

## AGENDA ITEM 5

### RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

#### CABINET

10<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2015

#### IMPROVING PRIMARY EDUCATION PROVISION IN CYMMER, PORTH

#### REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND LIFELONG LEARNING IN DISCUSSION WITH THE CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION & LIFELONG LEARNING (COUNCILLOR MRS E HANAGAN)

**Authors: Chris Bradshaw, Director of Education and Lifelong Learning  
Tel: 01443 744001 and Julie Hadley, School Organisation Manager Tel:  
01443 744227.**

#### 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 a proposal to close Cymmer Infants' and Cymmer Junior Schools and transfer their pupils to a new Primary school that will be created for the community, subject to parental preference, in September, 2016. This new school will be created using existing buildings that will be refurbished and remodelled for this purpose.

#### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Cabinet:

- 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 Agree to progress the proposal to close Cymmer Infants' and Cymmer Junior Schools and open a new Community Primary School for Cymmer, in existing buildings that will be refurbished and remodelled for this purpose, to the next stage of the review process, by issuing an appropriate statutory notice.

### **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 Cabinet held on 26<sup>th</sup> June 2015, approval was given to begin a process of formal consultation on a proposal to close Cymmer Infants' and Cymmer Junior Schools, and transfer education provision to a new Primary school in the existing buildings that will be refurbished and remodelled for this purpose, that will be created to serve the Cymmer catchment area, in September, 2016.

### **5 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 Equality and Community 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 both reports are attached as Appendix A to this report.

### **6 CONSULTATION**

- 6.1 The consultation process in respect of this proposal has been undertaken under the arrangements outlined in the Welsh Government's School Organisation Code, which was introduced on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2013. 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 13 weeks of the end of the consultation period, which is 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2016 in this instance.
- 6.2 The Consultation Report prepared in respect of this particular proposal is attached at Appendix B for your attention. It contains information in respect of meetings held to discuss the proposal, with copies of the detailed notes taken at these meetings. It also contains details of correspondence received together with the responses given to the points raised in this correspondence.
- 6.3 It must be noted that there has been an extremely limited response to this particular consultation process; only 9 completed questionnaires were received and only 39 persons attended the open evening held to provide further information on 21<sup>st</sup> October 2015. The majority of the responses received were submitted at this consultation event.

## **7. THE STATUTORY PROCESS**

7.1 The statutory notice for this proposal will refer to the:

- Closure of Cymmer Infants' and Cymmer Junior Schools, and transfer of the pupils and educational provision to a new Primary school to be created for the Cymmer catchment area, using existing buildings that will be refurbished and remodelled for this purpose, subject to parental preference.

The Statutory Notice will, if agreed be published on 20<sup>th</sup> November 2015 and will allow for a 28 day period for objections, ending on 17<sup>th</sup> December 2015. If any objections are received, in accordance with the aforementioned Code an Objections Report will be prepared. This matter will then be reported to a future meeting of Cabinet, probably in January 2016 for Members to receive and consider the Objections Report and to make a final decision on this proposal.

## **8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 If the proposal to create one primary school for Cymmer proceeds, it will realise annual revenue savings of £156,000. In creating one school, sometimes redundancy costs may arise, as the number of staff required in the new school will be less than for the separate schools. The Council seeks to minimise this cost by redeploying displaced members of staff wherever possible. Therefore, it is not possible at this point in the consultation process to identify any possible redundancy costs.

8.2 Significant building improvements and remodelling works will be required to improve the accommodation and facilities of the new primary school. It is estimated that the cost of this work will be approximately £2m and will be funded by the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Programme, which includes a 50% contribution from Welsh Government. The Council's 50% share of the capital costs will be met through Prudential borrowing, funded by the revenue savings generated from closing the two schools.

## **9 LINKS TO THE COUNCILS CORPORATE PLAN / OTHER CORPORATE PRIORITIES/ SIP.**

9.1 This particular proposal forms part of the larger school reorganisation proposals that form our 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Programme for Rhondda Cynon Taf.

## **10 CONCLUSION**

- 10.1 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 an appropriate Statutory Notice to progress this proposal.

