future Generations Act and other Acts.*

A. We also have to make these buildings more energy efficient and we often add solar panels and rainwater harvesting to assist with environmental impacts. Due to the funding, we have to adhere to the BREEAM model. The contractors we use have to keep their carbon footprint to a minimum during the process too. The closure of inefficient buildings has a positive impact on environmental factors too. In terms of traffic with the proposed sixth form relocation, the emissions may even balance out as they often go from one school to another during the school day for their lessons. This will be reduced by them going to one site for the whole day.

Q. *Is there a plan for this building?*

ET - There are not as of yet. If the proposal is successful, the building will be handed over to Corporate Estates to manage and they would make recommendations to Elected Members.

Q. *If there is a new school and there is closure of this school, how do the finances work? If we had a surplus and they had a deficit how would that work?*

A. We work with the closing schools to see how best to manage it and the deficits are cleared and a new school budget would be created for the new school. All data is linked to the new school e.g. SIMS etc. We work closely with schools on this.

Q. *Will there be any new buildings or just refurbishment?*

A. We are not sure of the designs yet, these are progressed in partnership with staff, pupils and governors.

Staff/governor comment - Some parents do not think there is enough detail on this.

A. We undertook refurbishments on previous 21st Century Schools projects. The quality and the standard of the refurbished classes in YGG Tonyrefail and the new Tonyrefail through school are the same.

Q. *If there is surplus capacity then other schools could join too?*

A. LH - We are not looking to do that and if we were, now would be the time to look at that and we are not. We need to look at community use and change the designations of some of the classes to make best use of the school.

Staff/governor comment - As fantastic as the school may be it is the road safety and the safeguarding that we want to raise and note.

Notes of a meeting held with students at Coleg Y Cymoedd (CYC)
Monday 26th November 2018 at 10:30 am

Meeting to discuss the Council's proposals to reorganise school provision in the Pontypridd area

Present

Gaynor Davies (GD), Director of Education and Inclusion Services
Andrea Richards (AR), Head of 21st Century Schools
Lisa Howell (LH), Senior 21st Century Schools Officer
Sophie Nicholls (SN), Graduate Officer 21st Century Schools
23 students who previously attended Pontypridd High, Hawthorn High or Cardinal Newman.

Introductions

Gaynor Davies (GD) welcomed everyone to the meeting and outlined the proposal, the reasons for the proposal, the purpose of the meeting, the consultation process and timescales relating to the consultation process and the proposals themselves, should they be implemented.

GD explained that officers are here today to ask in particular why the students chose college over school and what has been their experience here.

Feedback

Pupil – School wasn't a positive experience. Teachers wouldn't listen to us but they do in College.

Q. GD - What is the pastoral care like here?

A. Student – Very good. They help me with my course and are always available to support me if I am struggling with a piece of coursework. They also listen and help if I have any worries and any personal problems I'm having.

Student – It depends on the teachers. There were some at school that were great but some that were not. I chose to come here because I could do a BTEC here but in Pontypridd High it was an exam. I wanted to do music and business and there wasn't enough take up of music in school. I think it would be a really good idea to have a big sixth form in Bryncelynog because you will have more choice there as it will be funded, but you could still come here for BTEC.

Q. GD – What about A Levels?

A. Student – I spoke to my friends at Pontypridd High and they said that the teachers are spread too thinly as they are working with years 7-11 as well as sixth form and they don't have the time to commit and support especially if they are having problems with their coursework.

Student – I think a big sixth form is a brilliant idea. I went to sixth form in Hawthorn High and the support and technology there was awful. It's much

better here and I can undertake in particular the computer course I specifically require to go to University.

Student – The consortium is a shambles. Teachers are stretched and we could tell they were stressed. Post 16 wasn't a focus. It is a focus here and we get more attention. Redacted, I had one teacher in Hawthorn High and one teacher in Pontypridd High. I had less support split over two sites and the teachers didn't talk to each other so we would have the same lessons twice.

Q. GD – What was it like meeting the new people here?

A. Student – I prefer it here. We all did our own thing after GCSE and I have made loads of friends here and met my girlfriend. It's great preparation for university.

Student – I found it hard to start because I had five close friends from Pontypridd High but I now know so many more people with different viewpoints and have lots more new friends.

Q. GD – What do you think the big differences are between sixth form in school and here?

A. Student – You can express yourself how you want to here and are accepted for that.

Student – We are treated like adults and we are trusted more here. We can go home to study and I am doing more learning independently rather than being forced to stay in school.

Q. GD – Are there any negatives to taking the sixth form out of the schools?

A. Student – It will be hard for the people who live far away from the school.

GD – We will offer transport to those living more than two miles away.

Student – Yes we get transport here too but it can be difficult on occasions. We get public buses can be unreliable. Some of the buses are school buses but they are often late because they have already been to drop off at one school.

GD – We need to get the transport right for these pupils then.

Student – Yes.

Q. GD – Do you think the level of your course is right for you?

A. Student – Our A level chemistry teacher spent a lot of time with us to make sure we were happy to do the level of work and what the options were. In school we were just told “do this course, it will be fine”. At the college open day I spoke to people about one subject for 25minutes and they supported me to undertake the correct course for my future options for University.

Student – In Hawthorn they don't speak about college at all. They just say the best thing is sixth form but they don't ask and know what we need. They just say you're in sixth form and you're an adult so grow up if you have issues.

Student – The relationships here are fab. They are always there for you to make sure you are good at home too.

Student – Pontypridd High brought us here to the college to see what was on offer.

Q. AR – Do you think you have benefitted from coming here?

A. Student – yes and we are undertaking the courses we want.

Q. GD – How many of you wouldn't have been able to do your current course had you stayed in school? Can we have a show of hands?

A. 13 out of 23 pupils.

Student – In Hawthorn I could do IT but not computer science. They said for me to go off and research it. I can't do that I need to be taught and I need it for the university course I want to do.

Q. GD – Is there a clear pathway shown to you here?

A. Student – Yes if you have a target they will tell you all the different options to reach it.

Student – The tutors are really supportive and they sort any problems. They help you learn from your mistakes here instead of just disciplining you.

Q. AR – Do you get advice on work experience here?

A. Student – I can go abroad for two weeks on my business course, and we also have university lecturers who come in to teach us from time to time.

Student – I have add-ons here too. I can learn extra things if I want to and put the time into it.

Q. GD – If we are looking at investing in schools, how best can we get pupils' input?

A. Student – Do interesting events and make it worth them coming to give input.

Student – Show off the equipment and technology.

Q. LH – Do you think the learning environment is important to you?

A. Student – Yes, Hawthorn High is a prison. There are fences all around it. There is so much freedom here to go home if we need to.

Q. GD – What do you think about the learning environment at the college?

A. Student – They trust us to leave and come back and we trust them to support us.

GD – What impact does that have on your learning?

Student – I know that I am responsible for my own learning and I feel more like an adult. You lose your drive to do well if you are trapped in school and there is no room for you. Not everyone learns the same.

GD – So sixth form rooms are full in school?

Student – Yes, rooms are full and then you are told off for wandering or you have to ask for a key to a spare room if there is one. In the college there are lots of excellent places to self study.

Q. GD – Does anyone regret coming here?

A. Student – No.

Student – No, I met so many friends here and I am not bullied here. In school you have to sort it out yourself and fight because teachers don't do anything.

Student – If you are bullied here they sort it out. Everyone is different here but we all respect each other and we are tolerant of each other.

Student – The PE boys in school were the favourites and they could get away with bullying.

Q. LH – Is there any vandalism here?

A. Student – Everyone respects their environment here. Everything is clean and tidy here. In school the driers and toilet doors were hanging off the walls, we had no nice areas to study and the college has lovely areas that we feel safe and secure in.

Q. Student – With the 3-16 schools would they stay on the same site? I really enjoyed moving up to high school.

A. GD – We are trying to limit the transition for pupils who can find it hard. The playgrounds will be separate but the older pupils could help with the younger pupils and the younger pupils could use the specialist facilities that are only usually available for high school pupils.

Q. Student – It would be good if the schools just showed all of the options to you instead of only looking at sixth form.

A. GD – Yes we need to show a variety of options.

Student – I went to Cardinal Newman when it was split, but it wasn't the friendliest of splits. I was really worried I wouldn't get enough support but I get

so much support here. I even get email responses off teachers on the weekends when I have asked them a question to help me with my coursework.

Student – There is way more access to extra-curricular activities here. I do the knitting nanas club. There is also a huge LGBT support group here too. In my first lesson here my teacher said that the most important thing we can do is respect each other and that she would happily have a lengthy debate with anyone who disagreed with that. I know that maybe there aren't enough funds to create the same type of support groups in Pontypridd High, but people weren't confident enough to come out in school. Some of my friends changed their names here and staff would help here and adapt what they called them to make it suitable for them.

Q. AR – Do you think sixth form in schools is old fashioned?

- A. Student – Yes in a way because you are trapped and so many teachers left Pontypridd High because they are stressed and too busy trying to teach year 7-11 too. The 3-16 is okay but I loved meeting new people when I went to high school and made that transition. There was a lot of bullying in my primary so I was glad to meet new people.

GD – There will still be some other pupils joining in year 7, but we are trying to minimise the number of transitions generally.

GD thanked all for their inputs.
The meeting closed.

**Notes of a meeting held with the school council
at Hawthorn High School**

Monday 12th November at 3:30 pm

**Meeting to discuss the Council's proposals to reorganise school provision in
the Pontypridd area**

RCT Council officers present:

Gaynor Davies, Director of Education and Inclusion Services
Bernard Whittingham, Head of Secondary School Achievement
Lisa Howell, 21st Century Team Officer
Sophie Nicholls, Graduate Officer 21st Century Schools
46 pupils present

Gaynor Davies (GD) welcomed everyone to the meeting and outlined the proposal, the reasons for the proposal, the purpose of the meeting, the consultation process and timescales relating to the consultation process and the proposals themselves, should they be implemented.

Q. GD – Do you understand the proposal and what are your views on it?

A. I want to stay here and if the sixth form shuts I will have to travel. My parents don't drive and I can't get free transport.

A. GD - We want to give you more choice at sixth form instead of small sixth forms with limited courses. Those who are eligible for free transport will get it providing they live further than the two mile safe walking distance from their nearest suitable school.

Q. If this will be a 21st Century School does this mean all schools in the 21st century won't have a sixth form?

A. We are trying to create a larger sixth form to make more curriculum courses available and financially viable. We also want to ensure that school buildings are fit for the 21st Century. Creating a 3-16 school also minimises unnecessary changes for pupils and eases transition.

A. The 21st century developments mean there will be change. This can include moving schools. So far in the new schools that have opened this year pupils and staff have found that moving schools for post 16 education has been a great stepping stone for pupils to prepare them for Higher Education.

Q. The Pontypridd area is huge with 33,000 people and some live as far as Ynysybwl. If you are spending £12m, can't we have a sixth form in the Pontypridd area, like Garth Olwg have for Welsh Medium?

A. Sixth forms need to have around 250 pupils to be financially viable. Small sixth forms take funding away from Key Stage 3 and 4 pupils, which is unfair to those pupils. Projections and formula from Welsh Government help the Local

Authority assess where there is a need for a sixth form and how large that would need to be. Welsh medium catchment areas are much larger so they need a local sixth form to avoid travelling over the 40 minute maximum travel time recommended by Welsh Government.

Q. Will you be changing the shape of the building?

A. The Council's Corporate Estates team undertake several surveys on the buildings to see what is possible. With a £12m investment it is likely that some of the buildings will change.

Q. Cardiff Road already has too much traffic on it. If there are 400 pupils attending the sixth form how will the road cope with the traffic?

A. As part of the 21st Century Schools works we often change the entrances to schools where appropriate or necessary.

A. Safe routes to school surveys are always carried out by the RCT Highways department and any changes needed to ensure the route is safe for staff and pupils to access the site will be undertaken. This could include traffic calming measures, road lay outs etc.

Q. There is already a 'super-school' with a sixth form in Y Pant and Bryncelynnog is very close. If the proposals go ahead there won't be one in Pontypridd, so why are you going to put it in Bryncelynnog?

A. Y Pant is a school that is full and oversubscribed every year. We are looking to expand and create one larger sixth form to benefit pupil curriculum opportunities and when deciding on the location we look at a number of factors. Bryncelynnog currently has a larger sixth form, improving results for A Levels, and has a site that is appropriate to build on and adapt for the new sixth form provision.

A. Coleg Y Cymoedd is also an option for pupils studying at post-16 level, which is based in the Pontypridd area.

Q. So why make Y Pant a 'super-school' if it's already full?

A. Y Pant is always oversubscribed and the catchment area for this school has been changed to try and combat this issue.

A. We are also restricted with some sites, especially Y Pant, as there has to be enough outdoor play space for pupils. We wouldn't be allowed to build much more on the Y Pant site due to the size of the site.

Q. Cardinal Newman tried to send their pupils to Coleg Y Cymoedd for sixth form a few years ago and brought them back because the results weren't good enough. How are they doing now?

A. Coleg Y Cymoedd offer a range of A-Level and vocational courses. You will be able to choose between Coleg Y Cymoedd and Bryncelynnog for your post-16 education if proposals go ahead.

A. The un-ratified results for the 2018 A-Level exams at Coleg Y Cymoedd were very good. These will soon be ratified and made public.

Q. *I used to travel to Cardiff College every day and it took over an hour. It could take the same to get to Bryncelynnog from here so I think this would make more students automatically choose college.*

A. Welsh Government recommend that the journey to school should take no longer than 40 minutes. It definitely shouldn't take that long for pupils of Hawthorn to reach Bryncelynnog. Continuing the pupil/teacher relationship is important too which is why 3-16 is a good option here. Post-16 pupils are more capable of coping with a transition to ensure they are able to access the best curriculum options for them.

Q. *Sixth formers have free lessons so have more time to do extra duties e.g. school council and buddies. This would be put onto year 11 pupils who don't have the time to do this.*

A. Sixth formers should in fact be busier because of the nature of their workload. They have a lot of independent studying to do. The 11-16 schools I have worked in have shown this to be beneficial because many 15/16year olds relish the chance to have the responsibilities at a younger age.

Q. *If year 12 is similar to year 11, I wouldn't want the responsibilities so young. Sixth form contribute loads to all pupils and year 11 has more exams. The sixth form do newspapers, anti-bullying ambassadors etc. and if they weren't able to help it would be hard.*

Q. *I had so much help from the sixth form then I moved to this school and I chose this school because of the education and relationships instead of going to Tonyrefail or Bryncelynnog which are both closer to me.*

Q. *School Lane is already very busy. Will you be able to manage the increased volume of people with the budget that you have?*

A. The proposal is match funded by Welsh Government so this makes it much more financially viable. We will conduct safe routes assessments and we have a duty of care to ensure the routes into school are safe.

Q. *Garth Olwg have a 3-19 school being created; why don't we get that opportunity to have senior leadership roles? We won't get that in Bryncelynnog.*

A. All pupils transitioning to Bryncelynnog could still have the opportunity to apply for those positions in the new sixth form. The new provision would be larger but could allow for a better education. The sixth form there will still have responsibilities to help with the whole school.

A. In Tonyrefail where other sixth forms have amalgamated the current Head Boy was from Ferndale School and has just moved to Tonyrefail School for sixth form.

- Q. So we could still help younger pupils there.**
- A. Yes
- Q. Why are we changing it if it is going okay so far?**
- A. We always strive to move forward and improve. Improvements mean change and we always strive for change that will improve current education provision.
- Q. Half of sixth form provision here and half at Bryncelynnog or Coleg Y Cymoedd. What happens to me as I will be going into year 13 when this happens?**
- A. At the end of year 11 you would be given the option to move then. If you stay on for sixth form in the school your subjects will have to be offered when you move.
- Q. Y Pant had more than £20million and Tonyrefail had more than £40million. How can we be a super school with only a £12million budget?**
- A. The way the budgets are calculated depends on the size and condition of what is there already. We in RCT spend a lot on our schools. We need to think holistically about the budgets as the money being put into Bryncelynnog will be benefiting some pupils here too.
- Q. There doesn't seem to be enough money being spent here to make the school eco friendly and new technology costs a lot of money.**
- A. If you compare £40million to £12million it obviously seems much less but we look at the sites holistically. This is still a consultation and if the proposal is accepted and surveys completed, the allocated budget could go up or down. This is also not a one off spend as we continually undertake school improvement works.
- Q. With more pupils coming here how will you make it eco-friendly with the increase of traffic on site?**
- A. New materials for schools help make it eco friendly by lowering the CO2 emissions used to create heating etc. A traffic impact assessment will also be undertaken.
- Q. This school was built a long time ago. 21st Century schools should be built with 21st Century materials and not have buildings with asbestos. Is £12million enough?**
- A. Not every building will be removed but we need to do as many surveys as possible to ensure we invest sensibly in a way that is safe for pupils and staff.
- Q. GD – How best can we consult with you in the future?**

A. Pupils – Assembly, online surveys and social media.

Questions and comments from School Council at Hawthorn High – left as written notes.

- ***What are your plans for disability access for the new supers-school within the school?***
- ***Have you considered the psychological effects of having such young children and older children in a combined space and how it will affect their mental health?***
- ***What compensation will people living on school lane receive if you are making drastic changes to the road and surrounding areas?***
- ***How do you justify the difference in expenditure for the 21st century schools? For example Tonyrefail had £40m and Y Pant had £23m but we only get £12m. Why is there such a big difference? Surely in such a deprived area a focus should be put on us?***
- ***We have been in the school since year 7. Why should our learning be disrupted? I don't understand why we need to move. Why fix something if it's not broken? Our school wouldn't have the same dynamic if the sixth form left.***
- ***Are the current super-schools working?***
- ***This would affect all the children - learning GCSE level is stressful enough but not having adequate classroom space to learn effectively is very detrimental to their learning.***
- ***How much of our green space are you going to use?***
- ***What does Bryncelynnog have that Pontypridd doesn't?***
- ***We have read the reports you have written about our school and they are quite negative, when in actuality we are on a par with schools like Bryn and Ponty. How will reviews like this encourage pupils from Gwauncelyn to join our school?***
- ***There is too much pressure on year 11 already and to take away the sixth form would make it worse.***
- ***How are you going to ensure pupils in different primaries get the same education as those who are involved in the school?***
- ***GCSEs have changed an extreme amount, so it is unfair to give sixth former duties to year 11 pupils. I find having a small sixth form is beneficial as teachers are able to focus on pupils' needs.***
- ***What do you plan on doing with the current teachers when the new school is built?***
- ***What would happen if A-Level grades worsen because of the change?***
- ***What strategies are to be put in place to guarantee safety for younger children?***
- ***Do you really expect children from Gwauncelyn to come to Ponty only to go back at 16?***
- ***As a year 10 pupil I will be in my final year in 2022. I came to Hawthorn believing that I would be able to stay on and get my A-Levels. Am I expected to move to a different school half way through my A-Levels or move the year before? However, with both options, my close friends that are staying on for sixth form and I may end up separated. How am I expected to balance my social life with my education?***

- ***Already the car park is extremely full. With double the pupils in the school, how will you accommodate the amount of cars/buses etc that will be here?***
- ***I feel that students that go to the sixth form in Bryn have a massive disadvantage because we would have to re-navigate and find our way around the school.***
- ***Why is Bryncelynnog better than HHS? Bryn have 19% FSM (Free School Meals) pupils and Hawthorn has 25%. Hawthorn grades should be worse yet we have more 1s and 2s on the charts compared to Bryn. WE ARE ABOVE AVERAGE.***
- ***Will we have to pay for travelling?***
- ***When you create the 3-16 school years 7/8/9 will not have a choice to go to a sixth form in Pontypridd and if you create the super-school you are taking that choice away from us, so why can you not give us a choice to decide whether we go to sixth form in Pontypridd.***
- ***What will the £12m be spent on? Is this project in the best interest of education or money? College life is extremely different to sixth form. Without a sixth form in Pontypridd we could see a decline in further education?***
- ***Would RCT Council be responsible for the education at Coleg Y Cymoedd? (Described as 'adequate' with their A-Level education by Estyn.)***
- ***Have you considered the year 7s that may want to go to sixth form in Hawthorn?***
- ***What will happen to the teachers in the primaries that are shutting down?***
- ***What will happen to the current pupils of Hawthorn high during construction?***
- ***Moving to a new school can be very scary as if none of your friends were going to the sixth form in Bryn, you might not know any of the people and won't be as close with the teachers.***
- ***If Bryncelynnog is getting £10m for a sixth form centre, why not move it to Pontypridd where there are a lot more people – 33,000 people in Pontypridd as well as being a university town.***
- ***Cars go to fast down Cardiff Road and this 21st Century plan will also possibly cause traffic going from Hawthorn through to Upper Boat and maybe even Taffs Well. Even though buses will be put on there are still parent cars and more accidents are more likely to happen.***
- ***The extra-curricular activities currently run by sixth form in Hawthorn is not only beneficial to KS3 and 4 but allows KS5 to develop their university application as it's not all reliant on results but experience.***
- ***Is there a worry that all the change surrounding sixth form will discourage pupils from staying in education?***
- ***Why would putting infants in the same environment as young adults be beneficial?***
- ***With the expansion of our age range we will definitely need an expansion within the school itself as there are many classrooms that are almost always full.***
- ***I think that we should have a sixth form and Ponty should have a sixth form because they are easy to access from each other and they are not too far away.***

- *Why do you spend less money on us? Y Pant. What you going to do with our car park?*
- *Do you care about school bullying? I think Welsh Government mostly care about our future but if a kid gets bullied in school and school teachers can't really help. It will make this kid's future all dark. So I think Welsh Government is first not looking after the future, they should look do the students get bully or no because if this gets to you he will choose end his life.*
- *If you can spend £40m on Tonyrefail and £23m on Y Pant why is Hawthorn only getting £12m? If we had more we could have a super school that INCLUDES a sixth form.*
- *21st Century Schools are supposed to be Eco friendly, yet you want to create more roads destroying more grass lands and taking away the school fields.*
- *When the super-school goes ahead after a year say it starts going not so well, what will happen?*
- *By including a 3-16 school, how would the lunch times be altered for the needs of these children? Surely there would be issues having a three year old having the same breaks as a 16 year old.*
- *Since the time the 11 plus was removed, equality of education and opportunity was the main aim. Removing the sixth form from Pontypridd denies this equality as we only get the opportunity to go to sixth form in catchment area.*
- *If there is a sixth form on USW campus then they can work hand in hand and makes it easier for pupils to transition to sixth form and then to university.*
- *Why are pupils expected to stay at Bryncelynnog after arriving at school at 8:30am. As a sixth former I sometimes have one lesson a day, but I enjoy my independence and do studying at home as school is too noisy.*
- *Removing the sixth form at Pontypridd diminishes schools potential to have a centre of excellence. Pupils are not pushed to do A-Levels as there are not many opportunities. Why isn't there a choice of sixth form but rather where you are closest to?*
- *How will we handle the parking because we are struggling now and if you do make a new entrance it will take money so what will you do?*

Notes of a meeting held with staff and governors at Hawthorn High School

Monday 12th November at 3:30 pm

Meeting to discuss the Council's proposals to reorganise school provision in the Pontypridd area

RCT Council officers present:

Chris Bradshaw, Chief Executive
Gaynor Davies, Director of Education and Inclusion Services
Bernard Whittingham, Head of Secondary School Achievement
Lisa Howell, 21st Century Team Officer
Sophie Nicholls, Graduate Officer 21st Century Schools
Ellen Williams, Human Resources Advisor
47 members of school staff and governors

Gaynor Davies (GD) referred to the excellent participation of the school council during the earlier meeting with them.

GD welcomed everyone to the meeting and outlined the proposal, the reasons for the proposal, the purpose of the meeting, the consultation process, the timescales relating to the consultation process and the proposals themselves should they be implemented.

Should the proposals be implemented, the Council seeks to:

- Develop post 16 education at Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School, Beddau and Coleg y Cymoedd, Nantgarw;
- Create two new 3-16 schools in Pontypridd and Hawthorn;
- Improve and increase Welsh Medium primary provision by building a new school on the former site at Heol y Celyn, which will incorporate the former provisions at both Heol y Celyn and YGG Pont Sion Norton;
- Amend the catchment areas of Pontypridd High, Hawthorn High and the 6th form catchment of Bryncelynnog Comprehensive Schools, to better meet and match the demand for school places;

These changes will be achieved by:

- Closing the sixth forms of Hawthorn High School, Pontypridd High School and Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School and transferring the post16 provision to Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School or Coleg y Cymoedd, Nantgarw. For those students who opt for a Roman Catholic education, sixth form provision will be available at St David's College, Cardiff;
- Closing Pontypridd High School and Cilfynydd Primary School and creating a new 3-6 'all through' school on the site of the current Pontypridd High School;
- Closing Hawthorn High School, Hawthorn Primary School and Heol y Celyn

School and creating a new 3-16 'all through' school on the site of the current Hawthorn High and Hawthorn Primary Schools. The local authority designated ALN specialist class located in Hawthorn High School will also transfer to the new school.

- Closing Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Pont Sion Norton and opening a new Welsh Medium Primary School to be constructed on the site of the current Heol y Celyn Primary School. The pupils educated through the Welsh Medium at Heol y Celyn will transfer to the new school and the Heol y Celyn pupils educated through the English Medium will transfer to the new 3–16 school at Hawthorn;

Amending the catchment areas for pupils aged 11-16 of the three LA maintained Secondary schools by:

- Transferring the Graig area of Pontypridd which is part of the catchment area of Maesycod Primary School to the new 3-16 school for Pontypridd (currently Hawthorn);
- Transferring the catchment area of Coedpenmaen Primary School to the new 3-16 school for Pontypridd (currently Hawthorn);
- Transferring the catchment area of Gwauncelyn Primary School to the new 3-16 school for Hawthorn (currently Bryncelynnog).

It is proposed that all changes will be in place by September 2022.

GD referred to the detailed information contained within the consultation document which had been circulated and the consultation response pro-forma contained therein (further copies of both were available at the meeting) and referred to page 5 of the consultation document which outlines how people can make comments.

GD explained that the questions/comments/responses would be recorded for inclusion in the consultation report, which would be fed back to Cabinet in early 2019, as would the feedback from pupils. GD stressed that this was a period of consultation and should the proposals proceed to the next stage (statutory notice), objections would be received and recorded at that stage.

The meeting was then opened for questions.

Q. What does sixth form centre of excellence actually mean?

A. There are unsustainable numbers forecast for this sixth form. The ultimate goal is to give pupils a wide range of curriculum choices. This is currently unavailable here and is financially unsustainable.

Q. The sixth form pupils took that as meaning that all of the A-Levels would be at Bryncelynnog and all of the vocational courses at Coleg Y Cymoedd.

A. That is not the case. Both will be likely to offer A-Level and vocational courses.

Q. The consultation document says that Bryncelynnog have better results at A*-C than the Welsh National Average. That is not the case for the academic years 2015/16 or 2016/17.

A. Bryncelynnog are consistently improving and performing well. The 2018 data shows Bryncelynnog performing better than Pontypridd High, Hawthorn High and Cardinal Newman.

Q. Wouldn't you expect that for their free school meals numbers?

A. I agree that the factors and indicators for KS5 data are difficult, but Estyn don't compare free school meal numbers at 6th form, and only 36% of pupils returned to sixth form here.

The budget here is in a large deficit and the school has a large catalogue of backlog maintenance. We need to consider this and sixth form numbers on roll to see where is best to set up this sixth form provision.

This will provide opportunities for all young people in terms of subject choice and is fair, as budgets are then also spent more equitably between pupils in years 7-11.

Q. You can't say that all will be able to go to Bryncelynnog because not all pupils will be able to afford to travel. Will they have a choice or will you pay for transport to wherever they choose rather than just to the closest provision? It is a huge catchment and pupils from Ynysybwl will have to leave so early to get to Bryncelynnog.

A. There is also a huge cost for us currently as we pay to transport pupils from one school to another for A-Levels as they work with other schools in the consortium.

Q. Why not build one in Pontypridd and one in Bryncelynnog?

A. The data isn't there to warrant doing that. The demand isn't there to create a sustainable sixth form.

Q. Put a sixth form centre in Pontypridd. There are more numbers in that area than in Beddau.

A. Coleg Y Cymoedd have a sixth form provision for the Pontypridd area for 300+ pupils. I asked Headteachers to look at the sixth form provision when I was Director of Education and nothing has improved a great deal. The school is £400,000 in deficit which is money effectively being borrowed from the Council to fund a financially unviable sixth form with only 36% of pupils returning.

Q. Cardinal Newman moved their sixth form to Coleg Y Cymoedd (CYC) and it didn't work.

A. Data for 2018 shows that they are doing very well.

- Q. But we can't see that data. We have tried to improve links with CYC. The consultation document says that classes with under 5 pupils are as high as 28 when in reality there are only 8. I am distressed by this data. Travelling to Bryncelynnog is difficult and there is no direct transport link to here. We have no data from CYC to advise our pupils to go there.**
- A. We aren't criticising the effort you have put into this. The deficit has a detrimental impact to the KS3 and KS4 pupils too. CYC outcomes have improved so much this year and data will be ratified shortly. Children are already voting with their feet because you are constrained by the budget to offer a wider range of subjects.
- Q. We always budget for the number of pupils that pass the level 2 threshold and I don't register the figure of only 36% of pupils staying. I don't think that the direct comparison between us and Bryncelynnog is helpful. Calling them an improving school and not us makes it difficult for pupils to decide where to go.**
- Q. Carrying a deficit for 8 years we have fought to deliver a strong education using that deficit. We haven't spent carelessly. We are a leaner machine now. We shouldn't be lumped together with worse schools financially. The consultation document is painting a different picture.**
- A. You may have decreased the deficit previously but it has grown again in the last few years and this is linked to the fewer number of pupils staying for sixth form. There is more choice here but they are already choosing to go elsewhere.
- A. Staff - We have high aspirations to offer whatever pupils want, but pupils are leaving to do other things, not other A-Levels elsewhere.
- Q. If there is no sixth form in Pontypridd, you will remove the aspirations for pupils to do A-Levels because they want to stay with supportive teachers. We will lose sixth form teachers and will be a category 3:2 school because we are already a category 3 school but will then be without the sixth form. Putting a sixth form in Bryncelynnog where they have less pupils, it is not true that they will be able to do it in a more financially viable way up there. We are being treated differently to Mountain Ash who are a category 1 school. We are treated differently to the Cynon and Rhondda valleys. From a political point of view there is a huge argument to maintain a sixth form LEA provision in the Pontypridd area regardless of which school it is in.**
- A. Young people will have a choice to pick CYC and Bryncelynnog and have the choice of many subjects and career pathways.

- Q. From the top site they won't go to Bryncelynnog. Their parents won't pay for them to go. We need to encourage them not get in their way. After school these pupils can't get home, even from Hawthorn. We are giving them opportunities and if there is one barrier in their way they will use that as an excuse. 2018 statistics show that our most deprived pupils have improved.**
- A. There are sixth form provisions in the Hawthorn catchment area in CYC.
- Q. Why can't we take pupils from Pontypridd and CYC here?**
- A. The distance between the sites are then the same for those travelling.
- Q. No because there are no direct bus routes to Bryncelynnog. You could have a bespoke sixth form unit in Pontypridd for the whole area instead of for a small village.**
- A. Why would we build something new here when there is already something in place in Coleg Y Cymoedd?
- Q. The teaching information isn't clearly available for CYC. I understand it is not sustainable at the moment but a smaller setting which they are used to rather than a large facility at CYC that some pupils can't cope with must be better. Locate the A-Level facility in Pontypridd.**
- A. It is not cost effective to do this and there is already an A-Level provision in CYC. It is not morally right to prop up a sixth form with funds that should be used for KS3 and 4. If the pupils meet eligibility criteria then they will get transport to the new sixth form. The wider curriculum offered might engage those that are maybe less motivated.
- Q. Bryncelynnog is smaller than the combined sixth form figures of Cardinal Newman, Pontypridd High and Hawthorn High, and you are only moving it because a facility exists in CYC. We don't know the background, age of students etc. in CYC for safeguarding reasons, or have any control over their curriculum. How are they more financially sustainable?**
- A. As an LEA we don't decide the curriculum offered in CYC or in any other sixth form in RCT as the school governors decide this.
- Q. Has wellbeing been considered if you ship them off to Beddau?**
- A. You are assuming that it would be detrimental to change the location of the sixth form provision. There are economies of scale with a large sixth form and there will be more staff to consider the wellbeing of pupils.

Q. Kirsty Williams talks about the new through school approach to dealing with mental health wellbeing in schools. In addition, 75% of mental health problems start by the age of 24 according to the Joshua Foundation. We need to address this better in schools.

A. Good transitioning would be key to ensuring that their wellbeing is the highest priority.

A. One traumatic move is between year 6 and year 7. By creating a 3-16 school they would benefit from continuity. There are costs and benefits of moving but at 16 it could be argued that pupils are more capable of dealing with the transition and it is useful for pupils who can prepare for the inevitable transition to higher education or the workplace.

Q. Can you allow them to stay in Pontypridd?

A. Receiving education across two sites can be unsettling. There is no continuity there if pupils are struggling with an issue. We are striving for continuity in post-16 and staff will be able to meet the emotional needs of pupils. Economies of scale will allow this to be done effectively in a larger setting. Some pupils will inevitably struggle with the transition but the support will be there to help them.

Q. There is more and more pressure for staff to do the job of CAMHS etc. in schools. These Welsh Government proposals worry me as I think some children will fall through the gaps.

A. I totally understand where you are coming from. School and education psychology support is given to schools based on pupil numbers. If there is a larger sixth form and a 3-16 school, all schools involved could have even more support due to the increased numbers.

Q. Education psychology reports take time. If they are only in a school for two years that time has gone.

A. Transition is key. We need to ensure transition for these pupils is a priority. There are also Additional Learning Needs reforms being consulted on at the moment and we have a duty of care to all pupils. Communication is key, especially when services are stretched.

Q. We have a communication link with Pontypridd High too. If it takes over 8 months to reach an education psychologist or CAMHS that is a concern.

Q. Building a trusting relationship with pupils is key. They may achieve academically but their wellbeing needs to be of the utmost importance.

Q. I have a special needs child and the transition is just words. I have to deal with her emotions when she comes home from school.

Q. The college offers 28 A-Levels and 7 vocational courses. We have a large number of sixth form pupils who have 5 GCSEs who then have to do a level 2 course because they didn't have Maths and English, but they

would have been able to access a level 3 course had they stayed in school. Will that happen in Bryncelynnog?

Q. Have you done a survey with pupils to see how many will go to the new sixth form? You could spend all that money and not have any pupils move there.

A. That would be difficult to gauge now because feelings and emotions about the scheme could change over time. Some parents who were adamant that their children wouldn't go to the new Nantgwyn school, but they are attending now.

Q. My child is 12 and he said he wouldn't go to Bryncelynnog because it is too far. That's one pupil less already.

A. After doing their chosen subjects they may or may not change their minds and decide to go where the better course is for them. If they are engrossed in a subject, the extra mile may be insignificant to them then.

Q. We need to bring more pupils to the Pontypridd area not fewer. Will they be too far away in Bryncelynnog to do their Saturday jobs in Pontypridd if there are fewer chain companies and less people there?

Q. There is a social inclusion issue here. The message you are giving is that Pontypridd isn't good enough to have a sixth form. The pupils have to travel. It should be in Pontypridd and equal to all. What about redundant buildings, could we turn Pont Sion Norton into a sixth form centre?

Q. Aberdare has a sixth form and it has a smaller population than Pontypridd, so does Beddau and Pontyclun. People are seething because they want an in-school option. Shut Y Pant or Treorchy and see how people feel. There are colleges up there too. Pupils stay to do A-Levels here because it is an educational establishment which runs on passion and hard work. The college doesn't do that.

A. With only 36% of pupils staying the vast majority are leaving and take up is low. There is a steady decline and you can't sustainably offer these subjects to one or two pupils. The quality of KS3 and 4 education is not as good because the money is being used to prop up KS5. It is a spiral. The work you have done has been a huge effort but it is not working. There is a sixth form in CYC and we couldn't invest in that area as Welsh Government wouldn't support it and it wouldn't be viable.

Q. But we are borrowing all of the money for it.

A. It is 50% funded by Welsh Government and 50% by us.

Q. We are borrowing more money to the detriment of Pontypridd. Do it in the Cynon Valley. The poor children up there aren't getting any investment.

A. There is a wider picture and £160m was spent on Band A and Band B is another £168m. We are continuously trying to improve our schools ambitiously. We

aren't trying to lay off teachers etc., we are trying to create the best education provision for pupil. We do listen and change based on people's views but we will never please everyone.

Q. *How do the sixth form changes alter social mobility? With the 3-16 school they won't see pupils with aspirations to go to university because they haven't got these role models. It is difficult to establish these links with CYC.*

A. In the past we have worked with the college to engage with the schools. This is much better now than it was. It can be a partnership for the young people rather than operate as competition.

A. This can happen with Bryncelynnog too by establishing long transition links.

Q. *How much money does RCT pay for pupils to get to CYC?*

A. Nothing. Welsh Government pays the transport costs.

Q. *The consultation document says it only pays for the transport for post-16 to the nearest establishment that offers this.*

A. This is stated to stop pupils for example going from Hawthorn to Treorchy. We have stated that we will give them a fair choice of sixth form provision and we will do so.

Q. *I am struggling to cope with the projections. If a significant number choose CYC then £10m for a sixth form in Bryncelynnog is a waste if there aren't 420 pupils there. If the funding is going to do other things on site then we want to understand that better because I see they need that too.*

A. Realigning the catchment areas is being done to cope with the housing developments in the area. We are still looking at options for the building alterations at the moment.

Q. *How sustainable post 2022 is Hawthorn if we are trying to get pupils here from closer to Bryncelynnog, when we are being described as third / fourth quartile school and Bryncelynnog is being described as 'improving'. It will be difficult to get pupils here, especially if they will have to go back to Bryncelynnog for sixth form. It is not a fair comparison to take a school with 25% Free School Meals and compare them to Bryncelynnog with 14.5% when the Welsh average is 16.5%.*

Q. *Pupils at Gwauncelyn won't want to come to Hawthorn if they are going to then have to go back to Bryncelynnog for sixth form, especially when looking at pastoral needs. It's not about Hawthorn it's about continuity. Gwauncelyn have a two form entry so that's a huge number of pupils that could come here but probably won't.*

A. Parents can choose to send their child to any school if there are spaces available in the year group. In Y Pant we still have a lot of pupils from Penygawsi attending. Until the year group is full, parents can choose.

- Q. We are grateful for the catchment changes, but I think the reality will be slightly different. We need to think about how they are perceived as parents are looking for schools to add value to their child. The subliminal message is that Pontypridd High and Hawthorn High aren't good enough.**
- A. That hasn't happened so far. The number of out of catchment pupils attending Treorchy has dropped.
- A. The primary section of Nantgwyn is now full. That number could have decreased as there is now no sixth form in Nantgwyn, but that hasn't happened.
- Q. The cause and effect are not directly linked. Painting a school doesn't mean it is better. We need to keep thinking how quickly these catchment changes will actually happen.**
- A. Again, transition is important to think about to improve this in the future.
- Q. You're going to put a 3-16 school here. In practical terms what does that mean?**
- A. There are currently options appraisals being undertaken by the Corporate Estates department but we need to think about what the staff, community and pupils want and what works on the site in terms of layout.
- Q. Is the ICT structure incorporated? What about the heating and lighting for all the buildings?**
- A. Porth 3-16 included new build elements and refurbishments. There are options we need to investigate. It may include demolitions, extensions and refurbishments. Where we can we try and go into older buildings and we do everything in consultation with the school. We do vast data analysis and costs are also based on our experiences elsewhere. Until we conduct surveys we don't know what we will find. It is a £168m budget for RCT and surveys help us decide how to split that money up.
- Q. The Governors of the school wrote to Andrea Richards in the summer with regards to the state of the main building. There are extensive drainage issues with the roof. The response I had from Andrea didn't include any details about the roof. Are you aware of these issues?**
- A. Yes we are and this will inform our surveys and the options we take.
- A. We did a study with Tonyandy and the final proposals were very different and much better than the original plans. Consultation is key.
- Q. For the exhibition in January, if I contact Andrea Richards, will I have an indication beforehand of what it will look like?**
- A. The plans will develop over time and change through the planning process which is a different consultation process again. That is where we finalise the building proposals. We are looking at changing education too.

Q. Is the roads reorganisation being spent as part of the £12m too?

A. Everything inside the school boundary is from the 21st Century Schools budget. Everything outside of that will be an external budget.

Q. I think you may need to think about separate points of access as School Lane can't cope.

A. Previous consultations did change the layout of the access. We will have to prioritise but we also have to try and look at the site holistically. Corporate Estates will conduct these feasibility studies but we will also be undertaking visits and working with you.

Q. We want to understand what we get for £12m.

Q. Rhydyfelin is one of the most deprived areas and you are proposing to close Heol y Celyn. Is Welsh Medium right for Rhydyfelin after they have already had an infant school close?

A. There is no reason that the new school on the Heol y Celyn site can't provide an excellent education. Currently 40% of pupils from the Heol y Celyn catchment already attend Hawthorn. A new building on that site could increase investment there and create aspirations. There is a possibility for Welsh Medium child care provision to be available too. What we are proposing is beneficial to many.

A. Only 50% of pupils on Free School Meals from the Heol y Celyn area actually attend Heol y Celyn. Many go to other schools including Hawthorn, YGG Evan James etc. and are already voting with their feet. The bilingual model doesn't work there at the moment and our WESP highlights our commitment to investing in single language schools.

Q. Additional Learning Needs (ALN) in schools. What will happen? Are there plans to extend these provisions?

A. The proposal to realign ALN provision in schools is currently on the Council's website. New schools are often well placed to provide these provisions. ALN provision will have reserved areas in schools should they need to be used in the future. These spaces will be fit for purpose and fully accessible. There is no need for a primary complex needs class in the area at the moment, but there may be in the future and we will reassess this as part of our wider plan every few years.

Q. If this is a 21st Century School we need to be mindful of pupils who may be transferring here and how we cater for them.

A. Current data says we don't need it now, but we designate space to try and accommodate that in future.

Q. Don't be afraid of saying good outcomes about Hawthorn. The language used around the school isn't fair and we need to change that.

Q. What are the timescales for staff? Can the staff changes be done as early as possible? We don't want teachers thinking of redundancy so leaving early.

A. The decisions regarding the proposal are made first. Then, if the proposals proceed, the temporary governing body are appointed which will be a mixture of governors from affected schools. The Headteacher is then appointed and the rest of the school structure is put in place. A document will be issued to staff explaining the Headteacher and Governors' proposals for a new structure and you will be consulted on this.

Q. The information given to Governors should happen by when? How can a representation of three schools happen with two staff Governors and one support governor?

A. Aberdare Community School was created from three schools. Porth from four, and Nantgwyn from five. These all worked smoothly.

Q. What criteria do they use to make it an equitable decision?

A. Individuals can apply and the LEA will decide. Governors selected then choose community governors. They are making decisions about a new whole school, not three schools. There will be representation from all current governing bodies on the temporary governing body on it. There will be your representative for Hawthorn if you like.

Mark Cleverly – Members meet with unions for advice when the structure happens. I have been through this in Tonyrefail as a staff member and as a union representative. We can arrange a meeting to clear up any questions.

A. HR can also meet with staff on an individual basis if required.

GD thanked all for attending and sharing opinions.

**Notes of a meeting held with staff and governors
at Hawthorn Primary School**

Wednesday 14th November at 3:30 pm

**Meeting to discuss the Council's proposals to reorganise school provision in the
Pontypridd area**

Present

Esther Thomas, Temporary Service Director for Access & Inclusion Services
Lisa Howell, Senior 21st Century Schools Officer
Martin Silezin, 14-19 Strategy Officer
Ellen Williams, Human Resources Advisor
Sophie Nicholls, Graduate Officer 21st Century Schools
Catrin Edwards, Head Of Service Transformation and Data Systems
24 members of school staff and governors

The headteacher opened the meeting.

Esther Thomas (ET) introduced the Council officers.

ET welcomed everyone to the meeting and outlined the proposal, the reasons for the proposal, the purpose of the meeting, the consultation process, the timescales relating to the consultation process and the proposals themselves should they be implemented.

Should the proposals be implemented, the Council seeks to:

- Develop post 16 education at Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School, Beddau and Coleg y Cymoedd, Nantgarw;
- Create two new 3-16 schools in Pontypridd and Hawthorn;
- Improve and increase Welsh Medium primary provision by building a new school on the former site at Heol y Celyn, which will incorporate the former provisions at both Heol y Celyn and YGG Pont Sion Norton;
- Amend the catchment areas of Pontypridd High, Hawthorn High and the 6th form catchment of Bryncelynnog Comprehensive Schools, to better meet and match the demand for school places;

These changes will be achieved by:

- Closing the sixth forms of Hawthorn High School, Pontypridd High School and Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School and transferring the post-16 provision to Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School or Coleg y Cymoedd, Nantgarw. For those students who opt for a Roman Catholic education, sixth form provision

will be available at St David's College, Cardiff;

- Closing Pontypridd High School and Cilfynydd Primary School and creating a new 3-16 'all through' school on the site of the current Pontypridd High School;
- Closing Hawthorn High School, Hawthorn Primary School and Heol y Celyn School and creating a new 3-16 'all through' school on the site of the current Hawthorn High and Hawthorn Primary Schools. The local authority designated ALN specialist class located in Hawthorn High School will also transfer to the new school.
- Closing Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Pont Sion Norton and opening a new Welsh Medium Primary School to be constructed on the site of the current Heol y Celyn Primary School. The pupils educated through the Welsh Medium at Heol y Celyn will transfer to the new school and the Heol y Celyn pupils educated through the English Medium will transfer to the new 3 – 16 school at Hawthorn;

Amending the catchment areas for pupils aged 11-16 of the three LA maintained secondary schools by:

- Transferring the Graig area of Pontypridd which is part of the catchment area of Maesycloed Primary School to the new 3-16 school for Pontypridd (currently Hawthorn)
- Transferring the catchment area of Coedpenmaen Primary School to the new 3-16 school for Pontypridd (currently Hawthorn)
- Transferring the catchment area of Gwauncelyn Primary School to the new 3-16 school for Hawthorn (currently Bryncelynnog)

It is proposed that all changes will be in place by September 2022.

ET referred to the detailed information contained within the consultation document which had been circulated and the consultation response pro-forma contained therein (further copies of both were available at the meeting) and referred to page 5 of the consultation document which outlines how people can make comments.

ET explained that the questions/comments/responses would be recorded for inclusion in the consultation report, which would be fed back to Cabinet in early 2019, as would the feedback from pupils. ET stressed that this was a period of consultation and should the proposals proceed to the next stage (statutory notice), objections would be received and recorded at that stage.

The meeting was then opened for questions.

Q. We had an invitation to a meeting at Clydach Vale. At 3pm we were told the proposals. We were told that the proposals would be online the following morning but they were online that day and we didn't have enough time to tell staff. We would like RCT to listen and give us more time to tell those affected.

- A. The reason for that meeting was for people to be told so it wasn't a shock.
- Q. *We had some staff who found out on social media and they were obviously concerned for their jobs.***
- A. There was an embargo on the information and it wasn't supposed to be released. It was uploaded onto the website after the end of the working day.
- A. We take your point on board and it shouldn't have happened and we can only apologise for that error.
- Q. *What evidence is there that 3-16 schools are better and raise standards?***
- A. We have an all through school in Ysgol Llanhari that is working very well.
- Q. *Our worry is that there is no evidence for it now and we are worried because this school is already working well.***
- A. With the new curriculum the pupils will have opportunities to develop and create a continuum of learning.
- A. It is new but we are looking at giving opportunities for younger pupils to use facilities that aren't currently available for them. We want to push a continuum of learning that goes along with the new curriculum. We are managing our pupil numbers and this is how we are trying to manage it here. We don't have data yet on the new all through schools in the Rhondda as they are very new, however the schools have settled and progress is very positive.
- Q. *Are you also telling us that whatever the consultation says you will go ahead anyway.***
- A. No - we receive comments of objections and support, and this will all be measured and evaluated.
- Q. *But where is the data.***
- A. There is data in England but we didn't want to use this data because it is not like for like as the system is completely different.
- A. Speak to the Headteachers of the new schools in the Rhondda about their experiences.
- Q. *I have spoken to staff on the ground and I am not having good reports***
- A. That is different to what we are hearing from schools as we are having information about great transitions between years 6 and year 7 and can only work on fact.
- Q. *We are placing our children's future on a gamble with no empirical evidence.***

If that evidence exists we shouldn't have to chase it and it should be front and centre. It only appears as cost saving if that happens. I can't be in two places at once and I am a governor in Heol y Celyn. There isn't even an online web form for a 21st Century Schools proposal. This is one of the worst processes for people to respond to this that I have seen. I'm not certain we can have the best possible consultation with the public on this.

A. We follow the WG School Organisation Code in terms of what we do and how we consult. We do take your comments on board and you are welcome to email us.

Q. You have to scroll to the end of the consultation document to find the feedback form.

A. We can look to make the feedback proforma more obvious online.

Q. Parents won't be able to ask questions.

A. They will be able to in the event in January which will be a different and more interactive session for people to come and ask us their questions individually.

A. We have found that this is more helpful with parents as they may have specific concerns about safeguarding etc.

A. That is a public event for the community too.

Q. Can some be TUPE'd over to the new school rather than making them redundant? Why are we introducing a risk of losing good teachers?

A. We close a school and open a new school. The benefit of doing that is that it gives the opportunity for any staff to take early retirement or redundancy. If you amalgamate schools rather than closing them we cannot offer that opportunity.

Q. Why can't you amalgamate? Is there another way of doing it? I don't want to know if we don't have jobs in 4 years. Staff are going already.

A. A temporary governing body is set up - then a headteacher is appointed. Then the temporary governing body and headteacher set a new staffing structure and may ring fence the jobs on the new staffing structure to the staff in the current schools.

Q. You will still lose good staff who don't want to wait.

A. Some staff would leave anyway, to retire or look for promotion elsewhere, but the number of staff that have previously left due to other proposals are very very low.

Q. You will always get rumours and I have learned five or six people lost their

jobs.

- A. We appreciate how stressful this is. However, once a temporary governing body and headteacher are appointed we can progress. The staff are fully consulted with right up until the new structure is put in place. There will be a lengthy document highlighting the processes for this and the job descriptions for the new structure. There is an opportunity for you and trade unions to feed back. By the time you make decisions you will be fully informed.

Q Have you seen standards drop in the time leading up to this as people ‘jump ship’?

- A. No we haven't. The standards have remained but staff have left for a variety of reasons.

Q. If we were to make a drastic change in school we would have to research this massively.

Q. Can't we use that money to improve existing schools.

- A. Not under the funding criteria.

- A. There are also lessons that we will learn by the time this is implemented.

Q. Will there be a cross of ages like a lower/middle/upper school.

- A. That is down to the school governors and headteacher. We want to give them the chance to use more specialised facilities.

Q. Is there a training issue because I know a teacher in Porth who is now teaching in the primary level for a maths project.

- A. We don't know those circumstances to comment but the headteacher in Porth must think that this is going to have an impact on the pupils in a positive way.

Q. The new Head will probably be a Head of a secondary school

- A. No it could be anyone and could end up being nationally advertised.

Q. Of the leadership distribution in the Rhondda, how many are primary trained and how many are secondary trained?

- A. I don't have that data now.

- A. In Tonyrefail, for example, the former deputy head of Tonyrefail Primary is a deputy leader in the new Tonyrefail 3-19.

- A. I think numbers should be equitable but the governors would have to decide this to

ensure that there wasn't a gap.

Headteacher - we invested heavily in KS2 when I started as Head and realised that it was too late for our pupils and we have now invested heavily in nursery to ensure we build for the bottom up. I have a passion to say that when a Head is appointed they should have a passion to do the same and be aware of foundation phase.

Q. Would there be a full-time nursery?

A. It will be the same as it is now. RCT will fund 50% of the time in nursery and then it is down to the schools and governing body.

Q. How is the governing body formed?

A. The governing body members that exist on the three schools now will form the 3-16 temporary governing body. The LEA Appointments Panel appoints the LEA, parent teacher and staff representatives from the existing governing bodies of the schools. Once these appointments have been made, the temporary governing body will appoint the Community Governors.

Q. Catchment changes - Gwauncelyn numbers are more and we are losing two schools.

A. It is still parental choice. Gwauncelyn numbers are more but there would be no sixth form should the proposals proceed.

Q. Data on page 38 of the consultation document – 198 children in 2022, 259 in Heol y Celyn = 457; but in the bottom table it is 27 lower than that. Secondary school - if you remove the sixth form pupils then there are 26 children missing in the bottom table. I'm concerned because that affects surplus.

A. The first table is based on current status quo with no catchment changes. The bottom table is demonstrating the catchment changes made.

Q. Won't that be very disruptive if it's the same from years 1 to 6 but in year 7 there are 60 children coming into a new school who have already been there.

A. We have done a lot with transition. The associated schools are heavily involved in transition events to ensure that we minimise this effect and that they feel like it is as much their school as those pupils who were already there. These pupils would have had to transition anyway.

Q. But only half are coming in new rather than all starting new at the same time.

They are then invading the new school

- A. Invading isn't quite an appropriate word. That is why we try to create strong transition links.
- Q. Your document says that it is positive that there is a lack of transition for pupils in 3-16 schools - it doesn't seem fair for pupils from other schools.***
- Q. It's not true either because once they come here they will have to go to Bryncelynnog for sixth form which is another transition.***
- Q. The schools in the Rhondda all closed and started new. That isn't the case here because they will be here already. We will then have Heol y Celyn children moving here and with a new name/badge, it doesn't make those pupils feel welcome.***
- A. I completely agree that we need to ensure this is minimised. We will ensure that we have additional funding to fund some transition events to try and ensure everyone feels welcome.
- A. Headteacher - We work hard to make team Hawthorn and we wouldn't want everyone feeling it is Hawthorn with a new badge.
- Q. I am worried that the standards would drop because the two areas are so different.***
- Q. Can you set up the governing body three years in advance?***
- A. The main function of the temporary governing body is to appoint a headteacher and thereafter a new staffing structure. We would then be paying someone to appoint people for three years time. It has to be sensible. In terms of senior leadership concerns, we ask in interviews about the whole 3-16 school approach. Some excellent candidates fell short on this and then didn't get the jobs because they didn't look at the structure as a whole. They need to have a buy in from foundation phase.
- Q. It's easy for a secondary head to pop into primary schools and read in the news about the importance of foundation phase but I wouldn't be able to comment on the high school side with just popping into a high school for a few months.***
The three heads appointed in the Rhondda were secondary trained.
- Q. Page 37 of the consultation document alludes to parental choice being a***

reason for there being such a small surplus in Hawthorn relative to Heol y Celyn which is a great testament to this school. But on page 38 it seems to invert and says that it has 2.2% surplus and Hawthorn has 19.2%. There are links to parental choice and demographics which would hint that there is a much higher birth rate in the Heol y Celyn area.

A. We use the birth rates for this too and some of these are estimates as obviously many of these children aren't born yet.

Q. All of that information should be here because it's information that we don't know. I feel strongly that you need an outsider to come and scrutinise this before it is published.

A. You have asked the question and we can provide that data.

Q. What about the parents who won't ask that question and then think that they don't understand.

Q. My wife and I are strongly in favour of Welsh language provision, but that doesn't seem to be factored into the figures. It might be but I can't see that. If they live in Hawthorn and want Welsh language then they have to send them to Heol y Celyn.

A. A Welsh language survey is used to see where the demand is and we use this to make these decisions.

Q. I haven't been asked that question.

A. Every household where we know that there has been a birth is sent one every two years. But responses are very low.

Q. If responses are low then that is an issue as it may not be representative anyway.

Q. What consideration has been made in terms of road safety? We are working on a three year plan currently.

A. We work closely with Highways on this and I know you have been working with Sustrans on this. What we have done on all our projects is to provide a safe route for pupils coming to the new school. A traffic impact assessment is undertaken to look at all the routes – in Porth for example, zebra crossings, table tops etc. were put in place to provide traffic calming.

Q. There will be more traffic - will that be considered?

A. RCT have always made a commitment to fund this ourselves as 21st Century Schools funding only covers expenditure within the school boundary.

Q. *What if it can't be done.*

A. We will make it work. We have highway engineers to do this. We would have to undertake a planning consultation if this proposal proceeds. Planning have strict regulations which must be followed.

Q. *Why can't you do the planning first?*

A. We can't do that because we don't know if the proposal will progress yet. The statutory consultation process has to conclude first. We spend some money commencing initial investigations at risk, such as desktop feasibility studies but we will need to do more work on this in detail should the proposal proceed. We have to look at the whole site.

Q. *So you could put up a statutory notice without any provision for traffic? If that was the case we would put an objection in?*

A. But that is a planning objection rather than a school organisation objection. The roads are not directly relevant to this consultation.

Q. *Can you have a proposal for the roads in January? The community will care about this.*

A. We can't give too much information because people will think we are making the decision in advance of the outcome of the consultation.

Q. *Children should walk anyway. The volume of traffic will affect the Hawthorn area generally. I understand that they are different issues in terms of the process but we cannot separate them. We are currently strangled at this point in time with the traffic so we need to think about this.*

A. We have opened new entrances to Porth for example and that is also an option.

A. We are thinking about this alongside our consultation process and by all means make your comments on this now.

Q. *In a consultation period we want as much information as possible to address people's fears. Even if you were to show some possible solutions and not strict plans then we need to have some information.*

Q. *Whose idea is it to create a through school? If this funding wasn't in place I wonder if this would be happening and I don't see how we would benefit other than facilities?*

A. Officers have researched this.

Q. *What consideration is made to demolition and noise?*

- A. This is a high priority. We did this in Y Pant. Safety is paramount and we minimise this by working with the construction companies and the school to keep disruption to a minimum. Construction programmes are planned where possible to ensure the noisiest work is undertaken in the holidays etc.

Q. *Is there a timescale for construction? It's a concern as a parent.*

- A. Average timescales are 18 months to 2 years. We often work on live school sites – for example, the new science block in Treorchy; Treorchy primary had an extension block too. Contractors speak to pupils in assemblies to engage them in the construction processes. Any children with additional learning needs who need consideration - the contractor will work around their timetable.

Q. *Is there data on the how they were impacted?*

- A. There weren't issues. We have discussions with children and staff about the whole process and the safety of the children are paramount.

Q. *It says in the document that there is no possibility of extending this building. Why as there is plenty of space? So would the extended primary school provision be in two buildings?*

- A. It could.

Q. *I'm not sure how that would work because it feels like we are just stealing a few rooms from them.*

- A. We will come and look again with surveyors in respect of the final plans. We won't disregard anything when looking at the best solution. The £12m in the budget may end up increasing once we have done our surveys. The whole programme is £168m. If we think this school needs more funding we can ask Welsh Government to revise this. Plans will also be shared with staff to get their opinions.

Q. *If I apply for a job on the new site and don't get it. Would I still get a say on what will happen?*

- A. We want to tap into your experience and the building plans would be put in place before the staffing structure.

Q. *What is the criteria to determine if this goes ahead? What weight do the objections carry/ road safety objections? Presumably those putting this forward have a say in the vote?*

- A. You could attend that Cabinet meeting if you wanted to.

- A. A consultation report is written at the end of the consultation period. Cabinet will consider all of the information and decide whether or not to proceed to the next

stage, namely the issuing of a statutory notice. If a decision to proceed is made, then objections could be made.

Q. *Is there a recommendation by officers - e.g this should go ahead.*

Q. *Would we have an opportunity to put opinions forward in the meeting?*

A. No we would have already had your comments and objections by then so Cabinet would decide based on that information which will be contained in the consultation report.

Q. *Why was our school chosen? We have reduced capacity to make sure we have the appropriate environment for this school. We previously fought for an extension and failed. Why not merge Heol y Celyn with Parc Lewis?*

A. The Local Authority must look at the whole picture for RCT. It's a complicated jigsaw and we look at all school stock. The post-16 provision at Hawthorn High isn't sustainable. We aren't picking on Hawthorn because it's doing badly. We are looking at managing all assets, places and geography. We have to look wider and we know how successful this school is.

Q. *When I first saw the proposals I thought that going to one school for your whole education is beneficial. It seems to be two schools that share senior management team.*

A. That is up to the school management and staff to make it feel like a 3-16 school.

Q. *But if there are some classes over on the other site, the primary element won't interact if they are separate or you would have three year olds going over there in the rain.*

A. It's interesting that you took that view. The parents for the Rhondda consultation wanted that segregation.

Q. *My main concerns are that my personal aspiration for an integrated site is there but if the primary element is split over two sites then it isn't good for their health and safety or for their attainment.*

Q. *We don't have any concrete data on these schools but I am leaving here tonight thinking – 'all this disruption and what will change here?'. This stays as this school and they get a new block etc.*

A. You don't know that yet. The solutions created on some other schools are very modern and work.

A. We wouldn't want them to be separate.

Q. *Would we be at a disadvantage with a refurbishment?*

- A. That is why architects are involved. They think creatively about how we do this.
- A. The quality of the refurbishments for example in the new YGG Tonyrefail are the same quality of a new build school.
- Q. *The feel of the school will inevitably go off the lay out. I think it will be good for the Donaldson curriculum, but it's getting the geography of the site right.***
- Q. *We are not all sat here against it but we would like an input and this is where we can ask these questions.***
- A. Yes and you need to ask.
- A. If you speak to the headteachers of the new schools, I'm sure they would say that they have had a huge input to this.
- Q. *Can one of the headteachers come?***
- A. We are hoping to bring some of the new headteachers to the public events, where possible. The headteacher of Ysgol Llanhari came to the previous public events but we now have more headteachers that could come and dispel some myths. The attainment data is too early to comment on but in terms of the running of the school we are hoping to have someone here.
- Q. *Timescale on seeing plans?***
- A. 2022 is the end date but we are hoping to be as flexible as possible between this to try and make the transition as soon as possible, should the proposal proceed. Working back from 2022 we would hopefully have a plan by the end of next year for the buildings.
- Q. *So current staff could have input on what they want?***
- A. Yes but we want to have a standard in accordance with Building Bulletins etc.
- Q. *When would transition start?***
- A. It is in tandem with the staffing structure. We ask that question in interviews because it is for the Headteacher to push on as early as possible with the transition work.
- Q. *If staff are made redundant how will they find out?***
- A. Cabinet is a public forum so anyone can turn up and listen to find out if the proposal is going ahead or not.
- A. If anyone has any issues please come and speak to HR - individual meetings can be arranged as required. There are opportunities for people to look at retirement

and redundancy if that's what they want, but there are other opportunities too. We can look for redeployment opportunities and often that is quite last minute but we will try and sort this out as soon as possible. On previous schemes, in relation to the staff who wanted a position, there were very few staff who didn't get a position.

Q. *Can we have those figures?*

A. Yes and we have the numbers of staff who have been promoted during this process too.

Headteacher - NASUWT have been out and it was a positive meeting for staff.

ET thanked everyone for attending and for their comments.

Meeting ends.

Notes of a meeting held with the school council of Hawthorn Primary School

Wednesday 14th November at 2:30 pm

Meeting to discuss the Council's proposals to reorganise school provision in the Pontypridd area

Present

Esther Thomas, Temporary Service Director for Access & Inclusion Services
Lisa Howell, Senior 21st Century Schools Officer
Martin Silezin, 14-19 Strategy Officer
Sophie Nicholls, Graduate Officer 21st Century Schools
Number of pupils present = 14

Esther Thomas (ET) explained that the Council are looking to reorganise some of the schools in Pontypridd. The changes would include new 3-16 schools, in Pontypridd and Hawthorn, a new Welsh primary school in Rhydyfelin and moving the school sixth forms into larger sixth forms in Bryncelynnog and the college.

ET went into more detail about the proposal that would directly affect the pupils in Hawthorn Primary, as the school would close and become part of the Hawthorn 3-16 School. The pupils would be part of a larger school and would not have to move when they reach secondary school age. ET explained that although the children would be part of one school, the younger pupils would be separate from the older pupils, but would be able to use some specialist facilities in the school such as the P.E hall, science laboratories and ICT rooms from a younger age.

ET explained that the purpose of the meeting with the pupils today was for the Council to hear and record what the pupils think about the proposals, as their views are very important to the Council.

ET asked pupils if they already knew anything about the proposals.

ET explained what the Local Authority did in the Rhondda area last year and that the Local Authority are looking to use new funding for the Pontypridd area.

Q. Why do you have to close the school?

A. We have to close the school to create a new 3-16 school. Welsh Government have rules that we have to follow when we want to do something like this and part of that process is for us to close both schools and create a new 3-16 school for the Hawthorn area.

Q. Where will the new school be?

A. The new school is going to be here. The buildings are close together now and we will use our map and draw a new red line around the two sites to create one larger boundary for one school. We may build some new elements and remodel some other parts of the school to make it a new school.

Q. How is it going to work?

- A. We haven't made any decisions of what the buildings will look like yet because firstly the Council's Cabinet have to agree whether we can do it. The proposal is for the school to have one Headteacher over the whole school. You will be in your own classes with peers of your age. You will have access to the facilities that are in the other school such as science/computer/PE rooms and facilities. You may have some use of that now but as one school you will be able to work together much more. Pupils and teachers will know each other through the whole school.

Q. *How many children will there be?*

- A. The children from Heol y Celyn English medium will come here too. As a whole school the pupil numbers will be very large because that goes from age 3-16. The capacity will be 1,260 for the whole school, but if you were going to split it into primary/secondary phases that would be 540 primary and the secondary element would be 720 from years 7-11. This sounds like a lot compared to the amount of children you see now but it will be similar to how it is now because you will still have the same numbers in your class.

Q. *When will we know if the new school is happening?*

- A. This consultation happens now with you, staff, governors and parents of your school and at all of the other school affected. This will continue until the end of January next year. A report of your views will then go back to the Council's Cabinet and they will decide whether or not to go ahead to the next stage. They will probably make this decision in March next year. If they decide to go ahead with the proposals, we then go to a 'statutory notice' period where everyone can give their views / objections for another month. That is then reported back to Cabinet for them to finally say if we will definitely go ahead with the plans or not. This will possibly happen by the end of April. The new school won't be set up until 2022 so you will probably all be affected by it.