### **Other Information:-**

***Relevant Scrutiny Committee: Children and Young People***

### ***Contact Officer***

**Julie Hadley, School Organisation Manager  
01443 744227**

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

**AS AMENDED BY**

**THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985**

**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**CABINET**

**11<sup>TH</sup> November, 2015**

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND LIFELONG  
LEARNING IN DISCUSSION WITH THE CABINET MEMBER FOR  
EDUCATION & LIFELONG LEARNING (COUNCILLOR MRS E HANAGAN)**

Item: IMPROVING PRIMARY EDUCATION PROVISION IN CYMMER,  
PORTH

**Background Papers**

**The three background papers included as appendices to the report are:**

- **Equality Impact Assessment**
- **Community Impact Assessment**
- **Consultation Report**

Officer to contact: **Julie Hadley, School Organisation Manager**  
**01443 744227**

**This page is left Blank.**

# **APPENDIX A**

**This page is left Blank.**



**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL**

**EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT QUESTIONNAIRE**

## EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

**Directorate:** Education & Lifelong Learning

**Service Area:** 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools

**Responsible officer:** Julie Hadley

**Date:** 1<sup>st</sup> September 2015

**1. Name of policy/procedure/practice/project:** **The amalgamation of Cymmer Infants and Cymmer Junior Schools to create a new Community Primary School**

The Project is to:

Close both Cymmer Infants and Cymmer Junior Schools and replace them with a new Primary School, utilising the existing sites and buildings of the both current schools.

**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.

Estyn's conclusion in March 2012 on the quality of education services for children and young people in Rhondda Cynon Taf was:

- Overall Judgement – Adequate (Strengths outweigh areas for improvement);
- Capacity to Improve – Adequate.

In addition Estyn made the following recommendations for the Council:

- R1 - raise standards in schools particularly in key stage 4;
- R2 - improve attendance rates in all schools;
- R3 - improve the evaluation and analyses of data across service areas and partnerships to drive improvements in outcomes for learners;
- R4 - use the full powers available to the authority to improve leadership and management in schools;
- R5 - reduce surplus places; and
- R6 - improve the rigour and the level of scrutiny and challenge across all services and partnerships.

Over the past eighteen months the Council had focused its attention on these six recommendations, and in particular Recommendations 1, 2 & 5, which will have the greatest impact on pupil achievement in our schools. As a result, schools that, when compared with similar schools across Wales based on free school meals, are in the third and fourth quartiles are being subject to significant challenge, scrutiny and support. Where there is little evidence of significant progress, the Council is intervening using a range of its powers. One of the powers is to close schools that, over an extended period, continue to under-perform providing an education to children that is not good enough.

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 & Skills in June 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 have accepted Estyn's recommendations and have undertaken a review of our school provision. The criteria we have 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 of statutory school age;
- 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.

Cymmer Infants' and Junior Schools have been assessed against the aforementioned criteria:

- The schools are 'paired' with each other, i.e. the children usually progress from the one to the other;
- The schools are located on sites that are immediately adjacent to each other;
- Both have surplus places in excess of 25%; the Junior School has 45% of its capacity surplus, this is forecast to rise to 51% within 5 years:
- Between the two schools there is a maintenance backlog of £810K, which equates to £3,723 per pupil;
- Both schools have mixed aged classes;
- Pupil attendance has consistently been in the third and fourth quartiles when compared to similar schools in Wales, although the Infants' School is now showing some improvement.

**The opportunity exists to bring the two schools together to create a larger, more educationally viable Primary school.**

**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 a Primary school for the communities of Cymmer and Trebanog will create:

- A single school vision and ethos, with a single governing body and management team providing leadership across the full primary age range, using consistent policies and practices;
- Improved transition from the Foundation Phase to Key Stage 2 (Yr 2 to Yr 3) and overall progression;
- Greater consistency of teaching and learning for pupils across the key stages including:
  - Seamless curriculum planning and co-ordination;
  - Shared schemes of work, assessment and tracking of pupil progress;
  - Greater continuity in terms of expectations, behaviour, partnerships with parents and
  - Day to day organisation;
- Less change for parents and pupils;
- Greater continuity of support for vulnerable groups of pupils;
- Opportunities for staff to move between key stages and further develop expertise;
- Potential for financial savings in terms of staffing structures and purchase of services, which accrue to the single school; and
- The future capital investment benefits that would arise from the modernisation of one institution rather than two.