Q. *Will we have the same teachers?*

- A. It is highly likely that you will have the same teachers. There may be teachers who want to retire or move to new schools but a lot of the teachers will probably be the same. The new governing body for the 3-16 school will decide on the staff.

Q. *Will we have the same Headteacher?*

- A. We don't know if it will be the same Headteacher. The governors will decide. It may be, but it may not be.

Q. *Will there be loads of children in each class?*

- A. There won't be loads of children in the same classroom. We don't know how many children will be coming here exactly but it may be easier to organise the school better with more pupils here, and extra classes could be created to accommodate everyone. There shouldn't be more than 30 in one class.

Q. Will the classrooms be bigger?

- A. Some of the classrooms here are already lovely and it looks quite new in some places. When we build new spaces within schools there are certain sizes of classrooms that we have to provide. The Building Bulletin book which we use says exactly how big we have to build the classrooms when we build new ones. They won't be small classrooms for you.

Q. Will all the rooms be different?

- A. The classrooms are different now. The teachers have their own rooms and decorate them how they want to. If we build new classrooms there are some things that have to be the same, for example we have to put glass panels in the doors, but they are mainly standard classrooms that the teachers are able to make their own with displays etc. We make sure that there is good lighting, ICT infrastructure and a C-Touch board. For younger children they are on risers so the touch board can move up and down for all pupils to reach. There will be different equipment outside and different size tables and chairs etc. for pupils of different ages.

Q. What are the classrooms going to look like?

- A. They will be beautiful. You already have a lovely school. Is there anything you would like changed in your classes now?
- A. No not really.
- A. There will be sinks etc. that are slightly different heights in different classes, tables, chairs, ICT, storage etc. Then the classroom will be filled with your lovely creations.

Q. Where would the classes be in our new school?

- A. We don't know the answer to that yet. We are here to get your ideas but we don't know yet exactly how it will look. In a few weeks' time we will bring some surveyors with us who will come and assess what buildings are best to use and what needs to be changed. An architect will draw and design a plan for the new school and see where we can put some new classrooms. I don't think we will need to do too much here but as the primary will be larger we will need to put extra classrooms somewhere. When we have the plans we will bring some drawings for you to see and give us your opinion on.

Q. What new things will we have?

- A. New ICT equipment as we mentioned. New toilets, new furniture.
- A. It will depend on how the buildings are used too. It depends if your hall is big enough for everyone and there will be lots of new things to accommodate everyone.

Q. *Where will all the equipment be kept?*

A. We try and build in some storage into every classroom. There will be other places in the school where we can build stores for things like health and safety equipment. They need to have specific places to put things. Storage for classes is important for you too. There will be places for everything.

Q. *Are we going to have a second floor?*

A. Again we don't know yet. There won't be one on this block but if we build a new one there may be a second floor. We have built a range of new schools with a single floor and others with two floors because we have a smaller area to build on. We need to make sure you have enough outdoor space to play in. Would you mind if it was one or two floors?

A. Pupil - We want two floors.

Q. *Why?*

A. Pupil - If I am tired I can walk downstairs and wake up a bit.

Q. *Will we have a lift?*

A. If we build two floors then you will definitely have a lift. If it is one floor then you won't.

Q. *Why would you need a lift?*

A. Pupil - For disabled people

A. Well done. We need to think about the future if there are any pupils who need help to access a second floor.

Q. *Will there still be a football field?*

A. Yes we wouldn't take any of your play space away. To be healthy and fit you need places to exercise so the more room we give you to try new sports or exercises the better.

Q. *Will there still be a SAP room - where we talk to the teachers about our feelings and emotions?*

A. That will be down to the teachers to say that they really need to have that for the pupils. We need to make sure the children are happy and as you go through the 3-16 school it is important that you talk.

A. In many secondary schools there are also special spaces for this.

A. We can give you the space but it will be up to the staff to make sure it is used for that. Older children may be able to help too.

Q. What will happen to the swimming pool?

A. It will stay. We have no plans to take it and you should be able to use it during and after school.

Q. What will the canteen look like?

A. What would you like it to look like that is different to how it is now?

A. Pupil - Comfier chairs not benches.
Colourful instead of one boring colour.
Not benches for you to fold out all the time.
Like in high school it is a canteen, not a hall too.

A. We are trying to do that in other schools. We need to have the space on site for outdoor play too. That is why we tend to put the canteen and hall as one shared space. That doesn't mean that you can't advise us on colours or furniture that you want.

Q. What will the food be like?

A. It won't really change.

Q. Will there still be after school clubs?

A. If you have lots of after school clubs now then they will probably continue and we would advise the teachers that they should make sure they have the opportunities to do more.

Q. Will the older children mix with the other children?

A. They might. There are opportunities for the older children to help with you reading etc. If you have older brothers or sisters next door you may get to see them. There won't be older children wandering around where you are as they would be in lessons. Are you happy for the older children to be there?

A. Pupil - Yes as long as they are in their own classes.

A. You would always be safe and have your own toilets. If some of you excel in maths etc. then maybe you can have a lesson with year 7.

Q. Will there be mixed toilets?

A. What do you have now?

A. Pupil - We have separate toilets now but the infants are mixed.

A. Where we have put mixed toilets in for secondary age pupils, you can see into the sink area. Where there are mixed toilets the doors go from the floor to the ceiling to they are private. Lots of people were a bit worried when we did that but they are working very well in the schools they are in now. Bullying and children misbehaving in toilets has got much less.

Q. Will it take 10 minutes to get to the toilet and back?

A. New schools have toilets very close to the classes. That is how we will start the planning, but where we can't do that we will have to ensure that the toilets are close enough.

Q. Will older pupils be in the pupil council?

A. A school council could then be from age 3-16. To make decisions for the whole school you would need opinions from many pupils. There may be smaller groups but that would be down to the staff and Headteacher to decide.

Q. Will older children come to our discos?

A. Do you want the children at your discos? It would be down to the staff. The older children may not want to come. As a whole school council you possibly could decide that. Do you want something for everyone or for just one part?

Q. What about bullying? Will there be more and will it be harder to control? Lots of our children moved from Heol y Celyn because of bullying and now they will be with us. We are worried about this.

A. Is there bullying here?

A. Pupil - No

A. Staff in this school won't tolerate it and we need to manage this so that pupils don't get bullied. Bullying often happens in places where people can't see you. We design buildings so people can't hide in places and bully people. You must always tell a member of staff if you are being bullied. Our priority is for children to be safe.

Q. My brother said there are not adults on the yard in Hawthorn High.

A. There should be people on the yard supervising.

A. Lots of schools have safe places for you to go to. Where there are a mix of ages we have found that pupils become calmer because they are around their younger brothers and sisters etc.

Q. Will they still swear and be nasty like they do in the park?

A. You will have segregated play areas too and you may have play times at different times to minimise this. None of us can eradicate swearing. It is hard to make people stop swearing but the staff will manage this and make sure you are safe.

Q. Are we going to be disrupted when everything is being built?

A. I can't say that there will be no disruption because you are going to be in a school where we may be building other blocks, decorating or demolishing some

spaces etc. I can promise that the construction team are going to put big fences up to keep the staff and pupils separate from the works and they would have a good team on site that would come and visit you and speak to you to explain to you what is going on. If you have issues or complaints your staff will be able to complain and tell the construction people to stop. It will be important for exam time to be quiet so we need to make sure there is excellent communication. The project manager will be familiar to you and anything too noisy or disruptive can be sorted out between your staff and the project manager. We only let builders on our sites that will work with us and listen to us.

Q. *When will they start building? Will it be in the six weeks holidays?*

A. Some work may be in the six weeks holidays, But there would be a project plan for the whole school. Pupils would be able to visit and see how it is being built. We need to make sure you can still learn while it is going on, so no extra days off for you.

Q. *What is the school name going to be?*

A. It will be for the school governors to come up with suggestions based on your opinions and they then recommend the name to the Council. The Councillors will then decide the final name for the school.

Q. *What will the uniform and logo be like?*

A. What would you like it to be?

A. Pupil - Half of ours of half or Heol y Celyn
Red

A. It will be up to the governors and school staff to decide.

Q. *Will we get to see the school before it opens?*

A. Hopefully you will be part of the whole process rather than just seeing it at the end. We can make changes to colour schemes etc. then as it goes on. Pupils could help choose toilet colours etc.

Q. *We know what we would like in our new school. Will we get to have an opinion on the school?*

A. If it is passed we will show you photos of what we have done so far on other schemes and you can help decide.

ET – Thanked all for their inputs and their preparation.

ET - This has been excellent and you have had very sensible questions.

Do you think overall that this is a good or bad thing?

8 = good

1 = not good

5 = unsure.

Notes of a meeting held with pupils at Heol y Celyn Primary School

Wednesday 14th November at 2:30 pm

Meeting to discuss the Council's proposals to reorganise school provision in the Pontypridd area

Present

Gaynor Davies (GD), Director of Education and Inclusion Services
Andrea Richards (AR), Head of 21st Century Schools
Nicola Goodman (NG), Senior 21st Century Schools Officer
21 pupils of Heol y Celyn Primary School (combination of pupils from Welsh and English streams - Years 3/4/5/6)

Introductions

GD asked if the pupils understood what the proposals were and many did.

GD explained the reasons for the proposals as being - to ensure that all pupils would be in modern 21st century schools.

The changes planned to all schools as part of this proposal were outlined as:

- New sixth form in Bryncelynnog for over 400 learners (closing sixth forms in Pontypridd High, Hawthorn High and Cardinal Newman);
- Two new schools for pupils aged 3-16 at Pontypridd and Hawthorn;
- More Welsh medium school places at a brand new school on the Heol y Celyn site; Pupils from YGG Pont Sion Norton would also attend this school and it would be all Welsh medium;
- The catchment areas for some schools would change (i.e. which school you would be likely to go to depending on the street where you live could change for some pupils in the future);
- Pontypridd 3-16 School would be Pontypridd High School and Cilfynydd Primary School together;
- Hawthorn 3-16 School would be Hawthorn High, Heol y Celyn (English medium stream) and Hawthorn Primary School together;
- By 2022 it is proposed for there to be a brand new school building and external play areas on the Heol y Celyn site for Welsh medium pupils;
- English medium pupils from Heol y Celyn school could go to the 3-16 school in Hawthorn which is also having a lot of money spent on it;
- £12m investment at Hawthorn 3-16; plus £10.7m investment at the Heol y Celyn site.

Two short video clips were played showing new schools recently constructed as part of the 21st Century Schools Programme at Cwmaman and Tonyrefail.

GD explained that the purpose of the meeting with the pupils today was for the Council to hear and record what the pupils think about the proposals, as their views are very important to the Council.

To facilitate the discussion GD asked the pupils some initial questions:

Q. GD asked whether the pupils understood the proposals.

A. All pupils agreed that they did.

Q. GD asked whether the pupils thought the proposals were a good or a bad idea.

A. Positive responses from pupils

- Children in younger classes will get better facilities and better education.
- Younger brothers and sisters will go to an all Welsh school which will be better as they will be more like the pupils from other Welsh schools when they go to secondary school at Garth Olwg.

GD explained the Council's proposals to also change other schools into completely Welsh medium schools, as pupils are then fully immersed in the Welsh language.

A. Negative responses from pupils

- Will be sad to see the school go.
- Concerns regarding the closure of the special needs class in the school.

GD explained that the special class in the school was proposed to be relocated due to low numbers of pupils in the class. Another class would open in a place where the need was greater.

- Friends in English and Welsh departments help each other learn languages and they won't be able to do this in the new school.

GD recognised that was a very important point and explained that the new schools would be bigger (e.g. 480 plus nursery at the new Welsh school on the Heol y Celyn site), which would give more opportunity to make new friends; have more after school clubs etc.

AR asked what language was mainly spoken in the playground and the majority response given was English.

Questions were then asked by pupils:

Q. What will happen to the teachers in this school?

A. GD explained that teachers would be offered the chance to stay in the school (Welsh department), or teach elsewhere (such as Hawthorn), or they may want to leave.

Q. *Where would the English department pupils go in Hawthorn?*

A. AR explained that the proposal was that the pupils from the nursery class through to year 4 would be in the Hawthorn Primary School building and that the pupils in years 5 / 6 / 7 and 8 would be in another building.

Q. *Will the Hawthorn High summer activities be affected?*

A. AR explained that these could get better, as the external play areas at Hawthorn may also be improved.

Q. *Would it be bad to mix teenagers with three year olds as the teenagers drink, swear and smoke?*

A. GD explained that teenagers should not be smoking and drinking in school and a new school like this would not mix such small children with older children - they would have separate yards etc.

GD further explained that in the new Tonyrefail 3-19 school, the older pupils help the primary school aged pupils with their reading etc.

AR added that the pupils can use the secondary school facilities - for science; art; sports; etc.

GD commented that older children usually set an example to younger children in such a school environment and behave better when there are small children around.

Q. *Concerned about the walk down to Hawthorn – risky and bad traffic.*

A. GD explained that safety is a top priority for the Council.

AR explained that the whole area is surveyed to make sure that the route to school is safe (for example – speed bumps put outside the current school at Heol y Celyn). Many ideas from specialists will look at what is needed to ensure the walk is safe.

GD added that 97 children living in this area currently already choose to go Hawthorn.

Q. *What about the traffic, as there will be lots of cars? Also, the ambulance station could be blocked off?*

A. GD explained that it was not very far, so people could choose to walk. Safety is very important and people will take time to get used to the new arrangements and will work out what time to leave the house, their travel times, etc.

AR explained that turning circles will be created to keep the flow of traffic going whereby parents can drop children off, turn around and then go straight away.

AR also explained that the schools change start and end times so that the secondary age pupils and the primary age pupils start and end at different times. Breakfast clubs also mean that lots of pupils arrive earlier and the numbers of pupils are staggered. After school clubs also help, as different pupils leave at different times (rather than all pupils leaving at the same time).

Q. *If the schools are being knocked down, where will the pupils go to school?*

A. The Heol y Celyn building will stay in place and the new school building will be built near the existing building, so the pupils will be able to see the new building grow.

Q. *Concerns regarding sister starting in school with other pupils that she does not know.*

A. GD explained that lots of events are held to ensure that pupils get to know each other in advance by doing joint activities etc.

Q. *What happens to the houses in the area?*

A. GD commented that these would stay.

AR added that new families often move to go to new school and that prices sometimes go up when a new school is built nearby.

Q. *If the sixth form goes from Hawthorn, will other groups in the school extend? What happens to the sixth form?*

A. GD explained that sixth form pupils could go either to Coleg Y Cymoedd or Bryncelynnog School. The rest of the school would be used for all of the other year groups.

Q. *Why can't we keep the school as it is?*

A. GD explained that the Council want to provide better schools with better facilities and better play areas.

Q. *If parents are separated it will be more difficult to get to Hawthorn - dad needs to get to work and the traffic in Hawthorn will be worse.*

A. Management of the traffic will be looked at as part of the plans.

All pupils were thanked for their questions and the meeting closed at 3:30pm

**Notes of a meeting held with staff and governors
at Heol y Celyn Primary School**

Wednesday 14th November at 2:30 pm

**Meeting to discuss the Council's proposals to reorganise school provision in
the Pontypridd area**

Present

Gaynor Davies (GD), Director of Education and Inclusion Services
Richard Evans (RE), Service Director for Human Resources
Andrea Richards (AR), Head of 21st Century Schools
Nicola Goodman (NG), Senior 21st Century Schools Officer
Kylie Lewis (KL), Governor Support Officer
30 members of school staff and governors
1 Trade Union representative

Introductions from Council officers.

Gaynor Davies (GD) expressed thanks for the pupils' involvement and their really good comments.

GD welcomed everyone to the meeting and outlined the proposals, the reasons for the proposal, the purpose of the meeting and the consultation process and timescales relating to the consultation process and the proposals themselves should they be implemented.

Should the proposals be implemented, the Council seeks to:

- Develop post 16 education at Bryncelynog Comprehensive School, Beddau and Coleg y Cymoedd, Nantgarw;
- Create two new 3-16 schools in Pontypridd and Hawthorn;
- Improve and increase Welsh Medium primary provision by building a new school on the former site at Heol y Celyn, which will incorporate the former provisions at both Heol y Celyn and YGG Pont Sion Norton;
- Amend the catchment areas of Pontypridd High, Hawthorn High and the 6th form catchment of Bryncelynog Comprehensive Schools, to better meet and match the demand for school places;

These changes will be achieved by:

- Closing the sixth forms of Hawthorn High School, Pontypridd High School and Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School and transferring the post-16 provision to Bryncelynog Comprehensive School or Coleg y Cymoedd, Nantgarw. For those students who opt for a Roman Catholic education, sixth form provision will be available at St David's College, Cardiff;
- Closing Pontypridd High School and Cilfynydd Primary School and creating a

new 3 -16 'all through' school on the site of the current Pontypridd High School;

- Closing Hawthorn High School, Hawthorn Primary School and Heol y Celyn School and creating a new 3-16 'all through' school on the site of the current Hawthorn High and Hawthorn Primary Schools. The local authority designated ALN specialist class located in Hawthorn High School will also transfer to the new school.
- Closing Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Pont Sion Norton and opening a new Welsh Medium Primary School to be constructed on the site of the current Heol y Celyn Primary School. The pupils educated through the Welsh Medium at Heol y Celyn will transfer to the new school and the Heol y Celyn pupils educated through the English Medium will transfer to the new 3 – 16 school at Hawthorn;

Amending the catchment areas for pupils aged 11-16 of the three LA maintained Secondary schools by:

- Transferring the Graig area of Pontypridd which is part of the catchment area of Maesycloed Primary School to the new 3-16 school for Pontypridd (currently Hawthorn);
- Transferring the catchment area of Coedpenmaen Primary School to the new 3-16 school for Pontypridd (currently Hawthorn);
- Transferring the catchment area of Gwauncelyn Primary School to the new 3-16 school for Hawthorn (currently Bryncelynnog).

It is proposed that all changes will be in place by September 2022.

GD referred to the detailed information contained within the consultation document which had been circulated and the consultation response pro-forma contained therein (further copies of both were available at the meeting) and referred to page 5 of the consultation document which outlines how people can make comments.

GD explained that the questions/comments/responses would be recorded for inclusion in the consultation report, which would be fed back to Cabinet in early 2019, as would the feedback from pupils. GD stressed that this was a period of consultation and should the proposals proceed to the next stage (statutory notice), objections would be received and recorded at that stage.

The meeting was then opened for questions.

Q. Current parents have already made enquiries to move their children from the English to the Welsh department due to the travel distance to Hawthorn. It is anticipated that more pupils will join the Welsh department in January 2019. What if this increase is beyond the capacity of the new school? It would be a shame if pupils local to the area needed to be transported to another school.

A. GD explained that admissions criteria would be applied if the number of applications increased above the capacity of the new school.

Q. What is the capacity of the new Welsh medium school?

- A. GD advised that there would be 480 in total, a further 100 spaces than is currently available. Capacity will be monitored closely; catchment areas may be reviewed regularly especially with new housing developments in the area. The Authority reviews and undertakes planning of school places on a regular basis, so any issues would be foreseen before they arose.

Q. Would Pont Sion Norton pupils have priority in relation to admissions?

- A. GD stated the Authority's admissions criteria would apply. GD pointed out that some pupils within the Heol y Celyn catchment already attend out of catchment schools.

Q. How would the Authority address the traffic issues?

- A. AR explained traffic assessments/observations would be undertaken at different times to monitor the traffic flow and make recommendations. The Authority will ensure safe routes for all pupils. Possible that safe pickup/drop off zones would be created. Example cited of £480,000 spent on the Rhondda schemes in relation to safe routes to schools. Planning insist on this also.

Q. How many Heol y Celyn catchment pupils attend Hawthorn Primary?

- A. GD outlined that recent data shows that 97 pupils from the Heol y Celyn catchment attend Hawthorn Primary.

Q. What percentage of pupils from this area go to Hawthorn?

- A. AR explained that 97 pupils would equate to approximately 40% of the Hawthorn school roll. Heol y Celyn catchment pupils also attend other schools e.g. Parc Lewis (42 pupils from the Heol y Celyn catchment); Cefn Primary (2 pupils from the Heol y Celyn catchment).

Comment from staff/governors - It is possibly due to pupils choosing other schools when Heol y Celyn was not very good and siblings are probably now going to the same 'other' school.

Q. The number of pupils starting at the school in the nursery is now increasing as the school is improving.

- A. 23 admitted to Hawthorn and 35 admitted to Heol y Celyn.

Q. Although it would be good to have a brand new school, concerns are that we are losing a school which is part of the community and is bilingual. The splitting of the dual language provision is the biggest concern.

- A. GD commented that some pupils had also expressed concerns regarding the possible loss of friendships, however, the new school will still be at the heart of the community. GD advised that the Authority's WESP (Welsh in Education Strategic Plan) seeks to review bilingual schools in RCT. GD further added that some of the pupils had expressed that they were keen to attend an all Welsh

medium primary school as they felt that they would then be the same as their peers when they go to a fully Welsh medium secondary school.

Q. *Can parents view a 3-16 school?*

- A. AR confirmed this is possible; on the RCT website there are fly-through videos for parents to view. Pupils have viewed some examples of 21st Century School buildings and the feedback was very positive. Examples will also be shown at the public consultation events in January.

Q. *Staff are very worried about their jobs and their futures, especially in the English Department.*

- A. RE explained the temporary governing bodies would be involved in all appointments for the new schools. The Authority strongly recommends ring-fencing to give existing staff at the schools the first opportunity; any unfilled positions would then go out to external advert. RE acknowledged it is a worrying time for all staff members, however, the Authority has previous experience of school closures and has a good record of helping staff through this process with positive outcomes. Although he cannot promise that all staff will have a job. Some staff may wish to take the opportunity to retire or take redundancy; there are also opportunities for redeployment.

Q. *What are the timescales for the proposals?*

- A. RE advised that if the proposal proceeds there is a two year process to be undertaken before the new school opens.

AR added that if the proposal proceeds, the new temporary governing body would be set up in September 2020 and would be made up of governors on the existing governing bodies of the affected schools. The temporary governing body would appoint the Headteacher and the school structure would then follow.

Q. *In the consultation document there is an SEN Unit referenced for Hawthorn. Why is it located there and why is the Unit closing in Heol y Celyn?*

- A. GD outlined that there is another ongoing/separate consultation to review learning support classes in RCT and whether they are in the correct location throughout the RCT area. There are growing needs in certain areas of learning support. Complex needs provision has a lot of capacity and the number of pupils requiring this provision at Heol y Celyn has reduced over the years.

The Authority is also looking to reduce transition and put provision into the new 21st Century Schools which comply with the Equality Act. Example given of Porth Foundation Phase to Key Stage 4 provision; also Cwmaman Primary – one class is to open there as it is a brand new school and fully accessible.

In the future, there could be provision at Heol y Celyn, but there is no demand at the current time. Reviews of provision are undertaken every few years.

Q. Perhaps some parents would choose to send their children to the new Welsh school as it is closer to their homes, but their children would struggle to cope with the language.

A. GD outlined that every parent has the right to choose the medium of language for their child's education. Exposure at a young age means that children can progress with a language. If pupils experience challenges these would be identified and support provided.

Q. Some parents may, to the detriment of their child send their child to the wrong school.

A. GD stated it is parental choice and places have to be given if there is space in the school. Schools have to be inclusive and make the right decisions for pupils' best interests.

Q. Staff feel the new school will not be a community school due to the larger catchment area. Also, that it will not offer English medium education. Staff are upset about the loss of Heol y Celyn.

A. GD stressed it will be a community school and acknowledged that change is hard to cope with for some people especially as some staff have a long history with Heol y Celyn, however, the Authority wants to provide the best facilities possible for pupils of RCT.

Q. Some staff feel there will be segregation as they will only be using the Welsh language instead of mixing both languages.

A. GD advised that total immersion in the Welsh language is positive for pupils. The Authority feels that the proposals offer the best choice for the majority of pupils. Also, some of the pupils in the Welsh Department at Heol y Celyn had commented that being in a totally Welsh medium school would make them the same as their peers from other primary schools when they move onto their secondary school education at Garth Olwg.

Q. What happens if teachers start leaving Heol y Celyn?

A. GD explained that new schools are vibrant places to work and the aim is to attract teachers to the school, this will create a positive learning environment. The new larger schools will provide opportunities for teachers to work with different age ranges. It is hoped teachers will view this as an opportunity rather than a threat.

Q. Will the community have the opportunity to speak with the relevant officers?

A. NG outlined that an open evening for parents, staff and the community will be held on 22nd January 2019 from 3.00pm to 6.00pm at Hawthorn High regarding the proposed 3-16 school, and on 17th January 2019 in the Rhydyfelin Children's Centre in relation to the Welsh medium proposals. Officers from the Authority will be in attendance and there are various formats for providing feedback.

Q. Will it be a drop-in session?

A. AR confirmed and commented that it will be very informal.

GD thanked all for their attendance and inputs.

The meeting closed at 4:50pm.

Notes of a meeting held with the school council of Pontypridd High School

Monday 12th November 2018 at 2.00 pm

Meeting to discuss the Council's proposals to reorganise school provision in the Pontypridd area

Present

Esther Thomas (ET), Temporary Service Director for Access & Inclusion Services
Andrea Richards (AR), Head of 21st Century Schools
Nicola Goodman (NG), Senior 21st Century Schools Officer
Catrin Edwards, Head of Transformation and Data Systems
Emma Griffiths, 21st Century Schools
Members of the school council – 13 pupils (Years 7 to 12), plus 2 members of school staff

The Chair of the student council was introduced.

Introductions from Council officers.

Esther Thomas (ET) welcomed everyone to the meeting and outlined the proposal, the reasons for the proposal, the purpose of the meeting, the consultation process and timescales relating to the consultation process and the proposals themselves, should they be implemented.

In relation to proposed catchment changes a number of pupils identified themselves as having attended Coedpenmaen or Maesycloed Primary schools, but choosing Pontypridd High School instead of Hawthorn High School for their secondary education.

The meeting was then opened for questions.

Q. The proposals to reorganise schools are part of a programme called 21st Century schools. What does this actually mean?

A. ET explained that the Welsh Government provide funding along with Rhondda Cynon Taf (RCT) Council who match the amount to make improvements to schools. ET further explained that surplus places equals wasted money and added that the Council aims to reduce the number of secondary schools and small primary schools due to some of them being too small and/or in poor condition. The Council make decisions whilst looking at the bigger picture.

AR referred to the new curriculum for Wales and the need to 'future proof' schools to provide a suitable learning environment for the 21st Century.

Q. *The programme costs £4.7m. Where does all of this money come from?*

A. CE explained how local government borrow money, like a mortgage, and pay it back. Welsh Government provide 65% of the funding and the Council provide the other 35%.

Q. *What do you mean by a Sixth Form Centre of Excellence?*

A. ET advised that this is where there are a viable number of pupils wanting to study each subject, with a wide range of subjects available, the best facilities and staff able to teach up to A-Level. Some pupils are currently travelling during the school day to attend lessons in a neighbouring school which is not ideal.

The pupils identified that there are currently 104 pupils in years 12 and 13 and they have a choice of approximately 20 subjects, therefore, class sizes are small.

Q. *Why has Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School been chosen as a Sixth Form Centre of Excellence from 2022 bearing in mind the geographical impact? Also, would there be a dedicated bus, or would pupils be given bus passes?*

A. ET advised that Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School has a larger number of pupils with better results from A* to C.

AR added that pupil numbers will be considered and whether a dedicated bus or bus passes were provided would depend on pupil numbers. However, free transport would be provided to pupils living further than 2 miles away.

Q. *Consultation document shows Pontypridd High School's results as 100% in one category.*

A. CE provided an update on current results data and pupil numbers at Pontypridd High School compared to Bryncelynnog for post-16 pupils which show Bryncelynnog as having better performance levels.

ET reiterated that the LA are not implying that Pontypridd High's 6th form is not good, but there is a need to offer wider subject choices. Only 32% of pupils returned to Pontypridd High School's sixth form, compared to nearly 45% at Bryncelynnog.

Q. *Has it been considered that pupils from Pontypridd High may be uncomfortable moving schools and meeting/mixing with new pupils?*

A. CE advised that there would be a lot of transition work.

AR added that these activities would be similar to that of the Rhondda Schools which would help pupils in making new friends. The LA want

pupils to be happy in school. Pastoral care is very important and social activities as well as curriculum management is closely looked at.

Q. *Why isn't there a proposal for a 6th form in Pontypridd?*

A. ET explained that pupil numbers in Pontypridd High and Hawthorn High would not be viable to create a 6th form. 250 pupils as a minimum are required. Pontypridd High and Hawthorn High only have 245 combined on present numbers.

Q. *A setting in Pontypridd town centre may be more appealing to retain pupils in the 6th Form.*

A. ET explained that the post 16 funding is not enough to cover the costs of the courses and Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 funding has to be used to 'prop up' 6th form funding.

CE reiterated that Bryncelynnog were not running a deficit budget, however, emphasised that this proposal is not about money.

Q. *The consultation document says that A-level standards at Pontypridd High are poor. Can you tell us how you have come to this conclusion?*

A. CE referred to the All Wales Core Data Set and advised that most schools have high scores for A to E grades at A-Level. However, RCT would like all pupils to have a better opportunity to achieve A-C grades, as these are looked at more when pupils are striving for better universities.

The student council queried the Average Point Score.

CE confirmed that Pontypridd High was the highest. However, this is not a good comparator. AWPS is not a criteria used by Universities for University applications.

The student council commented that Pontypridd High scored more highly than Bryncelynnog on 6 out of 9 comparisons. On 7 out of 9 comparisons Bryncelynnog scored more highly.

ET commented that comparatives with Bryncelynnog is not like with like when Pontypridd provide more key skill courses.

Q. *What research have you done in terms of Pontypridd High School students wanting to go to Bryncelynnog if it became a Centre of Excellence? Would it surprise you to know that hardly anyone wants to go to there?*

A. ET reiterated that the LA are not saying that Pontypridd High is a bad school/6th form. The reason behind the proposal is to alleviate the need for students to travel during the school day which is not viable for the future.

AR suggested that students in Pontypridd High speak with pupils from Tonyrefail, Treorchy, Porth, etc. who have recently gone through a similar situation.

ET pointed out that some LA's have no schools with 6th forms, just tertiary colleges (e.g. Neath).

Q. *Some students always go to college for certain courses but not A-levels. What are the standards like at Coleg y Cymoedd for A-levels?*

A. ET agreed that Coleg y Cymoedd are more focused on vocational courses, however, following this consultation/proposals they may offer more/wider selection of A-level courses.

Q. *Would class sizes be larger? Concerns that results may not improve if class sizes were larger.*

A. AR advised that it was hoped that class sizes would be larger and that there would be more post-16 subject choices offered in one location.

Q. *If 200 primary aged children are based on our site, where will they be taught?*

A. AR advised that the LA would work collaboratively with the school to determine what fits best. Options will be considered, for example, the use of the year 7-8 block, reshaping of areas of the site to suit, including separate external play area. Plus the school already has many surplus places.

NG and CE advised that the building was over 30% empty.

Q. *The document says 3-16 at Pontypridd High will take a 'radically different approach' to education. What do you mean by this?*

A. ET referred to the Donaldson Report and outlined the new curriculum – namely six areas of learning.

Q. *What happens in terms of our comments after this meeting?*

A. Minutes taken will form part of the consultation report given to RCT councillors. They will then make the decision whether or not to proceed to the next stage, which would be the publication of a statutory notice.

Q. *When will a final decision be made by the Council?*

A. If the decision to go ahead is made then statutory notices will be issued at the end of February/March 2019.

Objections will be received at this stage. Final decision would be made by elected members after viewing all documentation/evidence.

NG referred to the questionnaire in the consultation document which all were encouraged to complete.

ET thanked all for their attendance and inputs.

The meeting closed at 2:50pm.

Notes of a meeting held with staff and governors at Pontypridd High School

Monday 12th November at 3:30 pm

Meeting to discuss the Council's proposals to reorganise school provision in the Pontypridd area

Present

Esther Thomas (ET), Temporary Service Director for Access & Inclusion Services
Andrea Richards (AR), Head of 21st Century Schools
Nicola Goodman (NG), Senior 21st Century Schools Officer
Emma Griffiths (EG), 21st Century Schools
Catrin Edwards (CE), Head Of Service Transformation and Data Systems
Sarah Corcoran (SC), Senior Challenge Adviser
Bethan Davies (BD), Human Resources
63 members of school staff and governors

Introductions from Council officers.

Esther Thomas (ET) credited the school council for their input into an earlier meeting held with them and asked that the Headteacher further extend the Council's thanks to them.

ET welcomed everyone to the meeting and outlined the proposal, the reasons for the proposal, the purpose of the meeting, the consultation process, the timescales relating to the consultation process and the proposals themselves should they be implemented.