There are opportunities for the teaching and support staff. An 'all-through' Primary school for Cymmer could offer:

- A larger school with a bigger role;
- A more flexible organisation;
- 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

It is proposed that the new Primary school will occupy the buildings currently used by the Infants and Juniors; however, consideration will be given to restricting access to the small roadway that separates the sites at present, this will in effect create one large site with two school buildings on it. Merging the sites in this way will improve road safety by allowing for a dedicated staff/visitor parking area to be created and it will also improve the security of the whole site. Both school buildings will be refurbished and remodeled to create a 21<sup>st</sup> Century learning environment, together with improved outdoor learning and play spaces for pupils

The Infants' school building was extended in January 2015 to create additional capacity following the closure of Rhiwgarn Infants School in December 2014, with the pupils of that school transferring to Cymmer. Further improvement works will be undertaken to both buildings, including refurbishment of pupil toilets, teaching areas and the outside space to benefit all pupils who will attend the new Primary school in the future.

There is sufficient space at both current school buildings to comfortably accommodate all pupils resident within the existing catchment area of the Infants and Junior Schools (including the former catchment area of Rhiwgarn Infants, which has been incorporated in to that of Cymmer) who will require a school place both now and in the future. A new Primary School for Cymmer will be able to provide greater flexibility and opportunity for pupils due to an extended, more enhanced and secure financial situation. Overall, the single, larger Primary School will be more financially viable than the Infants' and Junior schools in their current form.

In making the proposed change, most things will not change for the children at all; indeed, there are several perceived benefits that can be realised:

- The teachers and teaching assistants may be different, however, providing that pupil numbers remain stable at their current levels, the large majority of the staff currently employed in Cymmer Infants and Cymmer Junior Schools will simply 'slot' in to similar posts in the new Primary School, if they wish to do so;
- Being part of a larger school creates opportunity to engage in a wider range of curricular and extra-curricular activities.
- Build on the achievement gained at both schools by bringing together a larger team of staff to share expertise and experience.

- Transition between the Foundation Phase and Key Stage 2 will be 'seamless' in a Primary School
- Pupils will not have to physically transfer schools at the end of Year 2

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.

The catchment area of the new Primary School will not change, i.e. it will continue to be the same as the current catchment area of Cymmer Infants' and Cymmer Junior Schools. The Council's policy regarding free school transport, which is under review at the present time, will continue to apply. No pupil currently resident within the catchment area of these schools qualifies for free transport at present as the distances from home to school are less than the 1.5 miles this Council currently provides transport at. This will not change with the new Primary school.

**Demand for School Places** - The table overleaf sets out the capacity (excluding non statutory nursery places) of the schools in Cymmer and the forecast pupil numbers in 2020.

	<b>Capacity</b>	<b>Number On Roll 2015</b>	<b>Total Surplus Places 2015</b>	<b>Estimated NOR 2020</b>	<b>Total Surplus Places 2020</b>	<b>Surplus Places 2020 %</b>
Cymmer Infants	125	98	27	89	36	28.8%
Cymmer Junior	217	119	98	108	109	50%
	<b>342</b>	<b>217</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>197</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>42%</b>

The use of the accommodation in the new Primary school will be closely examined, to look at ways in which surplus capacity can be put to alternative use, eg for other educational use or for use by the community, to reduce the level of surplus places that will exist.

### School Buildings –

Cymmer Infants' School (Cymmer Infants') is a Community School located at Graigwen Road, Cymmer, Porth, to the rear of Cymmer Junior School and the school site consists of a traditional Victorian building, constructed in 1914. The Council has invested £125K of capital investment in this school since 2009, including refurbishment to pupil toilets, disabled toilet, replacement windows and doors, improvement to foundation area classrooms and rebuilding of the retaining walls. However the backlog maintenance figure is still £324K and this does not include costs of improvements to meet the 21<sup>st</sup> Century School criteria. Based on the results of the Welsh Government commissioned building survey of all schools Cymmer Infants is graded a B for suitability and a B for sufficiency, where A is the highest and D is the lowest performing building respectively.

Cymmer Junior School (Cymmer Junior) is a Community School located at High Street, Cymmer, Porth, immediately in front of Cymmer Infants' School (the two sites are separated only by a roadway) and the school site consists of a traditional Victorian building, constructed in 1881, with a more recent two storey extension to the rear. The Council has invested £52K of capital investment in this school since 2009, including refurbishment to provide new doors, windows and flat roof replacement works. However the backlog maintenance figure is still £491K and this does not include costs of improvements to meet the 21<sup>st</sup> Century School criteria. Based on the results of the Welsh Government commissioned building survey of all schools Cymmer Junior is graded a B for condition and a C for suitability, where A is the highest and D is the lowest performing building respectively.

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

Members of the public   Staff   Both   Other   Please state: children aged 3-11 years resident in the communities of Trebanog and Cymmer, Porth, the parents and carers of these children.

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

New      Review      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)	Young – Yes		Old – no impact	<p>Better learning facilities for all.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ensure that all the children in the new Primary school feel safe and secure,</li> <li>• make the learning environments, comfortable and attractive for all children who access them.</li> <li>• access services to improve the lives of children and their families.</li> <li>• Improved facilities will enable the pupils to access learning and cultural activities which can help develop relationships within communities.</li> <li>• The changing curriculum, life long learning opportunities and use of ICT will provide the opportunity to enable all learners to reach their potential.</li> <li>• Facilities at Primary schools, in particular the Infant teaching areas are geared towards the needs of young children and are, as such not suitable for use by older persons.</li> </ul>
Disability (remember to	Yes			The existing facilities at the Infants School are disabled access

People / issues to consider	Impact policy / practice will have			If a positive or negative impact is identified, explain why:
	Positive	Negative	Neutral (No impact)	
consider the different types of disability)				compliant, and can be further improved to make them more so. The Junior building will also have any reasonable adjustments that are possible to make undertaken to improve the access and facilities for any disabled persons who may attend or work at this school in the future.
Gender			Yes	
Gender Reassignment			Yes	
Race			Yes	
Religion or Belief			Yes	
Sexual Orientation			Yes	
Welsh Language			Yes	

People / issues to consider	Impact policy / practice will have			If a positive or negative impact is identified, explain why:
	Positive	Negative	Neutral (No impact)	
Carers			Yes	

## EVIDENCE

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

Reports of the Director of Education to Cabinet - July 2015.  
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 Infant building of the new Primary school will be, in the main unsuitable for community or other similar usage by older persons. This is because the facilities and services are specially geared towards use by very young children and as such do not lend themselves, or cater for use by adults. However, this negative impact can be easily mitigated as there is sufficient school provision in this area that can be used by adults instead, including the adjacent Junior School building and Ysgol Gyfun y Cymer, a Secondary School which offers youth and adult education opportunities as well as Secondary education through the medium of Welsh.

## 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 to be held

School Affected	Group	Time/Date	Venue
<b>Cymmer Infants' and Junior Schools</b>	<b>Joint Governors and Staff Meeting</b>	<b>Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> September 2015, 4 – 6pm</b>	<b>Cymmer Infants' School</b>
<b>Cymmer Infants' School</b>	<b>School Council</b>	<b>(date as above) 2.30 – 3.00 pm</b>	<b>Cymmer Infants' School</b>
<b>Cymmer Junior School</b>	<b>School Council</b>	<b>(date as above ), 1.45 – 2.15 pm</b>	<b>Cymmer Junior School</b>
<b>Both Schools and members of the local community</b>	<b>Parents and public drop in session and exhibition</b>	<b>Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> October 2015, 4 – 6pm</b>	<b>Cymmer Junior School</b>

Schools were also offered opportunities for consultation with pupils, via meetings of their School Councils as detailed in the table overleaf.

Details of the proposal were displayed at Porth Library for the period of the consultation. A consultation questionnaire was also available at the local Library and on the Council's internet site at [www.rctcbc.gov.uk](http://www.rctcbc.gov.uk)

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

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

e-mail [schoolplanning@rctednet.net](mailto:schoolplanning@rctednet.net)

## **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, governor support and HR teams will be fully engaged in supporting the temporary governing body to establish the new school, including offering advice and assisting with the process to appoint the senior management posts. This support will continue with the new headteacher and permanent governing body for as long as it is required.

## **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 the remodelling and refurbishment of both the Infant and Junior school buildings and to apply for appropriate planning permission if necessary.	Colin Atyeo Director of Corporate Estates	By September 2016		

**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@rhondda-cynon-taf.gov.uk](mailto:equality@rhondda-cynon-taf.gov.uk)

Tel: 01443 424075

Signed: Chris Bradshaw

Date: 1/9/15

Job Title: Director of Education & Lifelong Learning

## **Proposal to amalgamate Cymmer Infants' and Cymmer Junior Schools**

### **Community Impact Assessment**

This assessment is prepared in accordance with guidance contained within Annex D of statutory guidance circular 006/2013, the School Organisation Code.