Should the proposals be implemented, the Council seeks to:

- Develop post 16 education at Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School, Beddau and Coleg y Cymoedd, Nantgarw;
- Create two new 3-16 schools in Pontypridd and Hawthorn;
- Improve and increase Welsh Medium primary provision by building a new school on the former site at Heol y Celyn, which will incorporate the former provisions at both Heol y Celyn and YGG Pont Sion Norton;
- Amend the catchment areas of Pontypridd High, Hawthorn High and the 6th form catchment of Bryncelynnog Comprehensive Schools, to better meet and match the demand for school places;

These changes will be achieved by:

- Closing the sixth forms of Hawthorn High School, Pontypridd High School and Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School and transferring the post 16 provision to Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School or Coleg y Cymoedd, Nantgarw. For those students who opt for a Roman Catholic education, sixth form provision will be available at St David's College, Cardiff;

- Closing Pontypridd High School and Cilfynydd Primary School and creating a new 3-16 'all through' school on the site of the current Pontypridd High School;
- Closing Hawthorn High School, Hawthorn Primary School and Heol y Celyn School and creating a new 3-16 'all through' school on the site of the current Hawthorn High and Hawthorn Primary Schools. The local authority designated ALN specialist class located in Hawthorn High School will also transfer to the new school.
- Closing Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Pont Sion Norton and opening a new Welsh Medium Primary School to be constructed on the site of the current Heol y Celyn Primary School. The pupils educated through the Welsh Medium at Heol y Celyn will transfer to the new school and the Heol y Celyn pupils educated through the English Medium will transfer to the new 3-16 school at Hawthorn.

Amending the catchment areas for pupils aged 11-16 of the three LA maintained Secondary schools by:

- Transferring the Graig area of Pontypridd which is part of the catchment area of Maesycod Primary School to the new 3-16 school for Pontypridd (currently Hawthorn)
- Transferring the catchment area of Coedpenmaen Primary School to the new 3-16 school for Pontypridd (currently Hawthorn)
- Transferring the catchment area of Gwauncelyn Primary School to the new 3-16 school for Hawthorn (currently Bryncelynnog)

It is proposed that all changes will be in place by September 2022.

ET referred to the detailed information contained within the consultation document which had been circulated and the consultation response pro-forma contained therein (further copies of both were available at the meeting) and referred to page 5 of the consultation document which outlines how people can make comments.

ET explained that the questions/comments/responses would be recorded for inclusion in the consultation report, which would be fed back to Cabinet in early 2019, as would the feedback from pupils. ET stressed that this was a period of consultation and should the proposals proceed to the next stage (statutory notice), objections would be received and recorded at that stage.

The meeting was then opened for questions.

Proposal to remove the 6th form

Q. You are proposing two centres of excellence – one at Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School and one at Coleg y Cymoedd. What is meant by the term 'Centre of Excellence'?

A. The more appropriate term to use would be '6th Form Centre'. Similar to that in Treorchy where there is a dedicated part of the school for post 16 learners. The aim is to deliver a wide range of subjects in one place hence removing the need for pupils to travel between schools as this is not viable. Neither is the current

breadth of subjects being delivered in individual schools viable. Some LAs do not have 6th forms at all, just tertiary colleges. RCT do not want to do that, but the 6th form numbers are not viable for every school to have a 6th form.

Q. What are the reasons for choosing Bryncelynnog and Coleg y Cymoedd rather than Pontypridd High School?

- A. The numbers at Bryncelynnog are more viable. Also, the outcomes are good. Needs of pupils are the main consideration. The staff would be in one location. Bryncelynnog has the highest standards – highest number of pupils – highest pupil retention.

Comment from school - Disagreement expressed with several comments made – quality of provision – data in document not evidenced – standards. Therefore the arguments/points made fail badly.

Q. The document refers to £10million being spent at Bryncelynnog. How will this be spent – one single building or a number of improvements around the school?

- A. The LA would look at the school and their needs to meet the new curriculum going forward. The LA would work in collaboration with school staff/governors/students as part of the consultation process.

Q. Would it not be better to carry this out before?

- A. Options will be discussed and the proposal designed around the best options - this will form part of the consultation process – the LA cannot pre-empt decisions and has no pre-determined solutions.

Q. If the proposal is not successful could the funding be spent elsewhere?

- A. Changes have been made to proposals in the past following consultation – nothing is set in stone.

Q. Evidence in the document is not supporting Bryncelynnog as the 6th form centre of excellence. Pupils would need to travel long distances to attend Bryncelynnog. Is this plan/proposal being considered due to news that 2,000 houses are planned for construction in the area?

- A. These houses are not driving this particular proposal.

Q. Why choose Bryncelynnog as they are already in partnership with Y Pant? Why was this not considered when Y Pant building works were carried out? How does Y Pant feel now that they will be involved with a Centre of Excellence? Why is Y Pant not part of this consultation considering they already have a partnership with Bryncelynnog and let Pontypridd pupils stay in the Pontypridd area? Would this not be a better solution rather than make pupils travel?

- A. Y Pant can only accommodate pupils within their catchment area.

The Local Development Plan identifies strategic sites in the area, but many have been identified for many years with nothing happening. The Cwm Coke works site is contaminated and needs a lot of Welsh Government investment.

Y Pant can be extended by 200 pupils in the future, if needed, for in catchment demand. The LA need to manage school places across all of RCT and the whole picture has been looked at in relation to these current proposals.

Q. *What happens to the link between Bryncelynnog and Y Pant? Will pupils in Bryncelynnog have to travel to Y Pant for some of their lessons?*

A. Given the numbers, they should not have to travel, as Y Pant has a viable 6th form on its own. It is a possibility though. The school will continue to work with Y Pant and further strengthen links and shared opportunities.

Q. *Has a feasibility study been carried out to consider building a 6th Form Centre in Pontypridd? Couldn't the £10 million be invested in this?*

A. This is a consultation period. The feasibility study would be carried out after the consultation and feed into the final report for Cabinet. There is no available land in Pontypridd and designing a new 6th Form Centre would be very expensive and not sustainable.

Q. *The tone of the document appears to be promoting one school over another – it is not in favour of Pontypridd High School and is giving the wider impression that things are better elsewhere.*

Page 10 of the consultation document refers to the 6th forms at Pontypridd High School and Hawthorn High School as being less than 250 and with relatively poor educational performance – this is strongly contested.

Misleading statement referencing Pontypridd High School and Hawthorn High School as being in the third/fourth quartiles in some instances; the same applies to Bryncelynnog in 8 out of 18 instances, yet this is not highlighted.

A. The number of pupils is also taken into account. Both Pontypridd High School and Hawthorn High School have a combined 6th form of just under 250 pupils. Example given of pupils achieving A* and A grades = 21% at Bryncelynnog; compared to less than 8% at Pontypridd High School. Evidence shows the poor retention rate of Pontypridd High School's 6th form. It is about viable numbers going forward.

Q. *Many concerns strongly expressed by several school representatives that the data in the consultation document is inaccurate. Need to look at trends and take all indicators into account.*

A. The LA is not saying that Pontypridd High School is a poor school. Bryncelynnog is improving and has consistently better results.

Comment from school - Pontypridd High is also improving and references to 'consistently low' and 'worst in Wales' are strongly disputed. Third and fourth quartile positioning is the same for Bryncelynnog, yet Pontypridd High is emphasised. The document is factually incorrect – the data is correct, yet the analysis is wrong.

- Q. The Cabinet report refers to Bryncelynnog as an improving school consistently performing above the Welsh average for A-Level provision. Where is the evidence Bryncelynnog is an improving school?**
- A. Results are going up. KS4 and KS5 data for 2018 evidence this statement.
- Q. Pontypridd High School's results have also improved – these have not been mentioned. The wording has been used to mislead and data used is not factual.**
- A. The LA appreciates it is not easy to hear and appreciates that the school have been working hard. The data is correct.
- Q. Conclusions made from the data are inaccurate. Data does not support the statements made. Decisions are not being justified. This document has already gone to parents/Cabinet Members with inaccurate data included. LA should have made sure information was correct before misleading Members' decisions.**
- A. A final decision has not been made. The only decision made is the decision to consult which is what this period is.
- Q. What does the LA think of the provision in Coleg y Cymoedd now (after the £40 million new build)? They were in a partnership with Cardinal Newman and the school has now withdrawn from the agreement.**
- A. In terms of vocational pathways, the college is a good choice. They are an improving college and ESTYN have recognised this and they have invested in new A Level teachers.
- Q. Does the Director of Education have any influence on Coleg y Cymoedd?**
- A. Coleg y Cymoedd have a different management structure but the LA is represented on the board and is aware that the college's results have improved this year.
- Q. A-Level results would have included Cardinal Newman pupils.**
- A. This is not correct, as establishments can only report results against where the pupil is actually registered.
- Q. What evidence can be produced to show that Coleg y Cymoedd results have improved?**
- A. An inspection has been carried out.
- Q. Isn't the fact that Cardinal Newman has withdrawn after three years from Coleg y Cymoedd proof that this type of agreement does not work?**
- A. Pupils following vocational courses deserve the same opportunities/options. Not all LA's in Wales have 6th forms still forming part of their secondary schools. 6th

form provision is vocational as well as A-Level and the college offers a different pathway.

Q. *In Coleg y Cymoedd only 3% study for A-levels. This is not a Centre of Excellence. Pontypridd High School could be a Centre of Excellence. Concerns expressed regarding Coleg y Cymoedd not publishing results.*

A. The school does not have the pupil numbers to have a viable 6th form.

Q. *Children in college don't have the same level of support.*

A. The LA cannot comment for the college.

Comment from school - It shouldn't be an option in the document then.

Comment from LA - 67% of Year 11 pupils chose not to return to Pontypridd High School.

Q. *Pontypridd as an area has a high volume of traffic which could add an hour onto the day due to travelling.*

A. Some pupils (e.g. those in the Hawthorn area) would have a shorter distance to travel to Bryncelynog than if they had to travel to Pontypridd High.

The school summarised their concerns:

- Questions about the data analysis in the consultation document.
- Questions about standards in the college – Estyn report refers to the need for improvements in A-Levels.
- Questions regarding the 6th form numbers in the consultation document.
- What is a viable 6th form? Where does the 250 pupils figure come from?
- The consultation document states that the combined 6th forms of Pontypridd High School and Hawthorn High School are 245 pupils with 44 post-16 courses of under 5. Where did these figures come from? There are only 6 post-16 courses at Pontypridd High School with 5 pupils or less.

A. 6th form numbers are calculated from funding levels data, SIMS returns and timetables.

Comment from school - Consortium working is used to make classes viable.

A. Pontypridd High School is running at a £500,000 deficit which could increase by a further £100,000 next year.

Comment from school - No-one is disputing the need to review 6th form provision in Pontypridd. What is disputed are the options which have been put forward.

Q. Concerns expressed regarding the language used in the consultation document stating that pupils 'will transfer' to Bryncelynnog. What happens if students choose not to go to Bryncelynnog? In a survey carried out with 900 students only 4 said they would possibly go.

A. Pupils' decisions cannot be pre-determined, but similar discussions/conversations took place with Porth/Ferndale and Tonyrefail (Nant Gwyn) however it largely resulted in pupils choosing to go with the alternative proposals made.

Q. Pupil voice is being disregarded.

A. Pupils opinions are not disregarded, they all form part of the consultation and will be included in the consultation report.

Q. Do we know of the numbers in Tonyrefail School and has it made the proposal financially viable?

A. 50% of pupils from Ferndale's Year 11 chose to go to Tonyrefail's 6th form.

Comment: Bryncelynnog is anticipated to have a 6th form of 388 comprising:

- 105 pupils from Pontypridd High
- 178 pupils from Bryncelynnog
- 105 pupils from Hawthorn High

Proposal to relocate primary school

Q. Page 7 refers to a radically different education – what is meant by this?

A. Professor Donaldson's report refers to the ability for schools to share staff between phases and building up relationships with pupils at all key stages. Also, being better able to cater for more able and talented pupils.

Q. The provision of transition is challenging. Would any additional funding be available, particularly in relation to schools which are not part of the 3-16 school?

A. This is very much in the thinking of the 3-16 and 3-19 schools that have been established to date and would be supported and organised by the headteacher of the receiving school. Transition was looked at closely in relation to the Rhondda and Tonyrefail schools and transition events continue. During the setup of existing through schools, opportunities were looked at and funding provided to support.

Q. If the Year 7/8 block was used, would three new DT rooms be provided elsewhere?

A. The teaching environment is important. Remodelling works etc. would be investigated once a decision had been made. All areas of the buildings and the overall requirements of the school would be looked at, taking into account the removal of the 6th form and the space that would create.

Road safety measures

Q. Road safety measures are needed and consideration needs to be given to the number of cars accessing Pontypridd High School. The £4.7 million could end up being spent on a road programme, not on the school.

A. A full traffic impact assessment will be carried out and this is separately funded. Any road safety measures outside the school site would be separately funded.

Q. Are Coedpenmaen aware there will be no free transport provided to Pontypridd High if the catchment changes?

A. They would be aware and this would be the case (i.e. no free transport) if they live within 1.5 miles of Pontypridd High School.

Q. Is transport provided to Bryncelynnog, or just the nearest centre?

A. Transport would be provided to the nearest centre offering the subject choice, if the pupil lives over 2 miles away.

Q. Has any consideration been made to create a 6th form facility in Pontypridd town centre – suggestions made of possible locations including – the Old Girls Grammar School which is owned by the University and a large area of land behind the former Pontypridd lower school site at Tyfica Road. Only an office block type structure would be needed, no external play areas would be needed for the 6th form.

A. The former Girls Grammar School is part of the University and the site at Tyfica road is simply too small. We cannot build an office type structure as we need facilities to accommodate the curriculum and comply with Building Bulletin Guidelines for school facilities. This simply would not be an economical or physical option.

Human Resources

Q. What is the process for appointing staff?

A. Initially a temporary governing body would be appointed. Then a new headteacher would be appointed. It would be their responsibility to develop a staffing structure. There is a Managing Change document which outlines how the structure would be put in place. Trade Unions are also consulted with/involved. Decisions of the temporary governing body cannot be pre-determined, but the posts are most likely to be ring-fenced for staff in the existing affected schools. It would be a top-down appointment process starting with the senior leadership roles. Staff can apply for many jobs. Some staff may express an interest in leaving/ retiring etc. and figures can be provided on a without prejudice basis. Human Resources and Trade Unions would be available for advice. The best time to meet would be when the structure was out.

Q. *What is the timeframe?*

- A. Working back from 2022 – the temporary governing body would need to be set up from September 2020 – this would comprise of existing governors of Pontypridd High and Cilfynydd Primary Schools.

Protected salary arrangements discussed. These costs would be picked up by the LA, not the school. Protection would be one grade only and there is no protection on hours.

Q. *During previous school re-organisations were some staff left without jobs?*

- A. A small minority were offered re-deployment into other schools in RCT. RCT will make every effort to ensure every employee who wishes to remain employed gets the opportunity to remain, however that cannot be guaranteed.

Q. *If not successful in retaining a post will redundancy be offered?*

- A. If there is a compulsory redundancy situation, employees who are 55 years old or over would also get release of their pension (without detriment). Human Resources staff will be available for further discussions in the future.

Summary provided by the school:-

- Change recognised.
- Pontypridd High School is a good school with a lot to offer.
- The options for the 6th form are not accepted for the following reasons:-
 - Data analysis is wrong/misleading.
 - Geographical location/distance to Bryncelynog does not work (the schools have tried to work together before).
 - The college is vocationally strong however the level of success at A-level is not known.
 - The primary school proposal is not objected to.
 - More discussions are required in relation to options in this area for 6th form provision, especially in the town of Pontypridd.

ET thanked all for their attendance and the meeting closed at 4:45pm.

Notes of a meeting held with pupils at Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Pont Sion Norton

Tuesday 20th November 2018 at 2.30 pm

Meeting to discuss the Council's proposals to reorganise school provision in the Pontypridd area

Present

Gaynor Davies, Director of Education and Inclusion Services
Sophie Nicholls, Graduate Officer 21st Century Team
Non Morgan, School Organisation and Governance Team Leader
Number of pupils present: 9

Introductions

GD asked if the pupils understood what the proposals were and many did.

GD explained the reasons for the proposals as being - to ensure that all pupils would be in modern 21st century schools.

The changes planned to all schools as part of this proposal were outlined as:

- New sixth form in Bryncelynnog for over 400 learners (closing sixth forms in Pontypridd High, Hawthorn High and Cardinal Newman);
- Two new schools for pupils aged 3-16 at Pontypridd and Hawthorn;
- More Welsh medium school places at a brand new school on the Heol y Celyn site; Pupils from YGG Pont Sion Norton would also attend this school and it would be all Welsh medium;
- The catchment areas for some schools would change (i.e. which school you would be likely to go to depending on the street where you live could change for some pupils in the future);
- Pontypridd 3-16 School would be Pontypridd High School and Cilfynydd Primary School together;
- Hawthorn 3-16 School would be Hawthorn High, Heol y Celyn (English medium stream) and Hawthorn Primary School together;
- By 2022 it is proposed for there to be a brand new school building and external play areas on the Heol y Celyn site for Welsh medium pupils;
- English medium pupils from Heol y Celyn school could go to the 3-16 school in Hawthorn which is also having a lot of money spent on it;
- £12m investment at Hawthorn 3-16; plus £10.7m investment at the Heol y Celyn site.

Two short video clips were played showing new schools recently constructed as part of the 21st Century Schools Programme at Cwmaman and Tonyrefail.

GD explained that the purpose of the meeting with the pupils today was for the Council to hear and record what the pupils think about the proposals, as their views are very important to the Council.

To facilitate the discussion GD asked the pupils some initial questions:

Q. GD asked whether the pupils understood the proposals.

A. All pupils agreed that they did.

Q. GD asked what the pupils liked about the proposals?

A. Pupils listed the following:

- If the pupils come together there is an opportunity to create new friendships.
- There will be more after school clubs with more staff and more pupils.
- Brand new equipment.
- A flat yard. Pupils can play football.

GD explained that breakfast clubs can also be established.

Q. GD asked if there were any concerns regarding the proposals?

A. Pupils explained that they had undertaken a questionnaire with pupils and the outcomes were that some were worried about making new friends and losing staff members, but on the whole there were no major concerns.

GD explained that there will be lots of opportunities to make new friends and that pupils may have more friends as they progress to the secondary school.

Q. GD asked the pupils their opinion on how the consultation is being undertaken?

A. Pupils suggested the use of iPad and/or group discussions.

The pupils were then given the opportunity to ask questions.

Q. How many pupils will be attending the new school?

A. The school will have 480 places for reception to Year 6 pupils and then a further 60 places for nursery pupils. There will be more staff, which could mean more clubs can be offered.

Q. What will be the name of the new school?

A. This will be discussed with pupils, the community and staff. It will be for the school governors to come up with suggestions based on your opinions and they then recommend the name to the Council. The Councillors will then decide the final name for the school.

Q. *Ysgol Evan James is named after a person. Could we name the new school William Edwards after the man who built the bridge in Pontypridd?*

A. Pupils will be able to give their opinions on the name of the school.

Q. *What will the new uniform be?*

A. Pupils will be able to give their opinions regarding any new uniform.

Q. *What staff will be in the new school?*

A. The school will be larger and the Local Authority will ensure a process where current staff can apply for positions in the new school.

Q. *Will there be a big yard?*

A. There will be a grassed area and a large yard. The new school will be built on the Heol y Celyn site and once completed the old school building will be demolished, making way for more playing facilities including a Multi-Use Games Area.

Q. *Will the new school be ready by 2022?*

A. If the proposal is agreed, yes. A number of new schools have been built and completed on time.

Q. *Will school times stay the same?*

A. School times will need to be discussed by the temporary governing body and new Headteacher.

Q. *Will there be a fence to separate senior pupils?*

A. Some schools have a fence, some have a drawn line marking out the area, but the nursery will have their own soft play areas.

Q. *What new facilities will be in the new school?*

A. The Local Authority will improve the standard of all facilities, internally and externally. There will be new technology and IT equipment, a heart space, a new hall and dining area and lots of opportunities for outdoor play and learning.

Q. *Will there be enough resources for everybody?*

A. Everything will be brand new.

Q. *Why chose the Heol y Celyn site?*

A. The Local Authority look at the current school sites and review the condition of the buildings and surplus places. We also look at the needs of the community and if there is a high demand for Welsh education, the Local Authority needs to meet that need. We are looking to give more pupils the opportunity to learn through the medium of Welsh. We want to provide better opportunities for everyone and the Heol y Celyn site is a great site of a really good size to build a new school.

Q. *Will there be a Heol y Celyn football team versus a YGG Pont Sion Norton football team?*

A. No there will be one school, one team, in a new community.

Q. *In the Eisteddfod now there are different schools competing. Will we be competing against Heol y Celyn?*

A. No, you will be one big team in the new school, competing against other schools.

Q. *Will there be a new School Council and Eco Council in the new school?*

A. Yes. The new Headteacher will work with staff and pupils to establish a new School Council and a new Eco Council.

Q. *The history of both schools needs to be remembered and maintained*

A. This is important. The schools may want to work on project, for example, creating memory books.

Q. *Will there be a School Hall?*

A. Yes and in new schools we create a heart space.
GD showed pictures of Cwmaman Primary School and the heart space which incorporates break out areas for multiple small group activities.

GD thanked the pupils for their questions and for their excellent input.

**Notes of a meeting held with staff and governors at
Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Pont Sion Norton**

Tuesday 20th November 2018 at 4:00 pm

**Meeting to discuss the Council's proposals to reorganise school provision in the
Pontypridd area**

Present

Gaynor Davies, Director of Education and Inclusion Services
Sophie Nicholls, Graduate Officer 21st Century Schools
Non Morgan, School Organisation and Governance Team Leader
Andrea Richards, Head of 21st Century Schools
29 members of school staff and governors

Introductions

Gaynor Davies (GD) welcomed everyone to the meeting and outlined the proposal, the reasons for the proposal, the purpose of the meeting, the consultation process, the timescales relating to the consultation process and the proposals themselves should they be implemented.

Should the proposals be implemented, the Council seeks to:

- Develop post 16 education at Bryncelynog Comprehensive School, Beddau and Coleg y Cymoedd, Nantgarw;
- Create two new 3-16 schools in Pontypridd and Hawthorn;
- Improve and increase Welsh Medium primary provision by building a new school on the former site at Heol y Celyn, which will incorporate the former provisions at both Heol y Celyn and YGG Pont Sion Norton;
- Amend the catchment areas of Pontypridd High, Hawthorn High and the 6th form catchment of Bryncelynog Comprehensive Schools, to better meet and match the demand for school places;

These changes will be achieved by:

- Closing the sixth forms of Hawthorn High School, Pontypridd High School and Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School and transferring the post 16 provision to Bryncelynog Comprehensive School or Coleg y Cymoedd, Nantgarw. For those students who opt for a Roman Catholic education, sixth form provision will be available at St David's College, Cardiff;
- Closing Pontypridd High School and Cilfynydd Primary School and creating a new 3-6 'all through' school on the site of the current Pontypridd High School;

- Closing Hawthorn High School, Hawthorn Primary School and Heol y Celyn School and creating a new 3-16 'all through' school on the site of the current Hawthorn High and Hawthorn Primary Schools. The local authority designated ALN specialist class located in Hawthorn High School will also transfer to the new school.
- Closing Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Pont Sion Norton and opening a new Welsh Medium Primary School to be constructed on the site of the current Heol y Celyn Primary School. The pupils educated through the Welsh Medium at Heol y Celyn will transfer to the new school and the Heol y Celyn pupils educated through the English Medium will transfer to the new 3–16 school at Hawthorn;

Amending the catchment areas for pupils aged 11-16 of the three LA maintained secondary schools by:

- Transferring the Graig area of Pontypridd which is part of the catchment area of Maesycloed Primary School to the new 3-16 school for Pontypridd (currently Hawthorn)
- Transferring the catchment area of Coedpenmaen Primary School to the new 3-16 school for Pontypridd (currently Hawthorn)
- Transferring the catchment area of Gwauncelyn Primary School to the new 3-16 school for Hawthorn (currently Bryncelynnog)

It is proposed that all changes will be in place by September 2022.

GD referred to the detailed information contained within the consultation document which had been circulated and the consultation response pro-forma contained therein (further copies of both were available at the meeting) and referred to page 5 of the consultation document which outlines how people can make comments.

GD explained that the questions/comments/responses would be recorded for inclusion in the consultation report, which would be fed back to Cabinet in early 2019, as would the feedback from pupils. GD stressed that this was a period of consultation and should the proposals proceed to the next stage (statutory notice), objections would be received and recorded at that stage.

The meeting was then opened for questions.

Q. *The nursery provision is approximately 60 places - would they be in the main building or in the centre that already exists in the site next to the school?*

A. In the main building.

Q. *Regarding special needs, will there be a unit attached to the school where staff could go and teach those children or discuss the needs of those children. I think a unit would benefit the children, staff and parents.*

A. There are 47 learning support classes across RCT and we do review these on a regular basis to ensure we have the right provisions. In some Local Authorities there will be a special Learning Support class in Welsh medium schools and as part of the WESP we review this. The last evaluation showed that there wasn't sufficient demand to meet the need for this. We also try to future-proof any settings we create so where possible we try to develop cross-phase provision. As part of this proposal there is no consolation for a specific provision, but we try to ensure that there is a room designated that we could use for this in the future if the demand is there. Centrally located provisions are ideal and we will continually review this.

A. Part of the grant conditions are for a fully inclusive school. There will be a building that is completely adaptable for any child going in and it will be completely accessible.

Q. *In Cwmbach there is a setting called 'Rainbows' and the school can use it to take advice from specialist staff and it prevents going through the long procedures.*

A. The 'Rainbows' setting is an independent provider who rents the space near the school there. One of the things that has been raised is wrap around care – this has been brought up in this consultation process and we are looking at this. We are separately consulting on Additional Learning Needs (ALN) proposals in addition to this consultation. In terms of the Welsh medium sector there is a separate budget for this and early years intervention for ALN and we agree with this.

Q. *Time-scales for this. If the school will open in 2022 can you take us back from there to show the process from the endorsement from the Local Authority (LA) and then to the opening of the school in terms of staff and governors etc.*

A. Should the proposal be approved, we would set up a temporary governing body and representation would be decided by the LA appointments panel. Only current governors of the affected schools can apply for a position on the temporary governing body. Once established, the temporary governing body would appoint the headteacher and then a new staffing structure for the school would be created by the headteacher and the temporary governing body. The temporary governing body would also be responsible for organisation issues such as uniform, school name proposals etc. We would encourage them to consult with pupils on this too.

A. We look to start the recruitment process at least two years prior to September 2022. It does take a while to go through the process but once the headteacher is appointed, the LA will work with them on the structure. The positions are usually ring-fenced to current staff in the first instance and if we positions cannot be filled then they are advertised externally. We are currently doing this successfully in Garth Olwg. Another technical point is that both schools close, therefore all staff become

redundant. Those staff who want to take voluntary redundancy or retirement are therefore able to do that. We try and do this as soon as possible to ensure you as staff know where you are. If you are unsuccessful we approach other schools in RCT to try and create a bump redundancy if there are other schools where people are looking to retire etc. There are many processes we can follow to support you through this time.

Q. *Are jobs only advertised internally?*

A. We recommend that the governors do that, however, it is for the governors to make that decision. So far all schools have done that.

Q. *When would the head be appointed? Would they be the head of the new school and the current one?*

A. No they are just the head of the new school. There is a lot of work involved and the headteacher would be heavily involved in the design of the building too.

A. The consultation will be running for a while. It takes about 18 months for various processes to happen and then the construction takes place. You will be heavily involved in this. We would ideally like to start building in 2020. There would be approximately 18 months of construction on site.

Q. *Pupils won't move until 2023 then?*

A. No the build will hopefully be ready by June 2022 and then they would move in September 2022.

Q. *We deal with child protection issues now daily and I would like a child protection officer based on site. Will this happen?*

A. The governors and headteacher will decide the staffing structure and that goes out to consultation to you as staff. In the past structures have been changed and then the structure is appointed to.

A. The beauty of a larger school is that you have got more staff who could specialise in certain areas.

Q. *Yes and for ALN etc. we need to make sure there is someone looking at this because it will be a big school.*

A. The new ALN reforms show that this could be a leadership role in new schools too.

Q. *The quality impact assessment online says – 'As the proposal for Pont Sion Norton is the relocation and expansion of the school, the staff of Pont Sion Norton will stay with the school and will be extended'.*

A. This has been revised since this.

Q. *It is in the equality assessment area and is on the website. Why has it been changed?*

A. There have been lots of discussions and we have looked at this and decided it will be fair and equitable to all to close both schools and we want to build this into the new larger school. As part of previous proposals we have done this and only two people haven't had jobs in the new schools.

A. We are trying to be equitable to the Welsh area of Heol y Celyn too.

A. If people want to finish, they are able to leave and retire. If we didn't close both schools we would have to say that people could not retire.

Q. *2022 is when the new curriculum will happen and 2020 is the ALN reforms. Education in Wales is changing dramatically. During a period of disruption like this how do you mitigate this against the advent of the new curriculum?*

A. Some of our schools are not fit for the 21st Century. By building the new school we are able to try and future proof this school and ensure that the digital technology is current and that the learning spaces are flexible enough for the new curriculum. It could be argued that this is a perfect time to do this and shape the school for the new curriculum. In terms of mitigating this, we have a large team who specialise in different areas who can help make this a smooth process. All projects have been delivered on time, except at Tonyrefail due to a listed building and the associated issues that has brought. We need to ensure that teaching and learning are at a high standard and that there is no disruption to this. This school will continue to operate here meanwhile.

Q. *We have already started speaking to staff at the Welsh department of Heol y Celyn to ensure we are on the same page in terms of the Welsh Medium education in the new curriculum.*

A. We design new schools to meet the new curriculum. We are asking challenging design questions and we are pushing architects to give us more information to ensure that schools are future proofed for this.

Q. *Are there any proposals to improve the traffic situation?*

A. A robust traffic impact assessment is undertaken and any traffic calming measures required will be put in place and any recommendations made will be met. Some schools have turning circles etc. to minimise the time parents are parked on site but we will be researching this.

A. This will also be a planning condition and we need to ensure it is safe for pupils and that there are enough spaces. We look further than just Holly Street to ensure that pupils also get on their school buses safely.

Q. *Does the money for the school take into account these links or are there additional funds?*

A. This is additional money to create safe routes and we have done this with £440,000 in Porth. This will be undertaken for all of the schools involved in this proposal and we fund this from the Council's core capital funding, as pupil safety is of paramount importance to us.

Further information:

You can still submit any queries online for this and there will be an event in January for yourselves and the community.

You can also e-mail the school planning email address and we will answer your queries.

All were thanked for their input and attendance and the meeting closed.

Appendix 4

Notes of meeting with Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee meeting held on Wednesday, 19 December 2018 at 5.00 pm at the Council Chamber, The Pavilions, Cambrian Park. Clydach Vale, Tonypany, CF40 2XX.

County Borough Councillors - Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee Members in attendance:-

Councillor S. Rees-Owen (Chair)

Councillor W Lewis	Councillor J Brencher
Councillor A Calvert	Councillor H Boggis
Councillor M Griffiths	Councillor G Jones

Officers in attendance

Mr C Hanagan, Director of Communications & Interim Head of Democratic Services
Mr P Nicholls, Head of Legal - Litigation, Planning & Environment, Community & Children's Services
Ms G Davies, Director of Education and Inclusion Services
Ms A Richards, Head of 21st Century Schools
Ms S Nicholls, Graduate Officer
Ms L Howells, 21st Century Schools Officer

26 Declaration of Interest

The following declarations of personal interests were declared in matters pertaining to the agenda:

(1) In accordance with the Code of Conduct Co-opted Member Mr J Fish declared a personal interest in respect of Agenda Item 4 Scrutiny engagement in 21st Century Schools Modernisation Proposal, as he is a parent governor at Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School also a Chair of Governors at Maesybryn Primary School. I believe that my personal interest is not prejudicial and in the event these plans are implemented I will no longer be a parent governor.

27 Apologies for Absence

An apology for absence was received from County Borough Councillors A Davies – Jones, S. Evans, J. Davies, H. Fychan, M. Powell, G. Stacey and Co-Opted Voting Member N. Crowley.

28 Minutes

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the 21st November 2018 as an accurate reflection of the meeting.

29 School Holiday Enrichment Programme Update (SHEP)

The Head of 21st Century Schools and the 21st Century School Support Officer

presented the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee with the School Holiday Enrichment Programme report.

Members were informed that the report provides information on the provision of the School Holiday Enrichment Programme (SHEP) (also known as the 'Food and Fun Programme') that was delivered over the summer holiday period of 2018 in four primary schools and one special school, namely;

- Genboi Community Primary
- Heol y Celyn Primary
- Maerdy Community Primary
- Penywaun Primary
- Ysgol Hen Felin

The Head of 21st Century Schools explained the background of the School Holiday Enrichment Programme. It was explained that at the SHEP Wales 2017 'food and Fun' National Event held on 30th November 2017 a keynote speech delivered by the Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Mark Drakeford AM, confirmed the allocation, in the draft budget of £500,00 per year for 2018/2019 and 2019/2020 to support the further development of the SHEP across areas of social deprivation in Wales.

Members were informed that following on in December 2017, the Council submitted a completed match funding application form to the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) to deliver the four primary schools outlined in 1.1 of the report.