This proposal is to be consulted on between 1<sup>st</sup> September and 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2015. A detailed consultation document has been circulated to all prescribed consultees. Copies have already been forwarded to the WG in compliance with consultation and publication guidelines. This document clearly focuses on the education argument and case for change, this Impact Assessment is not included in the consultation document as we are mindful that the document needs to be as concise and informative as possible, whilst at the same time being readable and 'user-friendly'. The free availability of this document is however stressed; in addition, it is available for any person to view or download from the Council website.

It has to be stressed at this point that the community impact of these proposals is negligible; both school buildings are to remain and no provision whatsoever is being removed. The closures of the two schools are, in essence, in name only as they are being replaced by a single Primary school that will utilise the current sites and buildings of the both schools. It is therefore considered that the overall impact of these proposals will be neutral on the local community, there will be no change to the level of services and provision that are offered at present in the two separate schools.

At the current time, the percentage of pupils attending Cymmer Infants and Cymmer Junior Schools that reside within the catchment area is 80%. Of the total number of pupils on roll in January 2015 (date of the PLASC return), including non-statutory Nursery and pre-Nursery pupils.

Both Cymmer Infants and Cymmer Junior offer breakfast clubs to all pupils; this provision will continue in the Primary schools should this proposal be agreed. Cymmer Infants has after school clubs on two evenings a week, with provision on a third evening made by the local Communities First group. Cymmer Junior also offers after school clubs and activities to its pupils and in both cases this provision will continue in the Primary school.

Neither school has any regular out of hours usage made of their school building by any outside organisations, except for ad hoc usage by groups affiliated to the school, such as the PTA for functions. This is not uncommon, especially for Infants' schools; as these schools cater for children of a very young age they rarely have facilities that are suitable for regular use by older children or adults.

This proposal seeks to enhance the accommodation and facilities of both Cymmer Infants' and Cymmer Junior Schools, to cater for all children who may attend the school in the future from its catchment area (which will also remain unchanged). 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.

It must also be noted that the two school sites are immediately adjacent to each other; they are separated only by a narrow roadway. No additional transportation will be required as a result. This is considered to be of benefit to parents with children of both Infant and Junior age in future, as their children's school provision will be located in the same school, as opposed to two separate ones at present (albeit they are located next to each other)

As children are going to attend the same school sites and buildings as they do at present, it is not considered that there will be any changes to their mode or method of transportation to school and there will be no extra distance involved in respect of this journey.



# **APPENDIX B**

**This page is left Blank.**

## RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

### CONSULTATION REPORT

**Proposal : To close Cymmer Infants' and Cymmer Junior Schools, with all pupils transferring to a new Cymmer Primary School on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2015.**

#### 1. Purpose of the Consultation Report

This report is prepared in accordance with the Welsh Government's School Organisation Code, statutory document 006/2013. Its purpose is to inform the outcome of the consultation held during the period 1<sup>st</sup> September 2015 and 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2015 between all stakeholders and interested parties listed below.

#### 2. 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](http://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/schoolconsultations)

- The Governing Bodies of Cymmer Infants' School and Cymmer Junior School
- Pupils of Cymmer Infants' School and Cymmer Junior School
- Parents, carers, guardians, and staff members of Cymmer Infants' School and Cymmer Junior School
- Other governing bodies of neighbouring primary schools
- The Church in Wales and Roman Catholic Diocesan Authorities
- Welsh Minister for Education & Skills
- Assembly Members for the Rhondda Cynon Taf constituencies and regional Assembly Members for the area
- Members of Parliament for the Rhondda Cynon Taf constituencies
- Estyn
- Teaching and staff trade unions
- Central South Education Consortium
- South East Wales Transport Association
- South Wales Police and Crime Commissioner
- The local Communities First Partnership
- Cwm Taf Local Health Board
- The Early Years and Childcare Partnership

Copies were also sent to all local authorities that share a boundary with Rhondda Cynon Taf.

### **3. The Proposal**

The proposal consulted upon is to close both Cymmer Infants' and Cymmer Junior Schools and transfer all the pupils to a new Primary school to be created for the community of Cymmer, Porth. The existing school sites and buildings at Cymmer Infants' and Cymmer Junior will be upgraded and improved to accommodate the new Primary school. It is proposed that Cymmer Infants' and Cymmer Junior Schools would close on 31<sup>st</sup> August 2016 with the pupils transferring to the new Primary school on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2016.

The programme of capital works to improve and upgrade the school sites will continue after the new school is created on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2016.