The Head of 21st Century Schools explained that in early February 2018 the WLGA informed the Council that the match funding application had been successful. Then subsequently in late February 2018, the WLGA contacted the Council requesting the submission of a further match funding application in order to deliver the SHEP in special schools over the summer holiday period of 2018. A further match funding application was submitted to the WLGA and in April 2018 the WLGA informed the Council that the match funding application had been accepted.

The Head of 21st Century Schools informed Members of the delivery of SHEP and its evaluations. It was explained that the provision of the programme has supported some of the most vulnerable young people in the County Borough and provided much needed support during the school summer holidays and this gained positive feedback from both pupils and parents.

The Chair thanked Officers for their hard work in providing the excellent provision for the families that need the service the most and opened the meeting up for Members questions and observations.

A Member commented on what was a pleasing report they had in front of them and asked for clarification on some of the figures within the report.

Members asked how schools were selected and what criteria was used in selecting pupils for the project. It was explained that the schools that were selected were based on the high percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals. In respect of the criteria for pupil selection, this was on a first come first serve basis but all pupils on free school meals were automatically given priority.

A Member commented that there are high levels of poverty within RCT and

asked Officers if they had reviewed whether there were any other programmes going on in these areas with voluntary sector, church involvement, etc. and had we considered this as an extension of the programme. It was explained that Council currently works with our Children's Services Team and Barnardo's and vulnerable families and agreed that this would be a good idea for the future to involve the wider community.

A Member enquired whether the match funding by the Council had been taken from the correct budget. The Member asked would it have been more appropriate to come from the budget of Children's Service rather than Education. It was explained that the match funding comes from the catering budget and some suppliers even donate free food.

A Member enquired on the numbers of pupils that took up the offer of SHEP compared with the previous year. It was explained that at Penywaun Primary School the numbers had doubled and the other schools had increased, however Heol y Celyn numbers were static.

The Chair asked what could be done to expand parental involvement and make it more inclusive. Officers explained that feedback from parent was overall a very positive experience and in the future we would look at expanding the programme with a cluster approach. Parents would be invited in to undertake food and cooking sessions such as preparation of healthy meals and cooking to a budget.

After further in depth discussion Members **RESOLVED**:

- To Acknowledge the content of the report
- Thank officers and staff for their hard work in delivering the scheme.
- To receive additional reports at a future meeting of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee.

30 Scrutiny Engagement in the 21st Century School Modernisation

The Director of Communications and Interim Head of Democratic Services explained to Members the purpose of the report. He informed Members that the report provides the opportunity for the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee to engage in the formal consultation process, in respect of 21st Century School Programmes – Proposal to Improve Education in the Greater Pontypridd Area and Proposals to Improve Education in Cynon Valley.

On a number of occasions, Members of the committee have sought the opportunity to contribute and comment upon future 21st Century Schools proposals being considered by the Council as part of Band B Programme.

It was explained that on the 20th September and the 3rd October Cabinet agreed to initiate a formal consultation process in respect of proposals for improving education in the Cynon Valley and improving education in the Greater Pontypridd Area.

The Director of Communications and Interim Head of Democratic Services explained to Members of the committee the format the meeting would be conducted in order to be consistent with the public meetings being held by the

Council. It was explained that consultation would be presented as two separate items starting with the Cynon Valley Consultation first then moving on to the Greater Pontypridd Consultation. It was explained that the Scrutiny's views, alongside the schools and wider stakeholders engagement would be presented to Cabinet as part of the formal consultation process, before Cabinet determine whether to proceed or not with the next stage of the School Organisation Code.

The Director of Communication and Interim Head of Democratic Services invited the Director of Education and Inclusion Services and officers to conduct the consultation.

The Director of Education and Inclusion Services thanked the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee for participating in the consultation and explained that the views of the Committee are sought in relation to the School Organisation Proposals for Hirwaun/Penderyn.

Members were informed that the reasons for the proposal is that Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council wishes to seek the views of a wide range of stakeholders on the proposal to:

- Improve and increase education provision in Hirwaun by investing in a new school for Hirwaun Primary School.
- Improve Welsh medium education provision by increasing the supply of places in the Upper Cynon Valley by making Penderyn Community School, currently a dual language school, a Welsh medium primary school.

The changes will be achieved by the construction of a new school building on the site of the current Hirwaun Primary School. The new school would have a capacity of 390 pupils (plus nursery). The new school would replace the current school buildings on the existing site.

Penderyn Community Primary School would become a Welsh medium community primary school with the capacity for 231 pupils (plus nursery). It was explained that as part of the proposal to change the language medium of Penderyn Community Primary School to solely Welsh medium, it is also proposed to amend and extend catchments to encompass the communities of Trenant and Penywaun (currently in the Welsh catchment for Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Aberdar). These adjustments are being made to the catchment area to match the demand for Welsh medium places in the locality.

The Director of Education and Inclusion Services presented the consultation document in detail. At the end of the presentation, it was explained that the meeting is now open to any person present to inform officers of their views, which as indicated, will be recorded, and because this is a consultation, it may or may not, be possible to respond to all questions raised at this time, but all questions would be logged and formally included in the consultation report to Cabinet.

The Chair thanked the Director of Education and Inclusion Services for the overview of the proposal and explained to Members that the meeting does not have the jurisdiction to make any decisions but it provides an important opportunity to comment on the proposals and for the observations of Members to be reported back to Cabinet when they received the wider consultation feedback.

In respect of the improving education provision in Hirwaun by investing £10.4m in a new, school for Hirwaun Primary School, Members put forward their questions and observations.

A member explained that she had personally acted as a scribe in a recent meeting organised by Councillor Graham Thomas last Friday at Penderyn. This was not a formal Council meeting.

A Member asked in respect of the Hirwaun and Penderyn area and the concept of Welsh Education along with the Welsh Government plan for more Welsh speakers by 2050 had there been any pre-consultation with the community to take into account their views within the area.

It was explained that in the Council's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) the Council has included in its plan to increase the number of children being taught through the medium of Welsh and specifically included in the plan is to:

- Provide new and improved school buildings with appropriate capacity.
- Consideration of making dual language schools into full Welsh medium schools.

The School Organisation Code is very prescriptive. The Code clearly states that it is not a requirement to hold any meetings to discuss proposals but we convene this as we deem it good practice. However, to adopt a consistent approach we do not hold pre-consultation meetings.

A Member questioned the maintenance figure of £1.9Million and asked how as a Local Authority we got to that situation. Members were informed of that, the school is a CLASP type construction and was built in the late 1960's. The buildings are difficult to maintain due to the management of asbestos and they have come to the end of their useful life.

A member enquired whether the Council has to pay for demolition costs? It was explained that all costs, including the demolition and asbestos removal costs, are included in the overall project costs.

Another Member complemented the proposal and thought it was a well thought out proposal.

In respect of the Transport issue, a Member asked with regards the provision of transport how much extra pressure would be put on school transport. It was explained that this is unclear at present, in respect of the English medium provisional numbers will fluctuate. In catchment pupils resident in Penderyn attending English medium stream will receive free transport to the new Hirwaun Primary School as the walking route is deemed unavailable.

In respect of Transport provision a Member expressed concerns as to whether there was sufficient public transportation to and from Penderyn. A Member commented that the bus service from Penderyn is an hourly service, which could be a serious issue for parents especially if they do not drive. If parents need to get to the school in an emergency this could be of concern.

Majority of Members felt strongly that the transport situation needed to be looked in greater detail. Officers explained that the Education Department collaborates with the Highways transport team and will raise the issue with the private sector

transport company.

The Chair asked how can we make the Penderyn Welsh Medium School Proposal a positive one to the Communities of Hirwaun and Penderyn? The Director of Education and Inclusion Services explained that some parents feel strongly about removing the English stream however parents are already making a choice of choosing Welsh medium with only three pupils registered for English medium provision this year. However, there is positive feedback and the large capital investment in the community is seen as a real opportunity for the wider Cynon Valley schools in the area. We need to focus on equality and ensure all pupils have fair access to good education facilities and opportunities.

The Chair asked if the school would be able to accommodate any future housing development with the area and if this had been taken into consideration when devising the proposal. It was explained that the Council strategically manages its school places and inputs into the Local Development Plan and regularly monitors new and proposed housing development in the area. A Member also explained that there is a proposal for Heads of the Valleys road duelling. There is possible development there and we hope that along that corridor it will bring employment to the area. To have a 21st Century school would be very positive for the area.

The Chair thanked the Officers and as there were, no further questions put forward on the Cynon Valley proposal asked Officers to proceed with the next consultation document to consider the Greater Pontypridd Proposal.

The Director of Education and Inclusion Services took Members through the next consultation process in respect of the Greater Pontypridd Area in the same way as the Cynon Valley Proposal.

The Director of Education and Inclusion Services explained to Members that their views are sought in relation to the School Organisation Proposals for the Pontypridd Area.

Members were informed that the reasons for the proposal is that Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council wishes to seek the views of a wide range of stakeholders on the following proposals:

- To develop post 16 education at Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School, Beddau and Coleg Y Cymoedd, Nantgarw;
- To create two new 3-16 schools in Pontypridd and Hawthorn;
- To improve and increase Welsh medium primary provision by building a new school on the former site at Heol y Celyn, which will incorporate the former provisions at both Heol y Celyn and YGG Pont Sion Norton;
- To amend the catchment areas of Pontypridd High, Hawthorn High and the 6th form catchment of Bryncelynnog Comprehensive Schools to better meet and match the demands for school places.

These changes will be achieved by:

- Closing the sixth form of Hawthorn High School, Pontypridd High, School and Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School and transferring the post 16 provision to Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School or Coleg y Cymoedd, Nantgarw. For those students who opt for Roman Catholic education, sixth form provision will be available at St David's College,

Cardiff.

- Closing Pontypridd High School and Cilfynydd Primary School and creating a new 3–16 ‘all through’ school on the site of the current Pontypridd High School.
- Closing Hawthorn High School and Heol Y Celyn Primary School and creating a new 3-16 ‘all through school’ on the site of the current Hawthorn High School and Hawthorn Primary School. The local authority designated ALN specialist class located in Hawthorn High School will also transfer to the new school.
- Closing Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Pont Sion Norton and opening a new Welsh medium primary school to be constructed on the site of the current Heol Y Celyn Primary School. The pupils educated through the Welsh medium at Heol y Celyn Primary School will transfer to the new school and the Heol y Celyn pupils educated through the English medium will transfer to the new 3–16 school at Hawthorn.
- Amending the catchment areas for pupils aged 11-16 of the LA maintained secondary schools by:
 - Transferring the Graig area of Pontypridd which is part of the catchment area of Maesycod Primary School to the new 3–16 school for Pontypridd (currently Hawthorn)
 - Transferring the catchment area of Coedpenmaen Primary School to the new 3-16 school for Pontypridd (currently Hawthorn)
 - Transferring the catchment area of Gwauncelyn Primary School to the new 3-16 school for Hawthorn (currently Bryncelynog).

It was explained that the proposals are interdependent of each other and should they be implemented it is proposed that all changes will be in place by September 2022.

The Director of Education and Inclusion Services took Members through the consultation document in detail. At the end of the presentation it was explained that the meeting is now open to any person present to inform officers of their view on the Greater Pontypridd Proposal which, as indicated, will be recorded and because this is a consultation it may or may not be reported back to Cabinet when they received when they receive the wider consultation feedback.

The Chair once again thanked the Officers for the overview of the proposal and reiterated that the meeting does not have the jurisdiction to make any decision, but provides an important opportunity to comment on the proposals and for the observations of Members to be reported back to Cabinet when they receive the wider consultation feedback.

Members were invited to put their views and comments in relation to the following points.

The development of post 16 centres of excellence based at Bryncelynog Comprehensive School, Beddau and Coleg y Cymoedd, Nantgarw investing £10m in new sixth form provision at Bryncelynog

A Member commented that she totally understood the argument for a post 16 and a sixth form provision for all however felt that consideration need to be given as to the location of the build of the sixth form provision. It was felt

communication with Transport for Wales and the wider area of Pontypridd should consider the best option for where the pupils should go to school. The Member felt that Pontypridd would be the best area and not the area of Beddau where the proposed sixth form of Bryncelynog is set.

In replying to the Member, Officers explained that we look at the demand for 6th form places and Pontypridd High School and Hawthorn High School are low in numbers compared to Coleg Y Cymoedd. The college provides an alternative choice which many young people are exercising that choice and learners will be provided with transport to the nearest college. It was explained that outcomes are strong in Bryncelynog and are higher than in the other settings.

Co-opted Member thanked the Chair for the opportunity to speak. Before he asked his first question the Co-opted Member commented that he would like to remind Members of an important tenet of this committee. We have always prided ourselves in putting the lives of children and young people at the forefront of our challenges and we must ensure that the Authority does not lose sight of the fact that the lives of pupils, parents and staff that will be affected by these proposed changes.

Co-opted Member put his first question to the Officer, which was as follows:

This is comprehensive plan for the Council. As I understand it is based on meeting Band B requirements to secure funding for school and educational development and is in part informed by forecasted changes in population demographics, planning development as well as being supposedly justified by existing educational attainment outcomes. As I understand it even in the event the plans are in the future delivered upon parents and pupils will still have choices e.g., Post 16 pupils can choose where they wish to receive their education. Now whilst I am all for parental choice surely we must ensure that this investment produces deliverables not only in terms of cost efficiency but in terms of educational outcomes. How are we going to ensure these outcomes are achieved if the vagaries of choice could have a considerable impact?

In reply, Officers explained that although the proposals involve the sixth form provisions being removed there is still excellent provision within Bryncelynog and Coleg y Cymoedd and there is scope for improvement and we need to provide pupils with the best possible chance to succeed. Officers support and challenge on a regular basis and we have a good working relationship with the college. It was explained that the Chief Executive sits on the college board and data is made available and outcomes are regularly reviewed and challenged. Bryncelynog have shown strong and positive outcomes.

The second question put forward by the Co-opted Member was a supplementary question, what plans are being developed to support schools and importantly Governing Bodies to deliver on the proposal and in particular with regards to school choice. It was explained that larger numbers in 6th forms allows the school to enhance the range of subjects available. Bryncelynog has a good reputation and good leadership and an enhanced offer of subject choice will be available to all students.

With regards to parental choice a Member asked that whilst capacity exists in

Bryncelynnog children attending Gwauncelyn Primary will still be able to choose the existing secondary provider as opposed to that proposed under the boundary changes and when is it forecast this would end? In addition, would pupils receive pupil transport for this choice or only those attending Hawthorn?

It was explained that the School Admission Code would be implemented and pupils within the new catchment would receive transport to Hawthorn if eligible under the Transport Policy but pupils out of catchment would not receive transport.

With regards to Transportation the Co-Opted Member asked how will pupils from deprived areas such as Glyn Coch and Ynysybwll have true choice at post 16 when travel time and more importantly cost will be a significant factor. What plans if any are being considered for pupil transport? Is the WG School Transport Policy to be applied strictly or is discretionary travel being considered? If so, what does this look like, for how long and what are the costs the Authority?

It was explained that if these proposals are agreed we would amend the catchment area of both Pontypridd and Hawthorn High Schools for post 6th form provision.

Another Member of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee asked why are we taking away the option for Cilfynydd and Hawthorn 6th form? Could you explain the reason for this? Officers explained that numbers are small in both schools and because class sizes are small, there is a greater cost to the schools and limits the choice of A level subject available to students.

A Member thanked officers for the opportunity to be part of the consultation. She agreed that there was a need for change however felt that all aspects needs to be considered. It was asked if pupils required faith education schooling would pupils want to go to St David's Sixth Form in Cardiff, which would be sharing facilities with other authorities? The Member felt that there should be a secondary school within their area. We need to build on a model that is working to increase higher retention rates. We need to look at a whole range of factors.

It was explained that currently Hawthorn, Pontypridd High and Cardinal Newman work in partnership with Coleg y Cymoedd.

A Member commented that a child that attends a sixth form school setting goes there for support, familiarity and a good relationship with staff within their community, by removing the sixth form out of their local environment pupils may feel isolated and we could end up with there being no relationship with staff or other pupils which could have an effect on the young person's wellbeing.

Officers explained that the colleges have excellent pastoral services and pupils are well supported.

Members stated that a 6th form college within the Pontypridd Area would be a better site as it is a university town and it would connect wider valleys and beyond.

Transport links need to be looked at as students travelling to Bryncelynnog would be limited. The Member felt if the building was in the centre of Pontypridd it would be more beneficial for both pupils and economy.

Officers explained that data shows that pupils are making decisions to leave the local schools. There is a significant percentage of learners going to college and outcome data shows that outcomes from the college are positive. There is a willingness to collaborate the current situation hasn't worked we need to offer what meets the pupils needs.

Officers explained that in relation to transport from key areas, pupils would have bus passes, taxis. Transport Service would look at the route. Officers reiterated that pupils are making their own decisions and choice as to where they want to study at sixth form.

The Co-opted Member asked a question with regards to the post 16 education at Coleg y Cymoedd, Nantgarw, what accountability if any will they have to this Authority for their outcomes and what governance will be in place? I ask this as I understand the majority of effected post 16 leavers at Pontypridd and Hawthorn have given early indications of this being a likely choice over Bryncelynnog.

Officers explained that the college is accountable to Estyn and accountability to the Local Authority does not exist however the Chief Executive of RCT sits on the Board.

The Member asked with regards to secondary school professionals seeking fulfilment and professional development through post 16 teaching, with that being removed from Pontypridd and Hawthorn how do we intend to recruit and retain excellent provision at these locations?

An Officer explained that professional development is at the forefront for staff and the proposals create opportunity for the staff of the new school to work across the phases.

Members proceeded to the next part of the proposal which was the creation of two new 3–16 schools in the Pontypridd and Hawthorn which will take a radically different approach to education in these areas by sharing both primary and secondary sector resources and investing £16.7m in improved educational facilities.

A Member welcomed the provision however there were two things she wanted clarification on; one, the design of the building and secondly the concerns of travel time for pupils to the new schools. The Member felt parents had concerns over the distance pupils had to travel and wondered whether there had been any feedback from both pupils and staff.

In respect of the proposal to improve and increase Welsh medium primary provision by investing £10.7M in a new school to replace Ysgol Gynradd Gymreag Pont Sion Norton and the Welsh medium stream of Heol Y Celyn Primary School Members put their questions and observations forward.

A Member commented on the concerns of parents over the distance some of the young children would have to travel and what transport would be

provided.

It was explained that transport would be provided as normal.

The Chair thanked the Officer for taking the Committee through the consultation document and received general comments from the floor.

The Chair commented that she and a few Members of the Committee went to visit four of the new schools that had recently been developed through the 21st Century Band A process. These schools provided first class facilities but it is too soon to receive outcome data.

The Chair felt that a piece of work could be carried in twelve months' time to see how the Band A proposal is progressing and take into consideration staff and pupils comments.

The Chair explained that feedback from the visits was positive from Headteachers, staff pupils and parents. However, the transition process to the three to sixteen schools needed greater support. Transport was another concern with the amount of traffic at the start and at the end of the day.

The Director of Education and Inclusion Services suggested that some of the Headteachers would be happy to attend a meeting of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee in the future to talk about their experiences.

The Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee **RESOLVED** to

- Acknowledge the Consultation report
- To receive a progress report in 12 months to see how Band A Schools were progressing (inviting Pupils and Staff to Comment)
- Send a letter from the Committee to the Headteachers thanking them for the school visits.

Appendix 5

Estyn's response to the proposals

Estyn's response to the proposal to close Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Pont Sion Norton and the Welsh stream of Heol y Celyn Primary School and create a new Welsh medium community primary school.

This report has been prepared by Her Majesty's Inspectors of Education and Training in Wales.

Under the terms of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and its associated Code, proposers are required to send consultation documents to Estyn. However, Estyn is not a body which is required to act in accordance with the Code and the Act places no statutory requirements on Estyn in respect of school organisation matters. Therefore as a body being consulted, Estyn will provide their opinion only on the overall merits of school organisation proposals.

Estyn has considered the educational aspects of the proposal and has produced the following response to the information provided by the proposer and other additional information such as data from Welsh Government and the views of the Regional Consortia which deliver school improvement services to the schools within the proposal.

Introduction

This is a proposal by Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council to improve and increase Welsh medium primary provision in the Pontypridd area. The proposal forms part of its larger 21st Century Schools proposal to reorganise primary and secondary schools along with sixth form provision in the wider Pontypridd area. The proposal is to close a Welsh medium primary school along with the Welsh stream of a dual language school and to replace them with a new Welsh medium school.

Summary

The proposal by Rhondda Cynon Taf Borough Council forms part of its larger 21st Century Schools proposal to reorganise primary schools, secondary schools and sixth form provision in the Pontypridd area. The proposal is to close Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg (YGG) Pont Sion Norton and the Welsh stream of Heol y Celyn Primary School and create a new Welsh medium community primary school. A separate proposal by the proposer seeks to transfer pupils who are currently educated through the medium of English at Heol y Celyn Primary School to a new 3-16 school, which will be built on the adjoining sites of the current Hawthorn High and Hawthorn Primary schools. The new Welsh medium primary school will be built on the site of the old Heol y Celyn Primary School.

The proposal also notes changes to the catchment area of the new school. This will include the existing catchment of YGG Pont Sion Norton along with that of the current Welsh medium stream of Heol y Celyn Primary School. Although the proposer recognises that it is likely that pupils currently attending YGG Pont Sion Norton will have further to travel to attend the new school, it has not noted sufficiently the impact of this on the wellbeing of pupils.

It is Estyn's opinion that the proposal is likely to at least maintain the current standards of education in the area.

Description and benefits

The proposer have given a clear rationale for the proposed expected benefits when compared with the status quo in relation to improvement in educational provision, pupil outcomes, the learning environment and leadership. They also explain clearly how the proposal fits with the local authority's broader plan for the review of school provision as part of its 21st Century Schools programme and it's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP). The local authority has provided sufficient evidence to show that the plan is likely to at least maintain the standard of education in the local area.

The proposer notes appropriately the advantages of the proposal. These include efficient and effective use of resources, access to a purposeful learning environment and increased capacity for Welsh medium education in the area. The proposer has only identified a very few disadvantages to the current proposal, which focus on implications for staff currently employed at the two schools as well increased home to school journeys for YGG Pont Sion Norton pupils and subsequent increased transport costs for the local authority. The proposal also includes appropriately the advantages and disadvantages in relation maintaining the status quo.

The proposal also notes changes to the catchment area of the new school. This will include the existing catchment of YGG Pont Sion Norton along with that of the current Welsh medium stream of Heol y Celyn Primary School. This proposal does not change the current provision of home to school transport. This includes pupils of the existing YGG Pont Sion Norton catchment area who will qualify for free home to school transport to the new school as it is more than 1.5 miles from their home addresses. However, the proposer does not provide sufficient details on the impact of the change in catchment areas on the travelling time and wellbeing of pupils.

Both schools included in the proposal currently provide education through the medium of Welsh. This arrangement will continue under the proposal. The proposer has noted appropriately how the proposal forms part of the local authority's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP). The proposer notes suitably that the increased capacity of the new school will help promote Welsh medium school provision in the area and ensure that they meet the demand for places. The proposal is therefore likely to have a positive impact on the Welsh language.

The proposer has considered reasonably well the impact of the proposals on the quality of the outcomes and provision for both schools. However, it has not considered sufficiently the impact on the leadership and management of the schools.

The proposal includes an appropriate summary of outcomes for the schools, which is

concise and clear. It compares performance with similar schools based on entitlement to free school meals over an appropriate period. The proposer has considered appropriately the outcomes of the most recent Estyn inspection reports and school categorisation in relation to the National School Categorisation system for all three schools.

Estyn inspected Heol y Celyn Primary School in June 2014 and the judgements for the school's performance and prospects for improvement were both adequate. YGG Pont Sion Norton was inspected in September 2014, the current performance of the school was judged as adequate along with a judgement of good for prospects for improvement. Both schools were placed in a category of 'Estyn Monitoring' following these inspections. Estyn removed YGG Pont Sion Norton its list of schools requiring follow-up in April 2016. However, Heol y Celyn Primary School was deemed to not have made sufficient progress following a monitoring visit in November 2015 and was placed in statutory category of a school requiring 'Significant Improvement'. Estyn inspectors removed the school from this category of follow-up following a further monitoring visit in January 2017.

The local authority has also evaluated each school's performance in relation to the National School Categorisation System. The system aims to provide a clear and fair picture of how well a school is performing compared with other schools across Wales and helps to identify the schools that need the most help, support and guidance to improve. Under the system, schools are categorised according to a four-point 'traffic light' system, with red being schools which require the greatest support and green requiring the least. Both schools are currently categorised as 'yellow'. This defines them as effective schools which already doing well, know the areas needed to improve, and by identifying the right support and taking action have the potential to do even better.

The proposer has not considered sufficiently the likely impact of the proposals on standards and curriculum delivery at the new school. The proposal includes appropriate community and equality impact assessments, which considers the impact of the proposal on vulnerable groups including those with a disability. However, the proposal does not evaluate suitably the impact of the changes on pupils with special educational needs.

Estyn's response to the proposal to change primary and secondary school provision in Pontypridd.

This report has been prepared by Her Majesty's Inspectors of Education and Training in Wales.

Under the terms of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and its associated Code, proposers are required to send consultation documents to Estyn. However, Estyn is not a body which is required to act in accordance with the Code and the Act places no statutory requirements on Estyn in respect of school organisation matters. Therefore as a body being consulted, Estyn will provide their opinion only on the overall merits of school organisation proposals.

Estyn has considered the educational aspects of the proposal and has produced the following response to the information provided by the proposer and other additional information such as data from Welsh Government and the views of the Regional Consortia which deliver school improvement services to the schools within the proposal.

Introduction

This is a proposal by Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council to change primary and secondary school provision in the Pontypridd area. The proposal forms part of its larger 21st Century Schools proposal to reorganise primary and secondary schools along with sixth form provision in the Pontypridd area. The proposal is to build a new all through 3-16 school to replace an existing primary school and a secondary school in Pontypridd. The proposer notes changes to the catchment area for the new school, which will affect other schools in the area. A separate school reorganisation proposal made by the proposer seeks to relocate pupils currently attending the Sixth Form at the secondary school to another provision as part of their proposal to reform Sixth Form provision in the Pontypridd area.

Summary

The proposal by Rhondda Cynon Taf Borough Council forms part of its larger 21st Century Schools proposal to reorganise primary schools, secondary schools and sixth form provision in the Pontypridd area. The proposal is to close Cilfynydd Primary School and Pontypridd High School, along with its sixth form, to create a new 3-16 all through school on the site of the current Pontypridd High School. Pupils

from the sixth form will transfer to either Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School or Coleg y Cymoedd, dependent on student choice.

The proposal also includes proposed changes to the catchment area of the new 3-16 all through school. However, the proposer has not noted sufficiently the impact of these changes in catchment areas on other schools in the area nor on its impact on the wellbeing of pupils.

It is Estyn's opinion that the proposal is likely to at least maintain the current standards of education in the area.

Description and benefits

The proposer have given a clear rationale for the proposed expected benefits when compared with the status quo in relation to improvement in educational provision, pupil outcomes, the learning environment as well as leadership and financial benefits. They also explain clearly how the proposal fits with the local authority's broader plan for the review of school provision as part of its 21st Century Schools programme. The local authority has provided sufficient evidence to show that the plan is likely to at least maintain the standard of education in the local area.

The proposer notes appropriately the advantages of the proposal. These include efficient and effective use of resources, the continuity and progression in pupils' learning, access to a purposeful learning environment, improved professional development opportunities for staff including leadership along with better use of financial resources. The proposer also notes appropriately that the proposal is likely to have an impact on reducing the current level of surplus places across the local authority.

The proposer has identified suitably the disadvantages to the current proposal, which focus on the impact on travel arrangements for pupils including those currently attending the Sixth Form provision. It also notes appropriately the impact on staff in terms of job security particularly in relation to the removal of the Sixth Form curriculum. The proposal also includes appropriately the advantages and disadvantages in relation to each of the alternative proposals including maintaining the status quo.

The proposal also includes proposed changes to the catchment area of the new 3-16 all through school. The admission of pupils 3-11 years of age will remain the same and include the current catchment area for Cilfynydd Primary School. However, the proposal notes changes for the admission of pupils 11-16 years of age. The new catchment area will include that for the existing Pontypridd High School along with the addition areas that are currently part of the catchment area of Hawthorn High School. These include the the Graig area of Pontypridd, that is currently in the catchment area of Maesycod Primary School along with the catchment area of Coedpenmaen Primary School.

This proposal does not change the current provision of home to school transport.

This includes pupils of Pontypridd High School's Sixth Form who will continue to receive free transport to the nearest post-16 establishment that offers the choice of courses that they require, provided they meet the current qualifying criteria. However, the proposer has not provided sufficient information as how many pupils will have to travel further to their new school or college of their choice. In addition, the proposal does not provide sufficient details on the impact of the change in catchment areas on the travelling time and wellbeing of pupils. This is particularly relevant in respect to pupils currently attending Cilfynydd Primary school which is located at the centre of the community and the journey to the 3-16 school will present greater risks for the primary school pupils.

Cilfynydd Primary School and Pontypridd High School currently teaches Welsh as a second language but does not provide education through the medium of Welsh. This arrangement will continue under the proposal. There would therefore appear to be no impact on the Welsh language arising from this proposal.

The proposer has considered reasonably well the impact of the proposals on the quality of the outcomes, provision and leadership and management for both schools. The proposal includes an appropriate summary of outcomes for the schools, which is concise and clear. It compares performance with similar schools based on entitlement to free school meals over an appropriate period. The proposer has considered appropriately the outcomes of the most recent Estyn inspection reports and school categorisation in relation to the National School Categorisation system for both schools.

Estyn inspected Cilfynydd Primary School in May 2014 and the judgements for the school's performance and prospects for improvement were both adequate. Pontypridd High School was inspected by Estyn in January 2014 and the school's current performance was judged as adequate, with prospects for improvement was good. Both schools were placed in the category of 'Estyn Monitoring' following these inspections. The local authority has also evaluated each school's performance in relation to the National School Categorisation System. The system aims to provide a clear and fair picture of how well a school is performing compared with other schools across Wales and helps to identify the schools that need the most help, support and guidance to improve. Under the system, schools are categorised according to a four-point 'traffic light' system, with red being schools which require the greatest support and green requiring the least. Pontypridd High school is currently categorised as 'yellow' whilst Cilfynydd Primary school is categorised as 'green'. The proposer believes that the proposal will have a positive impact on the quality of education outcomes and provision in the area.

The proposer has appropriately considered the likely impact of the proposals on standards and curriculum delivery including better transition and extra-curricular opportunities for pupils. It has considered appropriately the positive effect this will have on pupil outcomes and wellbeing. The proposal includes appropriate community and equality impact assessments, which considers the impact of the proposal on vulnerable groups including those with a disability. However, the proposal does not evaluate suitably the impact of the changes on pupils with special educational needs.



Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru
Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales

Estyn's response to the proposal to change primary and secondary school provision in the Hawthorn area.

This report has been prepared by Her Majesty's Inspectors of Education and Training in Wales.

Under the terms of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and its associated Code, proposers are required to send consultation documents to Estyn. However, Estyn is not a body which is required to act in accordance with the Code and the Act places no statutory requirements on Estyn in respect of school organisation matters. Therefore as a body being consulted, Estyn will provide their opinion only on the overall merits of school organisation proposals.

Estyn has considered the educational aspects of the proposal and has produced the following response to the information provided by the proposer and other additional information such as data from Welsh Government and the views of the Regional Consortia which deliver school improvement services to the schools within the proposal.

Introduction

This is a proposal by Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council to change primary and secondary school provision in the Hawthorn area. The proposal forms part of its larger 21st Century Schools proposal to reorganise primary and secondary schools along with sixth form provision in the wider Pontypridd area. The proposal is to close a secondary school and two primary schools and to build a new all through 3-16 school on the site of the current Hawthorn High School. The local authority designated ALN class will also be accommodated in the new school. The proposal also includes proposed changes to the catchment area of the new 3-16 all through school. A separate school reorganisation proposal made by the proposer seeks to relocate pupils currently attending the Sixth Form at the secondary school to another provision as part of their proposal to reform Sixth Form provision in the Pontypridd area.

Summary

The proposal by Rhondda Cynon Taf Borough Council forms part of its larger 21st Century Schools proposal to reorganise primary schools, secondary schools and sixth form provision in the Hawthorn area. The proposal is to close Hawthorn Primary School, Heol y Celyn Primary School and Hawthorn High School along with its Sixth Form provision. A new 3-16 all through school is to be built on the adjoining

sites of the current Hawthorn High School and Hawthorn Primary School. This will also accommodate the local authority's designated Additional Learning Needs (ALN) class for key stage 3. A separate proposal on the future of ALN provision in the area could have an impact on pupils attending the new school. The proposer notes that this ALN proposal includes the closure of two ALN classes at Heol y Celyn Primary School due to the reduction in numbers attending. Should both proposals be successful, there will no dedicated ALN provision at the new 3-16 school for neither foundation phase pupils nor those in key stage 2. The proposer does not provide sufficient evidence as to how the needs of these pupils will be met in the new school. The proposal also notes changes to the catchment area of the new 3-16 all through school. However, the proposer has not noted sufficiently the impact of these changes in catchment areas on other schools in the area nor on its impact on the wellbeing of pupils.

The proposal notes that only those pupils currently being educated through the medium of English at the current Heol y Celyn Primary School, will transfer to the new 3-16 all through school. The proposer has submitted a separate proposal for the establishment of a new Welsh medium primary school to accommodate those pupils currently being educated through the medium of Welsh at Heol y Celyn Primary School. A separate school reorganisation proposal has also been submitted as part of the local authorities plans to reform Sixth Form provision in the Pontypridd area. Under the proposal, pupils currently attending Hawthorn High School Sixth Form will transfer to either Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School or Coleg y Cymoedd, dependent on student choice.

It is Estyn's opinion that the proposal is likely to at least maintain the current standards of education in the area.

Description and benefits

The proposer have given a clear rationale for the proposed expected benefits when compared with the status quo in relation to improvement in educational provision, pupil outcomes, the learning environment as well as leadership and financial benefits. They also explain clearly how the proposal fits with the local authority's broader plan for the review of school provision as part of its 21st Century Schools programme. The local authority has provided sufficient evidence to show that the plan is likely to at least maintain the standard of education in the local area.

The proposer notes appropriately the advantages of the proposal. These include efficient and effective use of resources, the continuity and progression in pupils' learning, access to a purposeful learning environment, improved professional development opportunities for staff including leadership along better use of financial resources. The proposer also notes appropriately that the proposal is likely to have an impact on reducing the current level of surplus places across the local authority.

The proposer has identified suitably the disadvantages to the current proposal, which focus on the impact on travel arrangements for pupils including those currently attending the Sixth Form provision and an increase in travel costs for the local authority. It also notes appropriately the impact on staff in terms of job security particularly in relation to the removal of the Sixth Form curriculum. The proposal also includes appropriately the advantages and disadvantages in relation to each of the alternative proposals including maintaining the status quo.

The proposal includes proposed changes to the catchment area of the new 3-16 all through school. The admission of pupils 3-11 years of age will remain the same and include the current combined catchment areas for Hawthorn Primary School and the Heol y Celyn Primary School (English Medium). However, the proposal notes changes for the admission of pupils 11-16 years of age. The new catchment area will include the existing Hawthorn High catchment area along

with that of Gwauncelyn Primary School, Tonteg. However, the new catchment area will exclude the Graig area of Pontypridd that is in the catchment area of Maesycloed Primary School and that of Coedpenmaen Primary School. The proposer notes appropriately that these changes are necessary to match the demand with the available supply across the secondary school provision in East Taf Ely, along with additional demand for places as a result of a housing development in the south east of the County Borough.

This proposal does not change the current provision of home to school transport. This includes pupils of Hawthorn High School's Sixth Form who will continue to receive free transport to the nearest post-16 establishment that offers the choice of courses that they require, provided they meet the current qualifying criteria. However, the proposer has not provided sufficient information as how many pupils will have to travel further to their new school or college of their choice. In addition, the proposal does not provide sufficient details on the impact of the change in catchment areas on the travelling time and wellbeing of pupils.

All schools included in the proposal currently teaches Welsh as a second language but does not provide education through the medium of Welsh. This arrangement will continue under the proposal. There would therefore appear to be no impact on the Welsh language arising from this proposal.

The proposer has considered reasonably well the impact of the proposals on the quality of the outcomes, provision and leadership and management for both schools. The proposal includes an appropriate summary of outcomes for the schools, which is concise and clear. It compares performance with similar schools based on entitlement to free school meals over an appropriate period. The proposer has considered appropriately the outcomes of the most recent Estyn inspection reports and school categorisation in relation to the National School Categorisation system for all three schools.

Estyn inspected Heol y Celyn Primary School in June 2014 and the judgements for the school's performance and prospects for improvement were both adequate. Hawthorn Primary School was inspected in January 2012 and Hawthorn High School in March 2014. The current performance of both schools was judged as adequate with a judgement of good awarded for prospects for improvement. All three schools were placed in a category of 'Estyn Monitoring' following these inspections. Both Hawthorn Primary School and Hawthorn High School were removed from this followup category in April 2013 and October 2015 respectively. However, Heol y Celyn Primary School was deemed to not have made sufficient progress following a monitoring visit in November 2015 and was placed in statutory category of a school requiring 'Significant Improvement'. Estyn inspectors removed the school from this category of follow-up following a further monitoring visit in January 2017.

The local authority has also evaluated each school's performance in relation to the National School Categorisation System. The system aims to provide a clear and fair picture of how well a school is performing compared with other schools across Wales and helps to identify the schools that need the most help, support and guidance to improve. Under the system, schools are categorised according to a four-point 'traffic light' system, with red being schools which require the greatest support and green requiring the least. All three schools are currently categorised as 'yellow'. This defines them as effective schools which already doing well, know the areas needed to improve, and by identifying the right support and taking action have the potential to do even better.

The proposer has appropriately considered the likely impact of the proposals on standards and curriculum delivery including better transition and extra-curricular opportunities for pupils. It has considered appropriately the positive effect this will have on pupil outcomes and wellbeing. A separate proposal on the future of ALN provision in the area could have an impact on pupils

attending the new school. The proposer notes that this ALN proposal includes the closure of two ALN classes at Heol y Celyn Primary School due to the reduction in numbers attending. Should both proposals be successful, there will no dedicated ALN provision at the new 3-16 school for neither foundation phase pupils nor those in key stage 2. The proposer does not provide sufficient evidence as to how the needs of these pupils will be met in the new school.

The proposal includes appropriate community and equality impact assessments, which considers the impact of the proposal on vulnerable groups including those with a disability. However, the proposal does not evaluate suitably the impact of the changes on pupils with special educational needs.

Estyn's response to the proposal to change sixth form provision in the Pontypridd area

This report has been prepared by Her Majesty's Inspectors of Education and Training in Wales.

Under the terms of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and its associated Code, proposers are required to send consultation documents to Estyn. However, Estyn is not a body which is required to act in accordance with the Code and the Act places no statutory requirements on Estyn in respect of school organisation matters. Therefore as a body being consulted, Estyn will provide their opinion only on the overall merits of school organisation proposals.

Estyn has considered the educational aspects of the proposal and has produced the following response to the information provided by the proposer and other additional information such as data from Welsh Government and the views of the Regional Consortia which deliver school improvement services to the schools within the proposal.

Introduction

This is a proposal by Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council to change sixth form provision in the Pontypridd area. The proposal forms part of its larger 21st Century Schools proposal to reorganise primary and secondary schools along with sixth form provision in the area. The proposal is to develop two post 16 centres of excellence in the area by closing three sixth forms currently located in three secondary schools. Pupils will transfer to either of the two sixth form centres, or in the case of those wishing to continue their Roman Catholic education, provision will be made available at a college in Cardiff for these pupils.

Summary

The proposal by Rhondda Cynon Taf Borough Council forms part of its larger 21st Century Schools proposal to reorganise primary schools, secondary schools and sixth form provision in the Pontypridd area. The proposal is to close the sixth forms of Hawthorn High School, Pontypridd High School and Cardinal Newman Roman Catholic (RC) School and transfer the post 16 provision to Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School and Coleg y Cymoedd, Nantgarw. The proposal notes that sixth form provision will be made available at St David's College, Cardiff for those pupils transferring from Cardinal Newman RC School who wish to continue their Roman Catholic education.

The proposer has also submitted separate proposals under its wider plan to reorganise primary schools, secondary schools and sixth form provision in the Pontypridd area. These include a proposal to close Pontypridd High School and Cilfynydd Primary School, replacing them with a new 3-16 all through school. Similarly, another proposal seeks to close Hawthorn High School, Hawthorn Primary School and Heol y Celyn Primary to create a new English medium 3-16 all through school. Under a separate proposal, Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Pont Sion Norton will close and a new Welsh medium school will be created to accommodate its pupils and those pupils currently receiving their

education in the Welsh stream in Heol y Celyn Primary School.

It is Estyn's opinion that the proposal is likely to at least maintain the present standard of education provision in the area.

Description and benefits

The proposer have given a clear rationale for the proposed expected benefits when compared with the status quo in relation to improvement in educational provision and the effective and efficient use of resources. They also explain clearly how the proposal fits with the local authority's broader plan for the review of school provision as part of its 21st Century Schools programme. The local authority has provided sufficient evidence to show that the plan is likely to at least maintain the standard of education in the local area.

The proposer notes appropriately the advantages of the proposal. These include efficient and effective use of resources, removal of duplicated courses and improving learning for pupils by creating larger sixth forms. The proposer also notes appropriately that the proposal is likely to have an impact on reducing the current level of surplus places across the local authority, including the current sixth form provision at Cardinal Newman RC School, Hawthorn High School and Pontypridd High School.

The proposer has identified suitably the disadvantages to the current proposal, which focus on the impact on travel arrangements for pupils currently attending the Sixth Form provision within their catchment. It also notes appropriately the impact on staff in terms of job security for staff currently employed at the three secondary schools should the Sixth Form curriculum be removed. The proposal also includes appropriately the advantages and disadvantages in relation to each of the alternative proposals including maintaining the status quo.

The proposal also includes proposed changes to the notional catchment areas for post 16 education for the purpose of managing home to school transport. RCT students that attend sixth form outside their catchment area are not eligible for home to school transport unless the Programme of Study of their choice is not available in the catchment school. The proposer notes amendments to the catchment areas of both Pontypridd and Hawthorn High Schools for post 16 provision, to place these areas in the sixth form catchment area of Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School.

Pupils from Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School, Hawthorn High School and Pontypridd High School will have the option of attending another school's sixth form provision of their choice or Coleg y Cymoedd for their post 16 education. Pupils who wish to continue their post 16 education through the Catholic faith could choose to attend St David's Sixth Form College, Cardiff. The local authority will provide free transportation to the nearest provision that offers the chosen selection of courses for RCT-resident students, providing that they meet the initial qualifying distance criteria. However, the proposer has not provided sufficient information as how many pupils will have to travel further to their new school or college of their choice. In addition, the proposal does not provide sufficient details on the impact of the change to student travelling time on their wellbeing.

Pontypridd High School, Hawthorn High School and Cardinal Newman RC School does not provide education through the medium of Welsh. This arrangement will continue under the proposal. There would therefore appear to be no impact on the Welsh language arising from this proposal.

The proposer has considered reasonably well the impact of the proposals on the quality of the provision and management for the four schools included in the proposal. The proposal includes an appropriate summary of outcomes for the schools, which is concise and clear. The proposer has considered appropriately the outcomes of the most recent Estyn inspection reports and school categorisation in relation to the National School Categorisation system for all four schools along with Coleg y Cymoedd and St David's College.

Estyn inspected Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School in February, 2016; Hawthorn High School in March 2014; Pontypridd High School in January 2014 and Coleg y Cymoedd in November 2017. All four were judged as adequate for current performance and good for prospects for improvement. Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School was inspected by Estyn in May 2018 under new inspection arrangements and were judged as 'good' for all five inspection areas. St David's College was last inspected in 2010 and was judged as excellent for both current performance and prospects for improvement.

The local authority has also evaluated each school's performance in relation to the National School Categorisation System. The system aims to provide a clear and fair picture of how well a school is performing compared with other schools across Wales and helps to identify the schools that need the most help, support and guidance to improve. Under the system, schools are categorised according to a four-point 'traffic light' system, with red being schools which require the greatest support and green requiring the least. However, the National School Categorisation System does not take into account Post 16 provision and outcomes. The proposer notes that Pontypridd High School, Hawthorn High School and Bryncelynnog are categorised as 'yellow' schools whilst Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School has been categorised as a 'green' school. The proposer believes that the proposal will have a positive impact on the quality of education outcomes and provision in the area. However, the rationale for locating the sixth form centre in Bryncelynnog as opposed to Cardinal Newman is not clear. Bryncelynnog is located near Y Pant which retains its sixth form provision.

The proposer has appropriately considered the likely impact of the proposals on standards and curriculum delivery including better learning experiences and a reduction in duplication of courses available. The proposal includes appropriate community and equality impact assessments, which considers the impact of the proposal on vulnerable groups including those with a disability. However, the proposal does not evaluate suitably the impact of the changes on pupils with special educational needs.

Appendix 6

Hawthorn High School's letter to parents / carers

21st CENTURY SCHOOLS PROGRAMME

CONSULTATION ON THE PROPOSED REORGANISATION OF PRIMARY SCHOOLS, SECONDARY SCHOOLS AND SIXTH FORM PROVISION IN THE PONTYPRIDD AREA

A GUIDE for PARENTS and CARERS



Contents	Page
The Consultation process so far	2
Proposal 1 : Removal of the Sixth Form of Hawthorn High School	3-12
Proposal 2 : Changes to make Hawthorn High School a 3-16 'all through' school	12-13
Proposal 5 : Amendments to the Hawthorn High School catchment area	13-14
'Conclusions', 'Further questions and thoughts' and 'What happens next?'	15-16
The consultation response pro forma	17-19

*(NB: Proposal 3 and 4 relate only to Pontypridd High School and Welsh medium education)

The Consultation process so far....

The Chair of Governors and Headteacher attended a meeting with the Chief Executive and other senior LA Officers on September 25th. At this meeting an outline of the proposals for the reorganisation of schools in Pontypridd was provided. This included 'background information' for Council members and a draft copy of the consultation document. A final copy of this document was released to schools and made public on October 15th.

Since receiving the document a number of different meetings have taken place in order to discuss the contents and form opinions on each of the three proposals. Important in forming such opinions has been to identify the information and rationale that gives justification for the Local Authority proposals based on the evidence provided and additional information available.

Meetings have taken place between:

- School Governors
- All teaching and non-teaching staff
- The Student Council and Senior staff and Governors
- The Headteachers of and Hawthorn High School and Pontypridd High School
- Headteachers, local Councillors and Politicians
- The Headteacher and parents/carers who have specific concerns about the proposals

A formal meeting has also taken place (November 12th) between the School governors, all staff and senior Local Authority Officers as part of the official consultation process (this included the Chief Executive of RCT - Chris Bradshaw and the Director of Education - Gaynor Davies). At this meeting the views of all people were presented in relation to each proposal and many questions were asked in particular in relation to Proposal 1 on changes to the Sixth Form. It is clear that much information presented in the proposal with regard to student outcomes, standards, class sizes and the overall comparison between Hawthorn High School (HHS), the Pontypridd Sixth Form (PSF), Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School (BCS) and Coleg Y Cymoedd (CyC) is inaccurate and misleading. Following this meeting and with all information considered the school is now able to present its view of the 3 proposals.

It is now essential that all parents and carers have the opportunity to read through the outcomes of such discussions and therefore have a fully informed view of all information available. *It is important to state that any comments about BCS or CyC are only made in reference to information which is readily available and commentary provided by the LA in the consultation document. It is in no way our intention to criticise the work of other schools/colleges but rather to redress an imbalance in the way performance has been portrayed in the Council's consultation document.*

The time has now come to present our views clearly to the Local Authority; the deadline for doing so is **January 25th, 2019**. Please use this information guide to inform your own opinion and I am sure that our considered responses will make a strong case for a 21st Century Sixth Form provision in Pontypridd that the children of this proud university town are entitled to.

PROPOSAL 1

Proposal 1 : Removal of the Sixth Form of Hawthorn High School with post-16 students attending an alternative school or college that offers the choice of courses they require.				
Agree with this proposal	YES	NO	NOT SURE	

About the Pontypridd Sixth Form

For 10 years we have operated a joint sixth form provision with Pontypridd High School (Cardinal Newman were in that partnership for the first 3 years). Together we call our partnership the 'Pontypridd Sixth Form' and we are developing ever closer links with the University of South Wales who support our provision in many ways. This operates by offering a choice of A Level subjects between the two centres and, in some cases, accessing courses at Coleg Y Cymoedd (CyC - Nantgarw). By working together we are able to offer students a broader range of subjects to choose from and we can maximise the use of staff and facilities across the two schools. Students travel the short distance between sites by bus, provided as required and free of charge. This is a well established provision and we continually review it and make changes to ensure it is successful and meets the needs of our students.

What is significant and right is that by working together we are providing a school based sixth form provision within and around the town of Pontypridd.

We are objecting to the proposal to close the Pontypridd Sixth Form and relocate our students to so called Sixth Form 'Centres of Excellence' at either Bryncelynog Comprehensive School (BCS) or Coleg y Cymoedd (CyC) for the following reasons:

REASON 1

The first reason is related to the Partnership working that has already been attempted with the BCS / Y Pant Sixth Form partnership

i) The fact that links for the Pontypridd Sixth Form with BCS (and Y Pant CS) have been discussed in the past and they did not materialise because of the distance between the school sites.

ii) LA Officers confirmed in a meeting at Pontypridd High School on November 12th that it is likely that Sixth Form students at BCS school in 2022 would also travel to Y Pant CS for their A Levels because they will continue to work in partnership with BCS. This will also lead to additional transport for those students with some being asked to travel from places like Ynysybwl as far as Llantrisant.

iii) The fact that only 5 students in all of PHS when surveyed expressed any interest in making the proposed move to BCS. Almost no post 16 students at HHS have responded positively to this Sixth Form proposal.

iv) Both points (ii) and (iii) above pose the question whether £10 million spent at BCS would ever be accessed by the number of students that the council projects are likely to attend

there beyond 2022. As a school we remain confused by the numbers being projected to attend the BCS Sixth Form from the Pontypridd area. The Council continues to try to argue the benefits of students attending Coleg Y Cymoedd for their A Levels and yet simultaneously bases its projections for attendance at the BCS Sixth Form on the presumption that every A Level pupil in the Pontypridd area would travel to Beddau to study.

v) In a meeting at Hawthorn HS on November 12th, it was confirmed by RCT that the £10 million in the proposal which is earmarked for the Bryncelynog site would at least partially be used to finance general improvements to poor building quality at BCS and not specifically to develop a 'Sixth Form Centre of Excellence'. This questions the accuracy of the consultation document and the commitment to our students if they were to attend a post-16 centre at BCS.

REASON 2

The consultation document makes a number of statements about standards up to and including Summer 2017 results at Hawthorn High School, Pontypridd High School and the Pontypridd Sixth Form which are inaccurate and misleading. It appears that the intention of the document is to create an impression that standards are higher elsewhere and that, on that basis, a move to a Sixth Form Centre in another part of RCT should be welcomed by parents/carers and their children in our own community. This is evidenced by the following statements:

Firstly from Page 12 of the Consultation Document with regards to GCSE outcomes:

'The educational performance and pupil attendance of the 2 LA maintained secondary schools at Key Stage 4 is consistently in the third and fourth quartiles when compared to similar schools in Wales'

The two LA maintained schools referred to in this quote are Hawthorn High and Pontypridd High. Both schools feel extremely disappointed by this factually inaccurate analysis of performance and would point out that the Welsh Assembly has categorized them as being 'Yellow' schools for each of the last three academic years. The Welsh Assembly defines Yellow schools as being those that **"Have secured good levels of learner outcomes in key performance indicators."** WAG National School Categorisation Guide p19

It is important to understand the meaning of 'quartiles' and how such a reference is a negative rather than a positive statement. All secondary schools in Wales are divided into groups by the Welsh Government (WG) depending on the number of children in the school who are in receipt of free school meals. This is averaged out over a 3 year period to give a single figure. As a result, with 24.5% of our pupils currently being entitled to claim free school meals, HHS is in a group of Schools with a FSM entitlement of 20-30%). These are the groups in which comparisons are made of 'similar' schools' ('similar' does not necessarily mean local as they could be located anywhere in Wales). In effect scores are given to schools on the basis of whether their performance in a particular category places them in the top 25% of similar schools in Wales (quartile 1) down to performance in the bottom 25% (quartile 4).

BCS is placed in a group of schools with 10-15% FSM entitlement. **To that extent, by the**

Welsh Assembly's own process, BCS is clearly not defined as being a 'similar' school to Hawthorn High and as such you should not compare outcomes between these two schools directly.

The following table shows GCSE outcomes at HHS for the previous three years in terms of whether performance was in either quartile 1, 2, 3 or 4:

Hawthorn High School

Welsh Assembly Indicator	2015	2016	2017
At least 5 GCSEs inc. Eng and Maths	3	1	2
At least 5 GCSEs A* - C	1	1	1
At least 5 GCSEs A* - G	3	1	3
Best 8 or 9 GCSE results	1	1	2
Best English GCSE A* to C	3	2	4
Best Maths or Numeracy GCSE A* to C	3	2	1
Numeracy GCSE A*-C			1
Maths GCSE A*- C			1
Science GCSE A* to C	3	3	1
Welsh Bacc Skills qualification			1

You will note that during the three years identified less than 34% of indicators have been in the third or fourth quartile for Hawthorn High School. **To draw the conclusion that HHS is 'consistently in the 3rd or 4th quartile' is therefore inaccurate and very misleading.** It would be more accurate to state the positive view that more than 66% of the time Hawthorn High has been in quartiles 1 and 2. It is very regrettable that the council has chosen to portray relative performance between schools in this fashion.

There are a number of negative references made in the consultation document to A Level standards at HHS and the Pontypridd Sixth Form.

The following is taken from information provided to Council members prior to presenting the proposals for reorganization in the Pontypridd area:

'The educational performance of the sixth forms has been mixed with two of the secondary schools (Pontypridd High and Hawthorn High) consistently being amongst the worst performing schools in respect of A Level performance'

'The educational achievement and success at Key Stage 5 (in respect of the A Level results) of Hawthorn and Pontypridd High Schools are consistently below the Welsh averages and are amongst the lowest in RCT and Wales.'

These statements are inaccurate and misleading because they do not reflect actual outcomes at A Level when measured and compared against different performance indicators. These performance indicators are as follows:

***Green = above RCT average performance**

		L3	AWPS	3 A*/A	3 A*/C
2014/15	Pontypridd High	95.2	856	3.2	68.3
	Hawthorn High	98.2	773	1.8	59.6
	RCT lowest			0	27.0
	RCT average	96.9	730	2.9	57.5
	Wales average	96.9	799	7.9	67.5
2015/16	Pontypridd High	100	928	5.9	64.7
	Hawthorn High	97.6	772	0	61.9
	RCT lowest			0	40.2
	RCT average	97.0	765	4.0	65.2
	Wales average	98.0	823	6.7	70.6
2016/17	Pontypridd High	100	820	5.6	42.6
	Hawthorn High	100	739	2.1	41.7
	RCT lowest			0	16.3
	RCT average	96.3	678	5.5	45.1
	Wales average	97.1	731	10.5	54.7

The comparisons being drawn are also inappropriate in that the Welsh Average is being used as a 'like for like' comparison to compare performance between HHS, PHS and BCS. This is unfair as the Welsh average entitlement of a school's population to free school meals stands at 16.5%. BCS's entitlement is 14.5%, PHS is 19.5% and HHS is 24.5%. **Clearly it is unfair and inappropriate to suggest that the expectation for pupils to achieve Welsh average performance or better should be the same in all three schools.**

Thorough, impartial and accurate analysis of this data reveals that the term 'consistent' and 'below' are totally inappropriate, very negative and not a true representation of the actual outcomes within the Pontypridd Sixth Form; as the chart reveals there are very similar outcomes at BCS and the Pontypridd Sixth Form between 2015 and 2017 even when we do not consider that the latter has a significantly less affluent catchment area as defined by the Welsh Assembly.

The following is taken from Page 29 of the Consultation Document:

'The educational achievement and success at Key Stage 5 (in relation to the Average Wider Points Score) in the County Borough is well below Welsh averages and among the lowest in Wales.'

Each A Level grade that a student achieves is equal to a certain number of points (for example, an A grade at A Level is worth 270 points, a B grade 240 points and so on). All of these grades/points are added up to give a total points score. The Average Wider Points

Score is made up of the total points achieved by each student which is then divided by the number of A Level students in the year group. Points are awarded for A/S results in Year 12 and for the WBQ and Skills Challenge Certificate. They are one of the key factors in meeting the requirements of a successful University or College application.

Whilst this statement makes no specific reference to HHS and the Pontypridd Sixth Form, it again implies that outcomes are not acceptable. More thorough and detailed analysis would show that:

- HHS, PHS and therefore the Pontypridd Sixth Form exceed both the Wales and RCT averages every year, on most occasions by more than 100 points which is very significant. This reflects the fact that each student is given quality learning experiences and a range of support and guidance which enables them to study different courses and complete them successfully.

The third aspect in relation to statements about standards relates to further information provided for the Council members prior to presenting the proposals for reorganisation in the Pontypridd area:

'However, Bryncelynnoq Comprehensive School is an improving school and has consistently performed above the Welsh average for A level provision.'

Despite recent year on year improvements in outcomes at HHS in many important indicators, there is no reference to HHS being an 'improved school' which again creates the impression that an unfair comparison is being made, justified by an inaccurate analysis and interpretation of data.

Finally, in relation to standards there is no reference at all to outcomes at Coleg Y Cymoedd (CyC) despite the fact that this institution is proposed to be an option for HHS students as a 'Sixth Form Centre of Excellence'. This is a concern because:

- The A Level provision at CyC has been in place since it was built as part of a £45million investment 8 years ago. It is intended to be a minimum of 350 students which is only 3% of the total student roll at CyC.
- Cardinal Newman Sixth Form was based at CyC for 5 years until 2015; they withdrew at that time over concerns about the quality of A Level provision.
- The consultation document contains no information on A Level standards at CyC. Despite requests at the meetings at both HHS and PHS with LA Officers on November 12th for an analysis of the previous four years' data re. A Level performance at CyC the Council were unable to present any information on outcomes which is interesting given they have committed our students to going there should this proposal be accepted.
- In the meetings on November 12th LA Officers referred to excellent results at CyC in 2018. This is apparently a reference to 98% 'pass rate' reported through a press release on exam results day in August 2018. It appears that they achieved 98% Level 3 threshold (those passing two A Levels). *The A Level results table on page 16 allows parents to consider how this compares to similar Level 3 pass rates in the Pontypridd Sixth Form for the previous four years.* The fact remains these proposals were

confirmed prior to the 2018 results being available and commentary in the document relates to data up to 2017.

- In 2017 an Estyn report on provision at CyC concluded that overall standards were **ADEQUATE**. This was because the majority of learning areas have success rates significantly below national averages. In addition, standards on academic programmes, including AS and A levels, were deemed by ESTYN to be “**well below national comparators**”. This is not referred to in the consultation document even though standards in HHS were referred to as ‘below average’ on more than one occasion.
- Estyn made the following recommendations following their inspection of CyC in 2017:
R1 : Improve standards and outcomes achieved by learners on AS and A level courses
R4 : Make sure that teaching strategies engage and challenge all learners
R5 : Make sure that all teachers support learners to develop their literacy, numeracy and digital literacy skills
- In the meeting on November 12th, LA Officers were asked what action they had led in response to this inspection report. They confirmed that they have no significant role to play in managing and leading provision, other than some positions on the board, at CyC and as such the LA had not responded in any way to the Estyn recommendations. This is a concern because it shows there is no commitment from the Local Authority to any HHS students who could attend CyC if this Sixth Form proposal to be a Centre of Excellence is accepted.

REASON 3

The third reason why we object to the proposed removal of a Sixth Form from Hawthorn High is related to the inaccurate and misleading information provided in the consultation document in relation to the educational and financial viability of our present sixth form.

In relation to viability, Page 12 of the Consultation document states:

‘Hawthorn and Pontypridd High Schools combined have small sixth forms of less than 250 pupils (the national recommended minimum number for an efficient and effective sixth form), and with relatively poor educational performance.’

And on Page 14 of the consultation document:

‘A viable sixth form, both educationally and financially should, ideally, have at least 250 students; In January 2018 (source : PLASC return), Hawthorn High had 114 sixth form students attending and Pontypridd High 131, just 245 in total between the two schools. Bryncelynnoq Comprehensive had 147 sixth form students at the same point in time.’

It is recognised that both PHS and HHS are in a budget deficit situation and that BCS is presently in a surplus situation. However, we question these statements because:

- It is unclear where a figure of 250 for a viable Sixth Form has been taken from.

- Can it be assumed that BCS with only 147 in its Sixth Form is by the LA's own figures also unviable?
- The Pontypridd Sixth Form with 245 students is presently more viable and a good basis for a £10 million investment.

Number of A Level classes with 5 students or less

	2016	2017	2018
RCT Calculation (as presented in proposal)	28	25	n/a
Pontypridd Sixth Form actual number	17	8	3

The table above illustrates the advantages of working in partnership and how the Pontypridd Sixth Form of 245 students is more financially viable than the council's figures seem to be intended to suggest. The number of classes with less than 5 students has been reduced significantly in recent years by increasingly sharing provision between ourselves and PHS. RCT calculations presented in the consultation document only consider each school's provision in isolation and take no account of students from both schools in each class. As a result, they seem to have chosen to present figures which completely ignore the efficiencies which have been achieved for many years by working in partnership. This creates an unfairly negative picture of the Pontypridd Sixth Form.

Average A Level classes size

	2016	2017	2018
RCT Calculation (as presented in proposal)	5	5	n/a
Pontypridd Sixth Form actual number	11	14	14

The table above also shows the average A level class size which has grown over the three years, again as a result of sharing provision. RCT calculations only consider each school and take no account of students from both schools in each class.

And on page 14 of the consultation document:

'This proposal will create a school based sixth form at Bryncelynnoq of over 350 students (this will depend on student choice) and further enhance the sixth form and vocational offer at Coleg Y Cymoedd's Nantgarw Campus that already has 350 post 16 students studying traditional A Level subjects and over 1,000 post 16 students studying vocational subjects.'

Proposed Sixth Form Numbers

School	January 2019	January 2020	January 2021	January 2022	January 2023
Bryncelynnog	152	167	174	172	178
Cardinal Newman	65	70	73	83	93
Hawthorn	98	107	100	92	105
Pontypridd	111	112	112	108	105
Total	426	456	459	455	481

School	January 2023	January 2024	January 2025
Bryncelynnog Sixth Form	388	408	428

The table above shows the planned Sixth Form numbers should this proposal be accepted. We question the strategic value of this statement and its claim that significant numbers of students (110) from HHS and PHS will attend a sixth form at BCS because:

- Previous attempts at partnership workings with BCS have not materialised because of the additional travel time for students (especially those in the northerly parts of PHS' catchment).
- In a survey of all PHS students only 5 expressed any interest in attending a Sixth form at BCS.
- Experience of sixth form reorganisation in the Rhondda suggests that significant numbers of students do not transfer to another school for post-16, preferring instead to attend a college environment, an option already questioned in this document. If similar choices are made by Pontypridd students (as they are being encouraged to do in the Council's proposals) the projected numbers at BCS' 'Centre of Excellence' in 2022 will be nothing like the Council's projections.
- The LA also accept that should this proposal be accepted it is likely students will move elsewhere over the next 3 to 4 years to the extent that alternative post-16 destinations will already have been established should the new Centre of Excellence at BCS open in 2022
- For these reasons it is highly unlikely that the proposed figure of 388 Sixth Form students at BCS in January of 2023 will be reached through additional students from the Pontypridd Sixth Form.

REASON 4

The fourth reason is related to the equity of provision that our students will have access to if proposal 1 regarding the Sixth Form is accepted in its present format. Within Hawthorn High and the Pontypridd Sixth Form we are committed to:

- Giving learners from deprived backgrounds access to the highest quality learning and teaching so that the individual's learning pathway meets their needs and aspirations

- Providing the support and guidance to each student to ensure a seamless progression and transition from school to school and from school to further and higher education

We are very pleased that standards achieved by those students who are entitled to FSM have improved at GCSE level each year and as such the overall number who are and progressing into the Pontypridd Sixth Form is also increasing.

Our aims support Welsh Government priorities and the present proposal for removing Sixth Forms from PHS and other Pontypridd schools questions how this can be achieved in the future. Such priorities are outlined in two government reports:

1. 'Prosperity for All – A National Strategy' (2017) sets out a long-term aim to make Wales healthy and active, prosperous and secure, ambitious and learning, and united and connected. It aims to do this by:

- supporting young people to make the most of their potential
- building ambition and encouraging learning for life
- equipping everyone with the right skills for a changing world.

2. Education in Wales – Our national Mission (2017-2021) has two related objectives:

Enabling objective 1: Developing a high-quality education profession

To continue the 21st Century Schools and Education Capital Programme in order to deliver learning environments that meet the needs of all learners

Enabling objective 3: Strong and inclusive schools committed to excellence, equity and well-being

All learners must be supported to be emotionally and physically ready to learn in a safe and supportive environment. Equity requires that we ensure that the system, at school, local and national level takes account of and responds to the unique challenges that present themselves to individuals or groups of learners.

The proposal to remove the Sixth Form from Pontypridd does not fit with the priorities of the Welsh government as it reduces choice, builds barriers to extended learning options and therefore reduces the likelihood of a student progressing into a school based Sixth Form within the Pontypridd area. This becomes more relevant when consideration is given for the increasing number of children entitled to FSM at Hawthorn High.

	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11
eFSM %	27.4%	30.6%	22.8%	23.6%	18.9%

This is a concern because the younger year groups will be those most directly affected by the proposed changes in Sixth Form from September 2022.

Our success in improving outcomes for such learners has been based on familiarity, specific roles for staff, family engagement and raising aspirations. The proposal for changes in Sixth

Form will not support this well established way of working and to that extent it questions whether the key government priorities can also be met.