Details of the proposal and the rationale behind it are fully outlined in the consultation document that was circulated to all the stakeholders listed overleaf which is attached as Appendix 1.

### **4. The Consultation Process**

All stakeholders identified in Section 2 overleaf were sent paper or electronic copies of our consultation documentation. The following meetings were also convened:

- Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> September, 1.45pm – School Council, Cymmer Junior;
- Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> September, 2.30 pm – School Council, Cymmer Infants';
- Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> September, 4 pm– Staff and Governing Bodies (joint meeting), Cymmer Junior and Cymmer Infants'.

Detailed notes of all of the above meetings were taken and are attached as Appendix 2. These notes detail all questions raised, comments and statements made with responses provided where appropriate.

An open evening/exhibition was held at Cymmer Junior School on 21<sup>st</sup> October 2015, the purpose of which was to provide further information on the proposal, answer any questions and give parents in particular the opportunity to view the proposed facilities that will be available for their children at the new Primary school. Officers from the Education and Lifelong Learning and Corporate Estates Divisions were in attendance. This event was attended by 39 persons, which included school staff, governors, parents and members of the local community.

## 5. Summary of Responses to Consultation

Responses to the matters raised at the meetings outlined above are, as indicated, summarised in the notes of the meetings attached as Appendix 2. Also enclosed as part of this Appendix are summaries of the questionnaires received (9 in total) and comments posted on a board provided for this purpose at the open evening. The main issues raised during consultation, with our responses to them include:

- **Increased class sizes will not be beneficial to the children. Instead of improving the existing schools, build a new one.**

Class sizes will not increase as a consequence of these proposals. We have explained the reasons for our proposals relating to the school sites and buildings in full in our consultation document. A new school building is not being proposed.

- **You will not be able to build a new school in 6 weeks, also where are the children going to go when this work is being undertaken?**

See the response above, we have not advised that a new school is to be built.

- **Concerns at the safety of the roadway that currently separates the school sites**

It is our intention to seek approval to close off this roadway to vehicular access and to incorporate it in to the site of the new Primary school.

- **Do not use the Junior hall for dining purposes**

No final plans in this regard have yet been made, but we have advised that this option is under consideration; this is a common practice in the majority of schools in Rhondda Cynon Taf and works well at the schools in question.

- **Retain the current Infant yard as a playground**

This is our intention; we have not suggested an alternative use for this area.

- **Consider the provision of free transport for pupils living in Rhiwgarn**

This request was not met during the previous process to close Rhiwgarn Infants' School as there was no entitlement for pupils under the Council's Learner Travel Policy. This position has not changed.

## **The View of Estyn (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education and Training in Wales) of the Overall Merits of the Proposal.**

Estyn has provided us with the following as their response to this consultation process:

'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**

The proposal is by Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council.

The proposal is that Cymmer Infants' and Cymmer Junior Schools amalgamate to create a new community primary school from September 2016.

### **Summary/ Conclusion**

The proposal has been developed in line with the council's programme to improve its educational provision and reduce surplus places.

It is Estyn's opinion that the proposal is likely to at least maintain the current standard of education provision in the area.

### **Description and benefits**

The proposer has given a clear rationale for the proposal. The proposer clearly states that it believes that the creation of an 'all through' school in improved and refurbished facilities will strengthen and improve the provision for learners. It gives a clear rationale as to why the schools have been selected for review and proposed amalgamation. This includes the facts that the schools are 'paired' with each other, are situated very close to each other and both have surplus places. It also includes the facts that there is a significant maintenance backlog between the two schools, both schools have mixed age classes and pupil attendance has been lower than that in similar schools.

The proposer clearly defines the expected benefits of the proposal. These appear to be reasonable and include improved transition from Foundation Phase to key stage 2 and greater consistency in teaching and learning for pupils across the key stages. It also asserts, reasonably, that it would provide increased opportunities for staff to develop expertise and would lead to financial savings.

The proposer has considered the disadvantages of the proposal, which include negative views from parents who prefer smaller schools and uncertainty for staff regarding job security. There is no guarantee that staff will be re-employed. However, it has provided suitable evidence to suggest that the benefits of the proposal outweigh the disadvantages.

The proposer has provided clear evidence to show that it has considered other alternatives to this current proposal, such as federation or maintaining the status quo. It has provided appropriate evidence as to why these alternatives have been considered unsuitable.

The proposer does not consider that there are any specific risks associated with the proposal and has not, therefore, considered any measures to manage or mitigate such risks.