PROPOSAL 2

Proposal 2: Create a new, 3-16 'all through' school for Hawthorn High					
Agree with this proposal	YES		NO		NOT SURE

We accept this proposal but recognise the views of those connected with Heol Y Celyn Primary School in particular who may have to experience a significant change should this proposal be implemented. We also only accept this proposal on the basis that suitable arrangements can be made for our post 16 students in the Pontypridd locality which are under the influence of RCT. **In agreeing with this proposal we do not by implication accept proposal 1 in its current incarnation.**

We understand that this proposal is very much in line with the strategic change across RCT and that the timescale for implementation sits alongside significant curriculum change and learning experiences planned across in Wales in 2022. The Governing Body has reservations that the level of investment proposed (£12 million) may not be sufficient to develop all aspects of the Hawthorn site to '21st Century' standards and note the level of investment recently made in other secondary school sites to this end (Y Pant - £23 million and Tonyrefail upwards of £40 million). To this extent we would accept this proposal whilst also recognising that all planning and delivery will be the responsibility of a new School in 2022. It will be for them to meet the demands of such a change as outlined in the following statements:

On Page 11 of the consultation document:

'A single workforce in a school reflecting on and jointly developing and designing what works for five-year olds, teenagers and young adults is capable of a wider range of points of reference and a wider range of practices that a smaller group of teachers with a one-phase window to consider. These changes to what pupils learn and how they learn it are easier to manage in an all-through environment than in a single-phase school or group of schools.'

And on Page 16 of the consultation document:

'Other partner/associated primary schools in each community will also benefit from the proposal. Pupil transition is important and the Council, through its 21st Century Band A programme has instigated some innovative programmes to ensure the quality of integration at Year 7 was seamless regardless of where they have received their primary experience. No pupil will be disadvantaged when they join the new school at Year 7.'

Transition work with all cluster schools is essential so that all children have similar experiences and access to quality resources in a 21st Century learning environment. To

achieve this the LA must ensure sufficient funding exists that enables each child to make use of such resources at the new school from September 2022.

PROPOSAL 5

Proposal 5 : Amendment of the catchment area Hawthorn High School					
Agree with this proposal	YES		NO		NOT SURE

We accept this proposal but recognise the views of those connected with the primary schools and parents/carers involved who may have to experience a significant change should this be the case.

On Page 36 in the consultation document:

'It is proposed that the 11-16 catchment areas will also change. The changes all directly relate to the new 3-16 School at Hawthorn High which will:

-include the catchment area of Gwauncelyn Primary School, Tonteg (which is currently in the catchment area of Bryncelynog Comprehensive).

- exclude the Graig area of Pontypridd that is in the catchment area of Maesycloed Primary School.

- exclude the catchment area of Coedpenmaen Primary School, which will be included in the catchment area of the new Pontypridd 11-16 school....With surplus places in both new 3-16 schools for the foreseeable future, the choice of both schools will remain for pupils and parents.

We understand that this proposal is very much in line with the strategic change across RCT. The Maesycloed proposal is also a solution to a longer-term issue with the catchment boundaries between ourselves and PHS and primary liaison with the school has always been problematic for Hawthorn High.

We regret the reorganisation of Coedpenmaen Primary into the catchment for Pontypridd High School as relationships between Coedpenmaen and HHS have been strong historically. We recognise that surplus places are likely to provide a choice for parents for the foreseeable future and that transport issues to the two new schools may still need to be based on historical precedents.

We would be very pleased to welcome pupils from Gwauncelyn Primary school into the Hawthorn catchment but recognise that this proposal is, in our opinion, also likely to leave a choice of secondary schools for parents in the Tonteg area because, as we have made clear elsewhere in this proposal, we do not accept that the Council's Sixth Form numbers estimates beyond 2022 for BCS are accurate. If this is indeed the case, there are likely to be surplus places in Bryncelynog should the £10 million pound investment go ahead. This is a concern for projected numbers at the new Hawthorn 3-16 school should Coedpenmaen Primary become part of the catchment for the new Pontypridd school.

With the aforementioned reservations, we would accept this proposal and can give our full assurance to the transition process that will allow all children to be successful at Hawthorn High from 2020 in a new school from September, 2022.

Other considerations in relation to Proposals 2 and 5

We welcome the commitment to improved road safety measures where appropriate to any implementation of these proposals. This was made clear by the statement below:

On Page 9 of the consultation document:

'A review of the safe routes to school, and improvements to walkways, road crossings and road speed management measures will be made to ensure the required safety standards are met. This is the approach we have implemented in other communities in earlier school reorganisation proposals with significant improvements being made to safe routes to schools.'

LA Officers on November 12th acknowledged the cost of ensuring such measures are put in place and confirmed that the funding to undertake such work **will not be taken from the 21st Century schools funding already outlined as a commitment to our school.**

Conclusions

Hawthorn High School does not accept Proposal 1 to remove the Sixth Form provision because the two alternatives given in the consultation document are not acceptable for different reasons. These include:

- The tone through much of the consultation document appears to question standards achieved by HHS, PHS and the Pontypridd Sixth Form. Unfair and statistically inaccurate comparisons are made in the consultation document about standards and outcomes between Hawthorn High School, Pontypridd High School, the Pontypridd Sixth Form and other schools.
- Performance data at both GCSE and A Level used does not justify the proposals. In fact outcomes alongside other schools are mostly as expected and to suggest one school is improving is as statistically sound as reporting that standards at HHS and PHS are amongst the worst in Wales.
- According to the consultation document, this is a plan for schools in Pontypridd and geographically a Centre of Excellence at BCS will not serve the majority of students from Pontypridd. Nor will such a distant provision encourage them to be aspirational about their own futures by furthering their studies at A Level.
- Evidence already shows that students are highly unlikely to take up the option of a Sixth Form Centre at BCS. Strategically this must question the allocation of £10million of funding and the fact that such funding will not be accessed by our students.
- It has been confirmed that the aforementioned funding for BCS will be used in a more general way to address the state of school buildings. Such a statement is at odds with the commentary in the document and the spirit of a 'Centre of Excellence' for post-16 students.
- The Pontypridd Sixth Form at present is a more viable solution through its partnership working. This is a foundation for further investment.
- It is not clear what pastoral, support and transition arrangements would be available through Sixth Form Centres of Excellence. This is important to all students and in particular the most vulnerable for whom a safe transition into post-16 in familiar surroundings and where staff know each individual and their family well.
- The Estyn report of 2017 would suggest that CyC is no better placed than the present Pontypridd Sixth Form partnership to become a Centre of Excellence.
- Cardinal Newman has already removed its 6th Form provision from CyC due to concerns about standards. The college's level of accountability to RCT is also a concern.

Hawthorn High School accepts Proposal 2 to become a 3-16 'all through' school

Hawthorn High School accepts Proposal 5 to amend catchment areas as outlined in the consultation document.

Further questions...?

- What is the justification for moving all Sixth Form provision out of the town area of Pontypridd? This is not clear from the document or from responses given in meetings with LA Officers.
- Should the £10million earmarked for BCS actually be used to develop a Sixth Form provision within the Pontypridd area, at a site appropriate to both PHS and HHS ?
- In what ways can a Centre of Excellence at Coleg Y Cymoedd be created when the LA has no significant input into how that is created, monitored or measured?
- How will the LA recognise the opinions of the students who firmly want a sixth form provision within the town of Pontypridd ?

And thoughts....

- Pontypridd is a university town and should be offering a vibrant Sixth Form. provision. This is as much about standards as it is a matter of geography, fairness and an equitable location of a Sixth Form provision for children who grow up and live in Pontypridd.
- Within this proposal there needs to be new consideration for an appropriate and suitable location in Pontypridd using 21st Century funding to deliver post-16 provision which can be built around the 3-16 model and which is delivered by staff who are often known to students and who have A Level teaching experience.
- Such a Sixth Form provision should have a leadership and management structure which is accountable to the LA, meets the aspirations of students and makes use of facilities and future investment planned for this important and well serviced central location within RCT.

What happens next ?

- i) Following the deadline for responses in January 2019 all information will be recorded, reported and discussed.
- ii) A decision will be made by the Council Cabinet in March, 2019. Following this there is a period when objections can be heard.
- iii) If proposals are agreed then the initial stage, most likely in the Autumn of 2020 will be to appoint a temporary governing body for the new school and staff appointments will take place from that time.
- iv) Changes to catchment areas will take effect from September, 2020
- v). **Appendix 5 on page 17** shows a copy of the Consultation response form that needs to be used as part of this process. Please use:
 - information on pages 3 to 12 to answer question 1 on Proposal 1
 - information on pages 12 to 13 to answer question 2 on Proposal 2
 - information on pages 13 to 14 to answer question 3 on Proposal 5

Thank you for your support, it is very much appreciated.

The Consultation Response Pro-forma

In order to comply with its legal duty under the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and help the Council reach a decision on the proposal below, it would be very helpful if you could answer the following questions. Please note, any personal information given by you will not be shared and only used to provide you with feedback, should you request it. Any comments that could identify you will be anonymised in the consultation report produced.

Completed questionnaires should be returned to:

Director of Education and Inclusion Services

21st Century Schools Team

Ty Trevithick

Abercynon

CF45 4UQ

or email schoolplanning@rctcbc.gov.uk

The Proposals

Proposal 1: Removal of the sixth forms of Hawthorn High, Pontypridd High and Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive, with post 16 students attending an alternative school or college that offers the choice of courses they require.

1. Do you agree with proposal 1? YES / NO / NOT SURE

Please let us know the reasons for your choice

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Proposal 2: Create a new, 3 – 16 ‘all through’ school for Hawthorn

2. Do you agree with proposal 2? YES / NO / NOT SURE

Please let us know the reasons for your choice

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Proposal 5: Amendment of the catchment areas of Hawthorn High and Pontypridd High Schools and the 6th form catchment area of Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School, as outlined in this document.

3. Do you agree with proposal 5? YES / NO / NOT SURE

Please let us know the reasons for your choice

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

4. Please state any alternative views or points which you would like to be taken into account

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

5. Please indicate who you are (e.g. parent of a pupil at named school, governor at named school etc.)

.....

6. Name (optional)

.....

7. Please provide contact details if you wish to be notified of publication of the consultation report

.....

.....

.....

Please forward completed questionnaires to the above address no later than Thursday, 31st January 2019

The Council is committed to keeping your personal information safe and secure and keeping you informed about how we use your information. To learn about how your privacy is protected and how and why we use your personal information to provide you with services, please visit our Consultation privacy notice here: www.rctcbc.gov.uk/serviceprivacynotice and the Council's data protection pages here: www.rctcbc.gov.uk/dataprotection.

Additional Information Sheet

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....



HAWTHORN HIGH SCHOOL

Health, Happiness, Success



School Lane, Hawthorn, Pontypridd, CF37 5AL Tel: 01443 841228 Fax: 01443 846464 Email: hawthorn@hawthornhs.co.uk

Headteacher / Prifathro: [REDACTED]

3rd December 2018

Dear parents/carers,

I would like to take this opportunity to convey to you the school's formal response to the Council's proposals for school reorganisation in the Pontypridd area in the hope that you will support us by expressing similar views in your written response before the end of January. We and Pontypridd High School have worked very closely together for many weeks in formulating our responses. Whilst both schools recognise that there are many benefits to aspects of the proposals, we are very disappointed by the arguments the council puts forward in an attempt to justify Cabinet thinking re. Sixth Form provision in Pontypridd; we would ask that the Local Authority gives further consideration to this aspect of reorganisation by identifying an appropriate and suitable location in Pontypridd for a Pontypridd Sixth Form using 21st Century funding. This should be one which:

- can be led and managed predominantly by staff working in our Schools
- is accountable to the LA for standards achieved by Sixth Form pupils
- meets the aspirations of students and makes use of facilities and future investment planned for this important and well serviced central location within RCT

On the school's website in the 'About us'/'21st Century Schools' you are able to read our **guide to the 21st Century Schools proposal for parents and carers**, which sets out our detailed response to the council's consultation document (***attached to this email is a summary of the arguments it puts forward***). We would encourage you to join the school in saying:

No to proposal one – to remove Sixth Form provision for all English medium schools

Yes to proposal two – to create a 3-16 school on the Hawthorn campus (as long as a suitable Sixth Form provision for Pontypridd can be found and the level of investment to create a 21st Century school campus is secured).

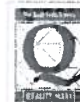
Yes to proposal five – to reorganise the catchment of the new Hawthorn school to include Gwauncelyn Primary School in Tonteg.

I hope that you can find the time to read the attached guide and summary document and consider their implications for your children's education. **I shall write to you again soon to tell you when you will have the opportunity to come to the school and discuss the attached documents** with myself, Governors and the Headteacher. You have until the last week in January to make your views known to the council.

Thank you for your continued support,

[REDACTED]
Chair of Governors

Ysgol Uwchradd Hawthorn, Lon Yr Ysgol,
Hawthorn, Pontypridd, CF37 5AL



Hawthorn High School summary response to RCT's 21st Century schools proposals

Proposal 1 – The removal of Sixth Form provision from all English medium schools in Pontypridd

We do not accept this proposal for the following reasons:

- Previous attempts at linking our Sixth Form with Bryncelynnog (BCS) have not materialised because of the distance between the schools and areas students travel from
- Students have expressed clearly that they will not want to travel to a BCS sixth form
- Standards at GCSE at Hawthorn High School and at A Level in the Pontypridd Sixth Form are at a much higher standard than the consultation document suggests
- The Estyn report of 2017 would suggest that Coleg y Cymoedd is no better placed than the present Pontypridd Sixth Form partnership to become a 'Centre of Excellence'.
- Present partnership working within the Pontypridd Sixth Form enables a broad subject choice to be offered and class sizes to be significantly higher than the LA suggests
- Pontypridd is an important central place in RCT and a university town which should have a Sixth Form provision
- Equity of provision for our students is at the heart of Welsh Government policy for young people in Wales and the lack of a Sixth Form in Pontypridd town does not support this national priority.

Proposal 2 – to create a 3-16 school on the Hawthorn campus

As long as a suitable Sixth Form provision for Pontypridd can be found and the level of investment to create a 21st Century school campus secured, **in principle we accept this proposal** because:

- The Hawthorn site is in need of significant capital investment to bring it up to the standards required of a 21st Century school.
- We understand the benefits to both students and staff of access to improved facilities and the progression that can be made through such learning experiences
- However, if such a change is to benefit the whole Hawthorn High cluster then the LA will need to commit significant additional funding to ensure all 3-11 children have access to the same 21st Century facilities.

Proposal 5 – to reorganise the catchment of the new Hawthorn school to include Gwauncelyn Primary School in Tonteg.

We accept this proposal because:

- We have discussed a resolution to the historical problems of our catchment area caused by the relocation of both HHS and PHS for a number of years
- It will help to support better progression and transition into Year 7

Appendix 7

Pontypridd High School's letter to parents / carers

December 4th, 2018

Dear Parent / Carer,

As part of the Local Authority proposals to reorganise schools in our area of Pontypridd, I would like to present to you a formal response from Pontypridd High as part of the consultation process. On behalf of the Governors, staff and students, I trust you will support us by expressing similar views in your own written response before the end of January, 2019. I have included a brief summary of the School position and also a more detailed justification of our thoughts on the three proposals. The three proposals which could impact on Pontypridd High are:

1. To remove the Sixth Form provision from Pontypridd High, Hawthorn High and Cardinal Newman and develop Post-16 'centres of excellence' based at Bryncelynog Comprehensive School and Coleg y Cymoedd. **We do not accept this proposal**
2. Create a new 3-16 school on the site of Pontypridd High. **We accept this proposal if the Sixth Form proposal above can be agreed**
3. Amend the catchment areas of Pontypridd High. **We accept this proposal.**

We have worked very closely with Hawthorn High School in forming our responses and together we strongly challenge the arguments put forward by the Local Authority in an attempt to justify Cabinet thinking about Sixth Form provision in Pontypridd. **We are asking the LA to give further consideration to sixth form reorganisation by identifying an appropriate and suitable location in Pontypridd for a Pontypridd Sixth Form using 21st Century funding. This should be one which:**

- can be led and managed predominantly by staff working in our Schools
- is accountable to the LA for standards achieved
- meets the aspirations of students and makes use of facilities and future investment planned for this important and well serviced central location within RCT

The time has now come to present our views clearly to the Local Authority and I trust you can find the time to read the attached summary and the more detailed information guide on the school website. Please use this to inform your own opinion and complete a response to the consultation process by January 31st, 2019.

The consultation proforma that you can use is also attached. I am sure that through our responses we will make a strong case for a 21st Century sixth form education provision in Pontypridd that our children are entitled to and which gives them the opportunity to meet aspirations and enjoy a successful future.

Please contact me at school should you wish to discuss any of the information included or if you require further advice on completing the consultation response document.

As always thank you for your continued support.



Huw Cripps
Headteacher

It is important to state that any comments about Bryncelynnog CS or Coleg y Cymoedd are only made in reference to information available. It is in no way our intention to criticise the work of other schools/colleges, but rather to question and challenge the LA analysis and interpretation of this information as portrayed in the Council's consultation document and the contextual report to members.

Proposal 1 – To remove the Sixth Form provision from Pontypridd High, Hawthorn High and Cardinal Newman and develop Post-16 'centres of excellence' based at Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School and Coleg y Cymoedd

We do not accept this proposal because:

- Previous attempts at linking our Sixth Form with Bryncelynnog have not materialised because of the distance between the two schools and areas students travel from
- Students have expressed clearly that they will not want to travel to a BCS sixth form
- Standards at GCSE and A Level in Pontypridd High School are at a much higher standard than the consultation document suggests
- The Estyn report of 2017 would suggest that CyC is no better placed than the present Pontypridd Sixth Form partnership to become a Centre of Excellence.
- Present partnership working within the Pontypridd Sixth Form enables a broad subject choice to be offered and class sizes to be higher than the consultation document suggests
- Pontypridd is an important central place in RCT and a university town which should have a Sixth Form provision
- Equity of provision for our students is at the heart of Welsh Government policy for young people in Wales and the lack of a Sixth Form in Pontypridd town does not support this national priority.

Proposal 2 – Create a new 3-16 schools on the site of Pontypridd High.

In principle we accept this proposal because;

- We understand the benefits to both students and staff of access to improved facilities and the progression that can be made through such learning experiences
- Good practise can be gained from 3-16 schools elsewhere in RCT
- If an acceptable Sixth Form option is agreed then the 3-16 proposal could be accepted.

Proposal 3 – Amend the catchment area of Pontypridd High.

We accept this proposal because:

- We have discussed a resolution to the historical problems of our catchment area caused by the relocation of both PHS and HHS for a number of years
- It will help to support better progression and transition into Year 7

We ask that the Local Authority gives further consideration to this aspect of reorganisation by identifying an appropriate and suitable location in Pontypridd for a Pontypridd Sixth Form using 21st Century funding. One which:

- can be led and managed by staff working in our Schools
- is accountable to the LA
- meets the aspirations of all students and makes use of facilities and future investment planned for this important and well serviced central location within RCT

REORGANISATION of SCHOOLS in PONTYPRIDD

AN INFORMATION GUIDE for PARENTS and CARERS



Contents

Purpose	Page(s)
Proposal 1 : Removal of the Sixth Form of Pontypridd High	2-11
Reason 1 : Sixth- Form partnership working	2
Reason 2 : Comparing A Level and GCSE standards	2-7
Reason 3 : Post-16 viability with reference to student roll and funding	8-9
Reason 4 : Welsh Government priorities	10-11
Proposal 3 : Changes to make PHS a 3-16 'all through' school	11
Proposal 5 : Amendments to the Pontypridd High catchment	12
Conclusions	13
What happens next ?	14
Questions for the Local Authority	15
The Consultation response form	16-18

(NB: Proposal 2 and 4 relate only to Hawthorn High School and Welsh medium education)

Documents referred to in this response include:

- 1. Local Authority 'Consultation on the reorganisation of primary schools, secondary schools and sixth form provision in the Pontypridd area**
- 2. A report to Council members with the purpose of seeking their approval to begin the relevant and required statutory consultations for the proposals**
- 3. Welsh Assembly Government National School Categorisation Guide**
- 4. Prosperity for All – A National Strategy' (2017)**
- 5. Education in Wales – Our National Mission (2017-2021)**

PROPOSAL 1

Proposal 1 : Removal of the Sixth Form of Pontypridd High with post-16 students attending an alternative school or college that offers the choice of courses they require.			
Agree with this proposal	YES	NO	NOT SURE

About the Pontypridd Sixth Form

For 10 years we have operated a joint sixth form provision with Hawthorn High School Together we call our partnership the 'Pontypridd Sixth Form'. By working together we are able to offer students a broader range of subjects at either school and we can also maximise the use of staff and facilities across the two schools. Students travel the short distance between sites by bus, provided as required and free of charge. This is a well established provision and we continually review it and make changes to ensure it is successful and meets the needs of our students.

What is significant and right is that by working together we are providing a school based sixth form provision within and around the town of Pontypridd.

We are objecting to the proposal to close the Pontypridd Sixth Form and relocate our students to Sixth Form 'Centres of Excellence' at either Bryncelynog Comprehensive School (BCS) or Coleg y Cymoedd (CyC) for the following reasons;

REASON 1

The first reason is related to the Partnership working that has already been attempted with the BCS / Y Pant Sixth Form partnership

- The fact that partnership working with BCS has been discussed in the past and joint work did not materialise because of the distance between the school sites
- BCS works in partnership with Y Pant CS. LA Officers confirmed in the meeting on November 12th that it was likely students would also travel to Y Pant CS for their A Levels because they will continue to work in partnership with BCS. This will lead to additional transport for those students.
- The fact that only 5 students out of nearly 900 of the students at Pontypridd High have expressed any interest to make this move to BCS. A similar number responded in that way at HHS.
- In the meeting on November 12th, Officers were not able to guarantee that the £10 million proposed for BCS would actually be spent on a Sixth Form Centre of Excellence' but could be used to finance general improvements to poor building quality at BCS.
- Because of the points above, the question must be asked whether £10 million spent at BCS would ever be accessed by PHS students

REASON 2

The second reason we do not accept this proposal as it is presented is because the consultation document makes a number of statements about poor standards at Pontypridd High and the Pontypridd Sixth Form which are inaccurate and misleading.

It appears that the intention of the document is to give an impression that standards are higher elsewhere and that a move to a Sixth Form Centre in another part of RCT should be welcomed by parents / carers and their children.

Examples of such statements about standards at Pontypridd High include:

a). Firstly from Page 10 of the Consultation Document with regards to GCSE outcomes

'The educational performance and pupil attendance of the 2 LA maintained secondary schools at Key Stage 4 is consistently in the third and fourth quartiles when compared to similar schools in Wales'

The two LA maintained schools referred to in this quote are Pontypridd High and Hawthorn High. Both schools feel extremely disappointed by this factually inaccurate analysis of performance and would point out that the Welsh Assembly has categorized both as being 'Yellow' schools for each of the last three academic years. The Welsh Assembly defines Yellow schools as being those that **"Have secured good levels of learner outcomes in key performance indicators."** (Page 19 of the WAG National School Categorisation Guide)

What is meant by 'quartiles' and how such a reference is a negative rather than a positive statement ?

All secondary schools in Wales are divided into groups depending on the number of children who receive free school meals. This is averaged out over a 3 year period to give a single figure. For the years 2015 and 2016 the average for Pontypridd High School (PHS) was 20.8%. For 2016 and 2018 this average fell to 19.8%. Since September 2018 the figure for PHS is 20.2%

As a result, between 2015 and 2016 PHS was in a group of Schools with a FSM entitlement of 20-30%. Between 2017 and 2018 we have been in a group of Schools between 15-20%. These are the groups in which comparisons are made of 'similar' schools'. Similar does not necessarily mean local, as they could be located anywhere in Wales.

Between 2015 and 2016 you would expect PHS to be in quartile 1 or 2 for all performance indicators given the average FSM entitlement of 20.8%. As this figure decreased to 19.8% for 2017 and 2018 you would expect any comparison with similar schools to be more in quartiles 3 and 4.

BCS is placed in a group of schools with 10-15% FSM entitlement. To that extent BCS is not a 'similar' school to Pontypridd High and as such no direct comparisons in relation to student outcomes should be made between the two schools.

The table below shows GCSE outcomes at PHS over the period 2015 to 2017.

Welsh Government Performance Indicator	2015 Compared to schools who were 20-30% eFSM	2016 Compared to schools who were 20-30% eFSM	2017 Compared to schools who were 15-20% eFSM	2017 Compared to schools who were 20-30% eFSM
5 A* to C at GCSE (with Eng/Maths)	2	1	3	2
5 A* to C at GCSE or better	1	1	4	2
5 A* to G at GCSE or better	2	1	2	2
Capped 8/9 average GCSE points	1	1	3	1
Best English A* to C %	3	1	4	2
Best Maths A* to C %	1	1	2	1
Best Science A* to C %	4	3	3	2

You will note that PHS has been in the 3rd or 4th quartile on 8/21 occasions during this 3 year period. To draw the conclusion that PHS is consistently in the 3rd or 4th quartile is therefore inaccurate and very misleading. It would be more accurate to state the positive view that in 13/21 occasions, PHS has been in quartiles 1 and 2 but the consultation document did not do that. The figures for BCS are the same.

ii). Secondly, misleading and inaccurate contextual information was given to Council members through an initial report regarding A Level standards at PHS and the Pontypridd Sixth Form. These include:

From the report to Council members paragraph 4.2

'The educational achievement and success at Key Stage 5 (in respect of the A Level results) of Hawthorn and Pontypridd High Schools are consistently below the Welsh averages and are amongst the lowest in RCT and Wales.'

From the report to Council members paragraph 4.7

'The educational performance of the sixth forms has been mixed with two of the secondary schools (Pontypridd High and Hawthorn High ?) consistently being amongst the worst performing schools in respect of A Level performance'

These statements are inaccurate and misleading because they do not reflect actual outcomes at A Level when measured and compared against different performance indicators. Thorough and accurate analysis of this data which is shown in the table below reveals that:

Comparative A Level outcomes in Year 13

		L3	AWPS	3 A*/A	3 A*/C
2015	Pontypridd High	95.2	856	3.2	68.3
	RCT lowest			0	27.0
	RCT average	96.9	730	3.1	57.9
	Wales average	96.9	799	7.9	68.1
2016	Pontypridd High	100	928	5.9	64.7
	RCT lowest			0	40.2
	RCT average	97.0	765	4.0	65.2
	Wales average	98.0	823	6.7	70.6
2017	Pontypridd High	100	820	5.6	42.6
	RCT lowest			0	16.3
	RCT average	96.3	678	5.5	45.1
	Wales average	97.1	731	10.5	54.7

i). Between 2015 and 2017, PHS and the Pontypridd Sixth Form achieved A Level outcomes that on 9/12 occasions were above the RCT average and 6/12 occasions above the Wales average. The term 'consistent' and 'below' are totally inappropriate, very negative and not a true representation of the actual outcomes within the Pontypridd Sixth Form. The figures for BCS are the same.

iii). In the meeting with senior LA Officers on November 12th these points were raised by the Student Council, staff and governors and not questioned. However, Officers raised the fact that BCS had achieved better results in 2018. It was noted that the document had been written and proposals agreed based on data up to 2017. If 2018 data was to be considered then PHS and the Pontypridd Sixth Form would also have been seen to have improved.

The following is taken from Pages 13 and 28 of the Consultation Document

'The educational achievement and success at Key Stage 5 (in relation to the Average Wider Points Score) in the County Borough is well below Welsh averages and among the lowest in Wales.'

Please see the student outcome data for Pontypridd High in comparison with RCT and Wales below:

Average Wider Points Score in Year 13

Year		AWPS
2015	Pontypridd High	856
	RCT average	725
	Wales average	787
2016	Pontypridd High	928
	RCT average	765
	Wales average	823
2017	Pontypridd High	820
	RCT average	679
	Wales average	733

Each A Level grade that a student achieves is equal to a certain number of points. (For example, an A grade at A Level is worth 120 points, a B grade 100 points and so on). All of these grades / points are added up to give a total points score. The Average Wider Points Score is made up of the total points achieved by each student which is then divided by the number of A Level students in the year group. Points are awarded for A/S results in Year 12 and for the WBQ and Skills Challenge Certificate. They are one of the key factors in meeting the requirements of a successful University or College application

Whilst this statement makes no specific reference to PHS and the Pontypridd Sixth Form, more thorough and detailed analysis would show that:

- PHS and the Pontypridd Sixth Form exceed both the Wales and RCT averages every year, on most occasions by more than 100 points which is very significant.
- This reflects the fact that each student is given quality learning experiences and a range of support and guidance which enables them to study different courses and complete them successfully.

iii). Thirdly, in relation to contextual information which was given to Council members prior to presenting the proposals for reorganisation in the Pontypridd area

From the report to Council members paragraph 4.2

'However, Bryncelynnoq Comprehensive School is an improving school and has consistently performed above the Welsh average for A level provision.'

- The data presented would appear to show parity between PHS, the Pontypridd Sixth Form and BCS.
- Despite improvements in outcomes at PHS and the Pontypridd Sixth Form there is no reference to PHS being an 'improved school' which again creates the impression that an unfair comparison is being made, justified by an inaccurate analysis and interpretation of data.

iv). Finally, in relation to standards there is no reference at all to outcomes at Coleg Y Cymoedd (CyC) despite the fact that this institution is proposed to be an option for PHS students as a 'Sixth Form Centre of Excellence'. This is a concern because;

- The A Level provision at CyC has been in place since it was built as part of a £45million investment 8 years ago. It is intended to be a minimum of 350 students which is only 3% of the total student roll at CyC.
- Cardinal Newman Sixth Form was based at CyC for 5 years until 2015. They withdrew at that time over concerns about the quality of A Level provision.
- The consultation document contains no information on A Level standards at CyC. Despite requests at the meeting with LA Officers on November 12th they were unable to present any information on outcomes which is interesting given they have committed our students to going there should this proposal be accepted.
- In the meeting on November 12th LA Officers referred to excellent results at CyC in 2018. This is reference to 98% 'pass rate' reported through a press release on exam results day in August 2018. PHS achieved 98.5% for this indicator. The fact remains these proposals were confirmed prior to the 2018 results being available and commentary in the document relates to data up to 2017.
- In 2017 an Estyn report on provision at CyC concluded that overall standards were **ADEQUATE**. This was because the majority of '*learning areas have success rates significantly below national averages. In addition, standards on academic programmes, including AS and A levels, are well below national comparators*'. This is not referred to in either document even though standards in PHS were referred to as 'below average' and 'amongst the worst in Wales' on different occasions.
- Amongst others, Estyn made the following recommendations following their inspection of CyC in 2017;

R1 : Improve standards and outcomes achieved by learners on AS and A level courses

- In the meeting on November 12th, LA Officers were asked what action they had led in response to this inspection report. They confirmed that they have no significant role in managing and leading provision at CyC and as such the LA had not responded in any way to the Estyn recommendations. This is a concern because it shows there is no clear line of accountability from the Local Authority to any PHS students who could attend CyC if this Sixth Form proposal to be a Centre of Excellence is accepted.

REASON 3

The third reason why we object to the proposed removal of a Sixth Form from Pontypridd High is related to the inaccurate and misleading information provided in the consultation document in relation to educational and financial viability of our present sixth form.

a). In relation to viability, Page 10 of the Consultation document states that;

'Hawthorn and Pontypridd High Schools combined have small sixth forms of less than 250 pupils (the national recommended minimum number for an efficient and effective sixth form), and with relatively poor educational performance.'

And on page Page 13 of the consultation document;

'A viable sixth form, both educationally and financially should, ideally, have at least 250 students; In January 2018 (source : PLASC return), Hawthorn High had 114 sixth form students attending and Pontypridd High 131, just 245 in total between the two schools. Bryncelynnoq Comprehensive had 147 sixth form students at the same point in time.'

It is recognised that both PHS and HHS are in a budget deficit situation and that BCS is presently in a surplus situation. However, we question these statements because;

- It is unclear where a figure of 250 for a viable Sixth Form has been taken. This could not be verified in the meeting with LA Officers on November 12th.
- The Pontypridd Sixth Form with 245 students is presently the most viable and a good basis for a £10 million investment.
- **The figures in the table below** illustrate the advantages of working in partnership and how the Pontypridd Sixth Form of 245 students is more viable. The number of classes with less than 5 students has been reduced significantly by sharing provision. RCT calculations only consider each school and take no account of students from both schools in each class and the efficiencies to be gained through such a partnership. This creates a misleading picture of the Pontypridd Sixth Form.

Number of A Level classes with 5 students or less

	2016	2017	2018
<i>RCT Calculation</i>	28	25	n/a
<i>Pontypridd Sixth Form actual number</i>	17	8	3

- **The table below** shows the average A Level class size which has grown over the three years, again as a result of sharing provision. RCT calculations only consider each school and take no account of students from both schools in each class.

Average A Level classes size

	2016	2017	2018
<i>RCT Calculation</i>	5	5	n/a
<i>Pontypridd Sixth Form actual number</i>	11	14	14

And on Page 26 of the consultation document

'This proposal will create a school based sixth form at Bryncelynnog of over 350 students (this will depend on student choice) and further enhance the sixth form and vocational offer at Coleg Y Cymoedd's Nantgarw Campus that already has 350 post 16 students studying traditional A Level subjects and over 1,000 post 16 students studying vocational subjects.'