The proposer has suitably considered the impact of the proposal on learner travel arrangements, which would not differ from the current arrangements.

The proposer has provided information about school capacities and tables of current and anticipated pupil numbers. The proposer suggests that amalgamation would lead to a reduction in surplus places. However, how this would happen is not made explicit in the document.

The proposer has not undertaken a Welsh language impact assessment.

The proposer explains that the current accommodation would be used for the new school and that this would be improved. It suitably includes information about the quality of the accommodation and references the condition category of the schools as identified by the 21st Century Schools Survey. However, it is very vague on road closure.

The proposer states clearly what the cost of the building investment would be and how the costs would be met. It also explains clearly the approximate savings that would arise as a result of the proposal. However, the costs of the amalgamation process itself are not detailed in the proposal.

The proposal includes suitable arrangements for consultation. It explains appropriately that objections can only be registered following publication of the statutory notice.

### **Educational aspects of the proposal**

The proposer has considered suitably the impact of the proposal on the quality of the outcomes, provision and leadership and management. It has summarised the support category for each school based on the national school categorisation system which takes into account the view of the local authority. It also makes reference to the most recent Estyn inspection reports for each school. The proposal appropriately includes accurate summary tables of the performance data of the schools involved.

The proposer states reasonably that the proposal could bring many benefits, including more distributed leadership and increased flexibility with regard to usage of teaching accommodation. It also claims suitably that the proposal would lead to less

disruption for pupils transferring to a new key stage and would enable pupils to be taught within their own age group.

The proposer claims reasonably that the proposal should lead to improved teaching standards and outcomes because teachers would be able to provide a more appropriate curriculum and support for pupils because they will no longer be taught in mixed age classes. Teachers would also have the opportunity to teach across the whole primary phase and there would be more specialist co-ordinator posts available.

The proposal does comment briefly on the impact of the proposal on vulnerable pupils, but does not include enough detail on the impact on pupils with special educational needs in particular. However, it has suitably completed an equality impact assessment and a community impact assessment which have concluded that the overall impact of the proposal is considered to be neutral.

The proposer has outlined the transitional arrangements for the amalgamation of the two schools. However, the amalgamation is likely to cause minimal disruption to learners'.

## **6. Conclusion**

The recommendation agreed at a meeting of the Council's Cabinet held on 10<sup>th</sup> November 2015 is that a statutory notice be published, to progress this proposal. The statutory notice will be published on Friday, 20<sup>th</sup> November 2015 and it will allow for a 28 day period, that includes 15 school days (to 5pm on Thursday, 17<sup>th</sup> December 2015) during which any person may lodge an objection to the proposals. At the end of the objection period, an Objection Report will be compiled, summarising any objections received, this Report will be published within 7 days of the determination of the proposal. The outcome of this part of the process will be considered by Cabinet again at their meeting to be held in January 2016, for a final decision on the proposal to be made.



**Appendix 1**



**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**CONSULTATION ON THE PROPOSED AMALGAMATION  
OF CYMMER INFANTS' AND CYMMER JUNIOR  
SCHOOL, TO CREATE A NEW COMMUNITY PRIMARY  
SCHOOL, FROM 1<sup>ST</sup> SEPTEMBER 2016.**

## Table of Contents

Introduction	9
Who will we consult with?	9
What will the consultation process entail?	9
What do you have to consider?	10
How do you make your views known?	10
Background to the proposal	6
Information on the Schools – Cymmer Infants’ School	6
Information on the Schools – Cymmer Junior School	8
What is the basis for this Proposal?	15
What is the educational case for closing Cymmer Infants’ and Cymmer Junior Schools to create a new Primary ?	.....17
What does the Proposal mean for the schools’ pupils?	18
What is the likely impact of the Proposal on the staff of the schools?	19
What will be the likely impact of the Proposal on the local area?	20
What are the financial implications of the Proposal?	20
What are the disadvantages of this proposal?	21
What alternative options have been considered other than the amalgamation of the schools?.....	21
What is the statutory process to close a school?	22
Consultation Response Pro-forma	19

## Introduction

---

Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council wishes to seek the views of a wide range of stakeholders on the proposal to amalgamate Cymmer Infants' and Cymmer Junior Schools. The amalgamation will be achieved by closing the two existing schools and opening a new Primary School to replace them. The existing school buildings of Cymmer Infants' and Cymmer Junior Schools would be used to accommodate the new Primary school and will be remodelled, refurbished and improved to benefit all of the pupils who will attend. It is proposed that the two schools would close on 31<sup>st</sup> August 2016 with the pupils transferring to the new Primary school on 1 September 2016.