The table below shows the planned Sixth Form numbers should this proposal be accepted.

Proposed Sixth Form Numbers

School	January 2019	January 2020	January 2021	January 2022	January 2023
Bryncelynnog	152	167	174	172	178
Newman	65	70	73	83	93
Hawthorn	98	107	100	92	105
Pontypridd	111	112	112	108	105
Total	426	456	459	455	481

School	January 2023	January 2024	January 2025
Bryncelynnog Sixth Form	388	408	428

We question the strategic value of this statement and its claim that significant numbers of students (210) from PHS and HHS will attend a sixth form at BCS because;

- Previous attempts at partnership workings with BCS have not materialised because of the additional travel time for students
- In a survey of all PHS students only 5 expressed any interest in attending a Sixth form at BCS
- Experience in the Rhondda suggests that significant numbers of students do not transfer to another school for post-16, preferring instead to attend a college environment, an option already questioned in this document. If similar choices are made by Pontypridd students (as they are being encouraged to do in the Council's proposals) the projected numbers at BCS' 'Centre of Excellence' in 2022 will be nothing like the Council's projections.
- The LA also accept that should this proposal be accepted it is likely students will move elsewhere over the next 3 to 4 years to the extent that an alternative post-16 destination will already have been established should the new Centre of Excellence at BCS open in 2022
- For these reasons it is unlikely that the proposed figure of 388 Sixth Form students at BCS in January of 2023 will be reached through additional students from the Pontypridd Sixth Form.

REASON 4

The fourth reason is related to the equity of provision that our students will have access to if proposal 1 regarding the Sixth Form is accepted in its present format. Within Pontypridd High and the Pontypridd Sixth Form we are committed to:

- Giving learners from deprived backgrounds access to the highest quality learning and teaching so that the individual's learning pathway meets their needs and aspirations
- Providing the support and guidance to each student to ensure a seamless progression and transition from school to school and from school to further and higher education

We are very pleased that standards achieved by those students who are entitled to FSM have improved at GCSE and A Level each year. Our aims support Welsh Government priorities and the present proposal for removing Sixth Forms from PHS and other Pontypridd schools questions how this can be achieved in the future. Such priorities are outlined in two government reports:

1. 'Prosperity for All – A National Strategy' (2017) sets out a long-term aim to make Wales healthy and active, prosperous and secure, ambitious and learning, and united and connected. It aims to do this by:

- supporting young people to make the most of their potential
- building ambition and encouraging learning for life
- equipping everyone with the right skills for a changing world.

2. Education in Wales – Our national Mission (2017-2021) has two related objectives:

Enabling objective 1: Developing a high-quality education profession

To continue the 21st Century Schools and Education Capital Programme in order to deliver learning environments that meet the needs of all learners

Enabling objective 3: Strong and inclusive schools committed to excellence, equity and well-being

All learners must be supported to be emotionally and physically ready to learn in a safe and supportive environment. Equity requires that we ensure that the system, at school, local and national level takes account of and responds to the unique challenges that present themselves to individuals or groups of learners.

The proposal to remove the Sixth Form from Pontypridd does not fit with the priorities of the Welsh government as it reduces choice, builds barriers to extended learning options and therefore reduces the likelihood of a student progressing into a school based Sixth Form within the Pontypridd area. This becomes more relevant when consideration is given for the increasing number of children entitled to FSM at Pontypridd High as shown below:

	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11
eFSM %	28%	26%	20%	12%	15%

The table shows that Years 9, 8 and 7 are almost double the % FSM for Years 10 and 11. This is a concern because the younger year groups will be those most directly affected by the proposed changes in Sixth Form from September 2022.

Our success in improving outcomes for such learners has been based on familiarity, specific roles for staff, family engagement and raising aspirations. The proposal for changes in Sixth Form will not support this well established way of working and to that extent it questions whether the key government priorities can also be met.

PROPOSAL 3

Proposal 3 : Create a new, 3-16 'all through' school for Pontypridd High			
Agree with this proposal	YES	NO	NOT SURE

We accept this proposal but recognise the views of those connected with Cilfynydd PS who may have to experience a significant change should this be the case.

We also only accept this proposal on the basis that suitable arrangements can be made for our post-16 students in the Pontypridd locality which are under the influence of RCT. In agreeing with this proposal we do not by implication accept proposal 1 in its current form.

We understand that this proposal is very much in line with the strategic change across RCT and that the timescale for implementation sits alongside significant curriculum change and learning experiences planned across in Wales in 2022.

The Governing Body has reservations that the level of investment proposed (£4.7 million) may not be sufficient to develop all aspects of the Pontypridd High site to '21st Century' standards

To that extent we would accept this proposal whilst also recognising that all planning and delivery will be the responsibility of a new School in 2022. It will be for them to meet the demands of such a change as outlined in the following statements;

On Page 8 of the consultation document;

'A single workforce in a school reflecting on and jointly developing and designing what works for five-year olds, teenagers and young adults is capable of a wider range of points of reference and a wider range of practices that a smaller group of teachers with a one-phase window to consider. These changes to what pupils learn and how they learn it are easier to manage in an all-through environment than in a single-phase school or group of schools.'

And on Page 16 of the consultation document;

'Other partner/associated primary schools in each community will also benefit from the proposal. Pupil transition is important and the Council, through its 21st Century Band A programme has instigated some innovative programmes to ensure the quality of integration at Year 7 was seamless regardless of where they have received their primary experience. No pupil will be disadvantaged when they join the new school at Year 7.'

Transition work with all cluster schools is essential so that all children have similar experiences and access to quality resources in a 21st Century learning environment. To achieve this the LA must ensure sufficient funding exists that enables each child to make use of such resources at the new school from September 2022.

PROPOSAL 5

Proposal 5 : Amendment of the catchment area Pontypridd High School			
Agree with this proposal	YES	NO	NOT SURE

We accept this proposal but recognise the views of those connected with the primary schools and parents / carers involved who may have to experience a significant change should this be the case.

On Page 54 in the consultation document

'The catchment area of the new Pontypridd 3-16 school will be as follows:

- Admission for 3-11 pupils – the existing catchment area of Cilfynydd PS
- The Graig area of Pontypridd that is currently part of the catchment area of Maesyrcoed Primary School
- The catchment area of Coedpenmaen Primary School'

We understand that this proposal is very much in line with the strategic change across RCT. It is also a solution to a longer-term issue with the catchment boundaries between ourselves and Hawthorn HS.

To that extent we would accept this proposal and can give our full assurance to the transition process that will allow all children to be successful at Pontypridd High from 2020 and then on in a new 3-16 (or 3-18) school from September, 2022.

Other considerations in relation to Proposals 3 and 5

We welcome the commitment to improved road safety measures where appropriate to any implementation of these proposals. This was made clear by the statement below;

On Page 7 of the consultation document

'A review of the safe routes to school, and improvements to walkways, road crossings and road speed management measures will be made to ensure the required safety standards are met. This is the approach we have implemented in other communities in earlier school reorganisation proposals with significant improvements being made to safe routes to schools.'

LA Officers on November 12th acknowledged the cost of ensuring such measures are put in place and confirmed **that the funding to undertake such work will not be taken from the 21st Century schools funding already outlined as a commitment to our school.**

Conclusions

Pontypridd High School does not accept Proposal 1 to remove the Sixth Form provision because the two alternatives given in the consultation document are not acceptable for different reasons. These include:

- The tone through much of the consultation document appears to question standards achieved by PHS. Unfair and statistically inaccurate comparisons are implied in the initial report to Council members and in the consultation document about standards and outcomes between Pontypridd High School, the Pontypridd Sixth Form and other institutions, the LA and Welsh figures.
- According to the consultation document this is a plan for schools in Pontypridd and geographically a Centre of Excellence at BCS will not serve students from Pontypridd. Nor will such a distant provision encourage different groups of learners to be aspirational about their own futures by furthering their studies at A Level.
- Evidence already shows that students are highly unlikely to take up the option of a Sixth Form Centre at BCS. Strategically this must question the allocation of £10million of funding and the fact that such funding will not be accessed by our students.
- It has been confirmed that no guarantee can be given as yet that such funding for BCS will be used specifically for a Sixth Form Centre or in a more general way to address the poor state of school buildings. Such a statement is at odds with the commentary in the document and the spirit of a Centre of Excellence for post-16 students.
- The Pontypridd Sixth Form at present is a more viable one through its partnership working. This is a foundation for further investment.
- It is not clear what pastoral, support and transition arrangements would be available through Sixth Form Centres of Excellence. This is important to all students and in particular the most vulnerable for whom a safe transition into post-16 in familiar surroundings and where staff know each individual and their family well.
- The Estyn report of 2017 would suggest that CyC is no better placed than the present Pontypridd Sixth Form partnership to become a Centre of Excellence.
- In comparison to a School based Sixth Form, the level of accountability that CyC has to RCT is a concern.

Pontypridd High School accepts Proposal 3 to become a 3-16 (or 3-18) 'all through' school within the context of Sixth Form proposals being reviewed.

Pontypridd High School accepts Proposal 5 to amend catchment areas as outlined in the consultation document.

What happens next ?

- i). Following the deadline for responses in January 2019 all information will be recorded, reported and discussed.
- ii). A decision will be made by the Council Cabinet in March, 2019. Following this there is a period when objections can be heard.
- iii). If proposals are agreed then the initial stage, most likely in the Autumn of 2020 will be to appoint a temporary governing body for the new school and staff appointments will take place from that time.
- iv). Changes to catchment areas will take effect from September, 2020
- v). Below is a copy of the Consultation response form that needs to be used as part of this process. **Please use:**
 - **information on pages 6 to 14 to answer question 1 on Proposal 1**
 - **information on page 14 and 15 to answer question 2 on Proposal 3**
 - **information on page 15 to answer question 3 on Proposal 5**

Questions for the Local Authority

- Pontypridd is a university town and it should be offering a vibrant Sixth Form provision for children who grow up and live in Pontypridd. This is what the student voice says they want.

What is the justification for moving all Sixth Form provision out of the town area of Pontypridd ? This is not clear from the documents provided or from responses given in meetings with LA Officers.

- Within this proposal there needs to be new consideration for an appropriate and suitable location in Pontypridd using 21st Century funding to deliver post-16 provision which can be built around the 3-16 model and which is delivered by staff who are known to students and who have A Level teaching experience.

How can a Centre of Excellence at Coleg Y Cymoedd be created when the LA has no significant input into how that is created, monitored or measured ?

- Such a Sixth Form provision should have a leadership and management structure which is accountable to the LA, meets the aspirations of students and makes use of facilities and future investment planned for this important and well serviced central location within RCT.

Should the £10million earmarked for Bryncelynog CS actually be used to develop a Sixth Form provision within the Pontypridd area, at a site appropriate to both PHS and HHS ?

The Consultation Response Form

In order to comply with its legal duty under the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and help the Council reach a decision on the proposal below, it would be very helpful if you could answer the following questions. Please note, any personal information given by you will not be shared and only used to provide you with feedback, should you request it. Any comments that could identify you will be anonymised in the consultation report produced.

Completed questionnaires should be returned to:

Director of Education and Inclusion Services

21st Century Schools Team

Ty Trevithick

Abercynon

CF45 4UQ

or email schoolplanning@rctcbc.gov.uk

The Proposals

Proposal 1: Removal of the sixth forms of Hawthorn High, Pontypridd High and Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive, with post 16 students attending a centre of excellence at Bryncelynnog CS or Coleg Y Cymoedd.

1. Do you agree with proposal 1? YES / NO / NOT SURE

Please let us know the reasons for your choice

[A summary of reasons why the school does not accept this proposal are included on the consultation response summary page which can be found on the school website](#)

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Proposal 3: Create a new, 3 – 16 ‘all through’ school for Pontypridd

2. Do you agree with proposal 3? YES / NO / NOT SURE

Please let us know the reasons for your choice

A summary of reasons why the school accepts this proposal given agreement on the Sixth Form are included on the consultation response summary page which can be found on the school website

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Proposal 5: Amendment of the catchment areas of Hawthorn High and Pontypridd High Schools and the 6th form catchment area of Bryncelynog Comprehensive School, as outlined in this document.

3. Do you agree with proposal 5? YES / NO / NOT SURE

Please let us know the reasons for your choice

A summary of reasons why the school accepts this proposal are included on the consultation response summary page which can be found on the school website

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

4. Please state any alternative views or points which you would like to be taken into account

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

5. Please indicate who you are (e.g. parent of a pupil at named school, governor at named school etc.)

.....

6. Name (optional)

.....

7. Please provide contact details if you wish to be notified of publication of the consultation report

.....

.....

.....

Please forward completed questionnaires to the above address no later than Thursday, 31st January 2019

The Council is committed to keeping your personal information safe and secure and keeping you informed about how we use your information. To learn about how your privacy is protected and how and why we use your personal information to provide you with services, please visit our Consultation privacy notice here: www.rctcbc.gov.uk/serviceprivacynotice and the Council's data protection pages here: www.rctcbc.gov.uk/dataprotection.

Additional Information Sheet

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Appendix 8

Results of separate consultation of Owen Smith MP

Consultation Response Pro-forma

The Proposals

Proposal 1: Removal of the sixth forms of Hawthorn High, Pontypridd High and Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive, with post 16 students attending an alternative school or college that offers the choice of courses they require.

Do you agree with proposal 1? **No**

Please let us know the reasons for your choice

1. This proposal will curtail choice for post 16 students in the greater Pontypridd area. The consultation assumes that approximately two thirds (c.200 of c.300) pupils attending the three 6th Forms proposed for closure will transfer to Bryncelynnog, expanding the Bryncelynnog 6th Form to 428 pupils by 2025, from its current base of 147. Though the projections do not include Coleg y Cymoedd, the inference is that just 60-100 of the pupils who would have attended one of the three closing 6th Forms will choose to attend CyC. There is no evidence to support these assumptions. Indeed, elsewhere in the document it is stated, quite plausibly, that the small decline we have seen in 6th Form numbers is a direct effect of the creation of the College.

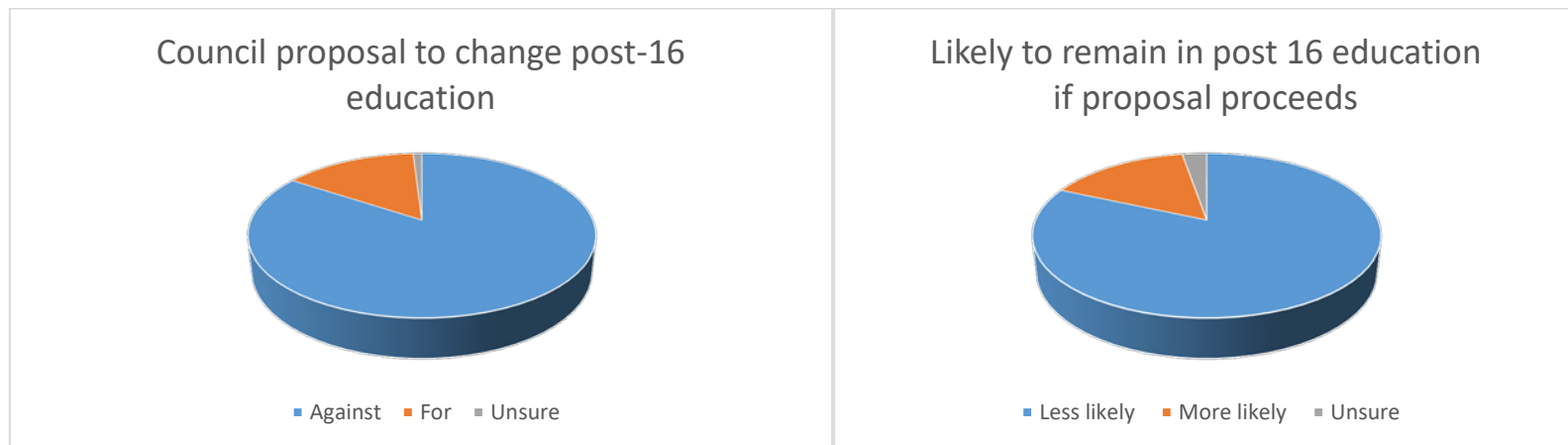
A far more realistic assumption is that the majority of students living between Cilfynydd and Taffs Well will, when presented with a choice between Bryncelynnog Comprehensive 6th Form and Coleg y Cymoedd, choose to attend the College. Geography and traditional patterns of travel and community connection will drive this pattern. People tend to travel up and down our valleys for work and education, rather than across valleys and there is no evidence to suggest that this pattern would change for these proposals.

In order to test public opinion about these proposals, I conducted a survey with affected schools in the catchment area and received responses from 542 families from the following schools:

- Pontypridd High
- Cardinal Newman
- Hawthorn High
- Hawthorn primary

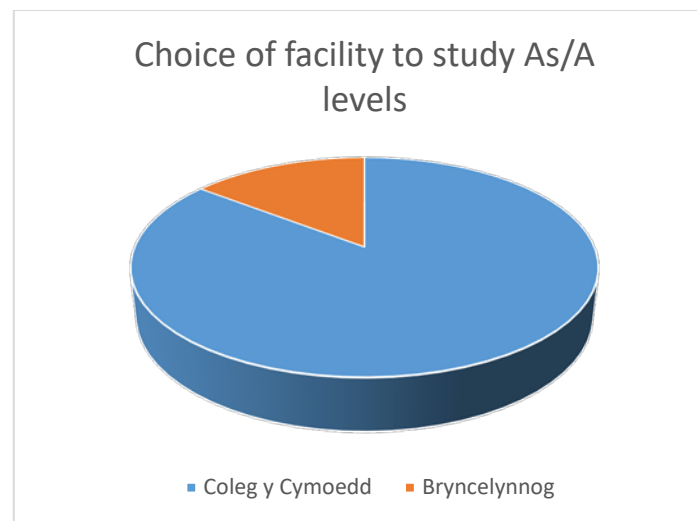
- Cefn primary
- Trehopcyn primary
- Trerobert primary
- Coed y Lan primary
- Parc Lewis primary
- Coedpenmaen primary
- Maesyrcoed primary
- Trallwn infants

Overwhelmingly, 84% of parents opposed the Council's proposals as the best way to improve post-16 education in the Pontypridd area, with only 15% supportive of the proposals. Furthermore, 82% of parents clearly stated their children were less likely to remain in education after the age of 16 if the Council's proposals were implemented. Only 16% thought their children were more likely to remain in post-16 education.



I also asked parents that if the changes were implemented, would your child be more likely to attend Coleg y Cymoedd or Bryncelynnog Comprehensive school to study for their As/A levels.

85% of parents answered that their child would be more likely to attend Coleg y Cymoedd compared with 15% who would choose to attend Bryncelynnog Comprehensive school.



The findings comprehensively support the conclusion that pupils will see their only 'real' choice as attending the college. It is therefore, essentially a false choice that is offered in these proposals, as the majority will attend the college.

There are several important issues that stem from this reduced choice:

a. Lesser pastoral care and structured learning for less mature or more vulnerable pupils, or for some with Learning Difficulties. Coleg y Cymoedd is an excellent FE college. It is, however, a very different learning environment to school, with a far greater, historic emphasis on vocational study and on student-led learning, with lesser structure in the learning day or week and greater churn in the teaching staff, with lesser continuity for students. There is less one-on-one management and knowledge of individual pupils, a function of the numbers of students and the culture of treating students more as adults and autonomous learners. For some, more mature or able students, this cultural change may prove stimulating and wholly positive. For others, however, who require greater nurturing, support or encouragement, it may prove a significant impediment to their achieving their full potential. That is why a true choice of options for students, with continuity pre-and post- 16 for those that require additional support, in an environment closer to their community, will remain a necessary condition for success for some students. In other words, the college will not be suitable for all at age 16, and Bryncelynnog, though an excellent school itself, may not be a realistic or viable alternative for those pupils who would fare better in a school 6th Form environment.

b. Lack of evidence that academic achievement will be improved by a concentration of pupils either at Coleg y Cymoedd or Bryncelynnog. The consultation document gives an impression that Bryncelynnog is significantly outperforming the other three schools in terms of performance at A Level. However, over a five year period all four schools have, in fact, performed similarly, with changes in cohorts delivering better results in Bryncelynnog in one year, Hawthorn in another, Ponty High in a third, Cardinal Newman in a fourth.

In 2015, for example, Bryncelynnog achieved just 34.7% success rate at grades A-C, whereas Cardinal Newman, Pontypridd High and Hawthorn achieved 73.4%, 68.3% and 59.6% respectively. A year later, in 2016, Bryncelynnog had boosted its performance to 67.2% while PHS, CN and HHS scored 64.7%, 68% and 61.9% respectively. These fluctuating patterns of similar performance are repeated across the period, and provide no strong evidence that any one school is 'out-performing' the others, nor that concentration of pupils in BCC would improve performance overall.

It is not ordinarily possible for parents to draw comparison between the academic performance of A Level students at Coleg y Cymoedd and that at our sixth forms, as the CyC data is not published. However, that data has been provided to me by the Welsh Assembly Government and it does not support the conclusion that performance would be enhanced by the transference of pupils to the college.

For comparison, in 2015, 61% of students at CyC achieved A-Levels grade A-C, out-performing the cohort at Bryncelynnog that year, on a par with Hawthorn, but a lesser percentage of success than at Ponty High or Cardinal Newman.

In 2016, 59% of students at CyC achieved A Levels grade A-C, performing less well than at any of our 6th Forms.

For completeness and transparency, please see the table below listing all Coleg y Cymoedd results across all A Level Subjects from 2013-2017.

Psychology	55	9	54	89	20	0	40	95	35	*	53	85	45	7	45	84
Religious Studies	25	17	58	92	15	0	54	100	*	*	*	*	10	*	67	92
Sociology	45	6	55	94	35	0	61	100	35	*	63	100	30	14	82	100
Spanish	0	0	0	0	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	0	0	0	0
Statistics	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	*	*	*	*
Welsh second language	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
All	405	11	59	93	350	7	61	96	355	10	65	95	425	11	67	97

(a) Data not shown for cohorts of less than 10, or individual cells for less than 3 pupils.

Number of A levels sat rounded to the nearest 5.

Source: Lifelong Learning Wales Record (LLWR)

It is also worth noting that the breadth and nature of the A Level Subjects being undertaken at the College versus the 6th Forms may have some significant bearing on any analysis of their relative performance. The history and tradition of CyC is as a centre of excellence for vocational learning, not as a 6th Form with its traditional emphasis on academic learning and progression to Higher Education.

This accounts for the fact that many traditional A Level subjects have NEVER been taught at Coleg y Cymoedd. For example, since the creation of the College, NO pupils have undertaken A Levels in English Literature, Further Mathematics, French, German, Spanish, Welsh, Music, DT, Government and Politics, Philosophy or Statistics..

The most popular A Levels at the College over the period are Psychology, Sociology, Art and Design, Media studies, Mathematics, History and Law. Of course these subject choices and mix would change if the College were effectively the post-16 choice for many across Pontypridd, but it does highlight a significant dearth of experience or expertise in the teaching of many academic subjects at Coleg y Cymoedd

c. Travel arrangements. It is a longstanding objective of the Welsh Government and RCTCBC to increase the physical activity of our children, including through the encouragement of walking to school along safe school routes. For the overwhelming majority of pupils transferring from one of the existing 6th Forms to either CyC or BCC, there will be no safe route and significantly increased

distances to travel. The consultation acknowledges that fact and so proposes home to school bus transport for almost all of the pupils. This is at odds with the important objective of increasing physical activity. It is also environmentally detrimental. Questions also have to be asked about the sustainability of this guarantee of transport, in light of recent, later retracted, proposals to cut school transport routes due to budgetary restrictions.

d. Faith school provision. This would be the second time in five years that the 6th Form at Cardinal Newman has undergone significant change, including its abortive partnership with Coleg y Cymoedd, widely perceived by parents and pupils not to have worked, for a variety of reasons. These new proposals will see many pupils seeking a Catholic 6th Form education forced to travel out of county, to Cardiff. There is significant concern among parents and pupils at the school about the impact this will have on both the individuals concerned and on the long-term viability of the school, if denuded of its 6th Form.

Proposal 2: Create a new, 3 – 16 ‘all through’ school for Hawthorn

Do you agree with proposal 2? **No**

Please let us know the reasons for your choice:

For the reasons listed in my response to Proposal 1, I believe retention of a 6th Form for Pontypridd is essential. I accept the arguments being made about size and the relative performance of the existing 6th Forms, and the logic of greater concentration on one or more sites. The logical site for an expanded 6th Form for the greater Pontypridd area is at Hawthorn, although that too would present some challenges in respect of traffic management and other important issues raised by parents.

There is nothing to stop the Council proposing a 3-19 school on the Hawthorn site. The proximity of Hawthorn Primary means that such a school already exists in spatial terms, though the management, governance, resourcing etc are currently all separate, of course.

Nor is there significant evidence from elsewhere in Wales, or the rest of the UK that 3-16 schools increase academic performance. Indeed some recent studies have illustrated the traditional benefits of having older, post-16 student role-models on site alongside younger pupils. I accept many of the arguments made in the document about the theoretical benefits in management and financial terms of the merger, but do not believe they are sufficient to any educational concerns.

Parents, as surveyed above, and in local public meetings have expressed other concerns, which the council must address. These include:

- That a 3 – 16 ‘all through school’ can be difficult to manage and younger pupils may be exposed to older pupils’ behaviour, i.e, swearing and smoking.
- That there could be an increase of anti-social behaviour due to the size of the school, which also raises the question about children who have difficulty settling into a new environment – a smaller school, with pupils from an appropriate age range can manage the transition into school easier, which then has a more positive outcome on their educational journey.

Proposal 3: Create a new, 3 – 16 ‘all through’ school for Pontypridd

Do you agree with proposal 3? No

Please let us know the reasons for your choice:

For the reasons listed in my response to Proposal 1, I believe retention of a 6th Form for Pontypridd is essential. However, I accept the arguments being made about size and the relative performance of the existing 6th Forms, and the logic of greater concentration on one or more sites. Pontypridd High School provides an excellent, nurturing education and environment for its pupils. It’s location, however, significantly outside Pontypridd, in the Cynon Valley Constituency, and wedged between an industrial estate and the A470 has never been ideal. If the Council considers it financially and educationally unsustainable to retain all three existing 6th Forms, then a compromise proposal might be to concentrate the three 6th Forms at Hawthorn.

Alternative ideas that the Council should consider are either:

- a. The construction of a new 6th Form Centre of Excellence elsewhere in Pontypridd, with shared governance between the three local schools, and oversight by our Local Authority.
- b. Full amalgamation of Pontypridd High and Hawthorn High Schools on a shared site, with a 6th Form shared between all three schools.

Proposal 4: Close YGG Pont Sion Norton and relocate its pupils to a new Welsh Medium Primary School, to be constructed on the current site of Heol-Y-Celyn Primary School (which will close as part of Proposal 2). Welsh Medium pupils attending Heol y Celyn will also transfer to the new school.

Do you agree with proposal 4? **Yes**

Please let us know the reasons for your choice

YGG Pont Sion Norton is another excellent local school, but its site, access and location are far from perfect, as described accurately in the Consultation Document. Welsh language pupils will benefit significantly from the construction of a new school, especially in the improved provision for outdoor learning and play.

Proposal 5: Amendment of the catchment areas of Hawthorn High and Pontypridd High Schools and the 6th form catchment area of Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School, as outlined in this document.

Do you agree with proposal 5? **Yes, in respect of Pontypridd High. No, in respect of Hawthorn and Bryncellynnog**

Please let us know the reasons for your choice

The changes to the catchment for Pontypridd High are sensible and largely supported by parents. The current catchments are anomalous consequences of previous decisions to relocate Secondary provision in Pontypridd from Glyntaff and Coed-y-Lan to the current sites at Hawthorn and Pontypridd High (Cilfynydd) respectively. Natural connections between areas and communities would be better reflected by the proposed changes. This is especially true for Coedpenmaen Primary. The case for Maes-y-Coed is more finely balanced, as reflected in the relatively even split of pupils transitioning from the school to Hawthorn and Ponty High.

However, the same cannot be said of the proposal to change the catchments for Hawthorn and Bryncelynnog through the change to Gwauncelyn Primary School.

Gwauncelyn is located in Tonteg, at one end of a 'natural' community that includes Church Village, Lllantwit Fadre, Tynant and Beddau, all locations that have traditionally fed Bryncelynnog Comprehensive. Tonteg is geographically and culturally part of that community and wholly separate from the community of Hawthorn and Rhydyfelin. Geographically, they are several miles apart, with Power Station Hill, the River Taff, Treforest Industrial Estate and the exceptionally busy Upper Boat Roundabout separating them. There is clearly no safe route to school between Tonteg and Hawthorn but, more importantly, there is no shared community. Such a shift would involve moving pupils wholly outside their community of friends, neighbours, clubs and associations – only to ask them all to move back at age 16.

This is a decision clearly designed to accommodate anticipated growth of the communities along the Church Village by-pass corridor, and the consequent increase in pupil numbers at Bryncelynnog, but it cannot be right to ask parents and pupils in the community of Tonteg to sever their traditional, natural connection to Bryncelynnog in anticipation of other local population changes. Far better to plan additional, future primary school provision for those growth areas in conjunction with investment and expansion of Bryncelynnog as necessary.

6. Please state any alternative views or points which you would like to be taken into account (attach additional sheets if necessary):

Rhondda Cynon Taff Council has an excellent and enviable record of investment in, and support of local education with some outstanding performance and results as a consequence. I consistently hear praise from local parents at the quality of local education and the commitment of our teachers and local authority to maintaining and improving performance.

The recent capital investments across our county have also been exceptional – in effect the greatest investment we have seen since the Victorian era, with new schools across all areas. The proposals in this consultation also involve significant and welcome further investment. Bryncelynnog and Hawthorn schools, in particular, are in clear and pressing need of investment in the fabric of

their buildings. We also have too many surplus places at Primary level, and too many failing buildings in need of constant and expensive repair. These proposals would be beneficial in addressing these financial issues.

However, these changes must, first and foremost, be about achieving improvements in educational standards, increasing educational engagement post-16, while creating a footprint for our local services which matches likely population growth and development into this century. And I am not convinced that these proposals are the best means of achieving any of those goals.

The consultation document suggests that pupils will have a choice in the greater Pontypridd area between attending Coleg y Cymoedd or Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School. I believe, in line with the more than 500 parents and pupils I have consulted, that the majority of pupils under these circumstances will attend Coleg y Cymoedd, thereby effectively denying meaningful educational choice to residents in Pontypridd. That cannot be right.

Nor is it right, in my view, for our Local Authority, with its proud tradition of overseeing excellent local education, to divest itself of responsibility for the provision of post-16 education for the hundreds of pupils whom this consultation anticipates will attend CyC in future, as CyC has no meaningful accountability to our Local Authority, only to the Welsh Government.

In conclusion, I do not support the proposals to change 6th Forms outlined in the consultation document, nor those to the catchment areas for Hawthorn and Bryncelynnog. I think it is imperative that the Council does invest in Bryncelynnog and Hawthorn as the fabric and suitability of the buildings on both sites is poor, and unequal to the excellence and commitment of pupils and staff at both schools.

I believe the Council should undertake a further study of the options for reform in greater Pontypridd, including an analysis of the possibility of Secondary School Mergers, as has been undertaken in Aberdare, for example. Or in the merger of 6th Forms at a site in Pontypridd to achieve the financial and educational excellence, sustainability and local accountability sought by the Council and supported by parents and pupils.

None of these alternative options should consider any changes, other than the required additional investment, to the excellent 6th Form provisions at Bryncelynnog Comprehensive.

In summary of the 542 submissions from parents and pupils that I received, here are some of their comments and concerns. For completeness and transparency, I will provide all of the survey data to the Council.

Parents are concerned about:

- Diminished parental and pupil choice
- Sense that these changes are driven largely by financial considerations
- Loss of high calibre teachers
- Lack of consistency and continuity of support for pupils
- Large impersonal class sizes
- Loss of teaching posts and other job losses
- Loss of community schools
- Affordability and sustainability of school transport
- Lack of affiliation between Pontypridd High and Bryncellynog
- Traffic congestion at schools during peak times
- University town of Pontypridd should have a 6th form
- Significant difference between a secondary school and a college
- Reduced diversity in subjects
- Reduced aspirations for pupils
- No Catholic 6th Form for Pontypridd
- Lesser accountability to parents for performance at Coleg y Cymoedd
- Less pastoral care – especially for pupils with learning difficulties.

7. Please indicate who you are (e.g. parent of a pupil at named school, governor at named school etc.)

Constituency Member of Parliament

8. Name **Owen Smith MP**

9. Please provide contact details if you wish to be notified of publication of the consultation report

10 Market Street

Pontypridd

CF37 2ST

Owen.smith.mp@parliament.uk

Please forward completed questionnaires to the above address no later than Thursday, 31st January 2019

The Council is committed to keeping your personal information safe and secure and keeping you informed about how we use your information. To learn about how your privacy is protected and how and why we use your personal information to provide you with services, please visit our Consultation privacy notice here www.rctcbc.gov.uk/serviceprivacynotice and the Councils data protection pages here www.rctcbc.gov.uk/dataprotection.