The designated LA class for pupils with special educational needs currently based at Cymmer Junior School will also transfer to the new Primary School if these proposals are approved.

### Who will we consult with?

We are seeking the views of the following stakeholders:

The Governing Bodies of Cymmer Infants' School and Cymmer Junior School	Members of Parliament for the Rhondda Cynon Taf constituencies
Pupils of Cymmer Infants' School and Cymmer Junior School	Estyn
Parents, carers, guardians, and staff members of Cymmer Infants' School and Cymmer Junior School	Teaching and staff trade unions
Other governing bodies of neighbouring primary schools	Central South Education Consortium
The Church in Wales and Roman Catholic Diocesan Authorities	South East Wales Transport Association
Welsh Minister for Education & Skills	South Wales Police and Crime Commissioner
Assembly Members for the Rhondda Cynon Taf constituencies and regional Assembly Members for the area	The local Communities First Partnership
	Cwm Taf Local Health Board
	The Early Years and Childcare Partnership

### What will the consultation process entail?

The consultation will start on the 1<sup>st</sup> September 2015 and will be completed at 5pm on 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2015. The feedback from the consultation will be collated and summarised, and a report presented to the Council's Cabinet in November 2015. This consultation report will be available for all persons to view on the Council internet site and copies can be obtained on request from the addresses detailed on Page 5 of this document.

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

If the Cabinet decides to proceed with the proposal a Statutory Notice is 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 proposal was published.

The Council's Cabinet will consider the outcome of the statutory notice at the next available Cabinet meeting and determine whether to implement the proposal.

If there are objections, the Council's Director of Education & Lifelong Learning will publish an objection report providing a summary of the objections and his response to them within 7 days of the day of the determination of the proposal, or within 28 days of the end of the objection period (as appropriate). This 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 addresses detailed on Page 5 of this document.

If the Council's Cabinet approve the proposal, the proposal will be implemented in accordance with the date given in the statutory notice or any subsequently modified date. In the case of this proposal the implementation date is 1<sup>st</sup> September 2016.

#### What do you have to consider?

The remainder of the consultation document sets out the rationale for the proposed change to primary education provision in Cymmer, Porth. 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 proposal to amalgamate Cymmer Infants' and Cymmer Junior Schools. The existing school buildings of Cymmer Infants' and Cymmer Junior Schools would be used to accommodate the new Primary and will be remodelled, refurbished and improved to benefit all of the pupils who will attend.

#### How do you make your views known?

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

School Affected	Group	Time/Date	Venue
<b>Cymmer Infants' and Junior Schools</b>	<b>Joint Governors and Staff Meeting</b>	<b>Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> September 2015, 4 – 6pm</b>	<b>Cymmer Infants' School</b>
<b>Cymmer Infants' School</b>	<b>School Council</b>	<b>(date as above) 2.30 – 3.00 pm</b>	<b>Cymmer Infants' School</b>
<b>Cymmer Junior School</b>	<b>School Council</b>	<b>(date as above ), 1.45 – 2.15 pm</b>	<b>Cymmer Junior School</b>
<b>Both Schools and members of the local community</b>	<b>Parents and public drop in session and exhibition</b>	<b>Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> October 2015, 4 – 6pm</b>	<b>Cymmer Junior School</b>

A consultation questionnaire is attached, it will also be available at the drop-in session detailed above and on the Council's internet site at [www.rctcbc.gov.uk](http://www.rctcbc.gov.uk)

The questionnaire also enables consultees to register their wish to be notified of the publication of the consultation report to the Council's Cabinet.

You are also welcome to put your views in writing to:

Director of Education and Lifelong Learning  
 School Organisation and Planning Unit  
 Ty Trevithick,  
 Abercynon CF45 4UQ Telephone (01443) 744227 Fax (01443) 744201

E-mail [schoolplanning@rctednet.net](mailto:schoolplanning@rctednet.net)

All correspondence should be received **no later than 5pm Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2015.**

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

All schools affected by this proposal are English medium schools and therefore all the consultation documents are provided via the English language. If a Welsh language copy of the consultation document is required, please contact the above address.

## Background to the proposal

---

### Information on the Schools – Cymmer Infants' School

Cymmer Infants' School (Cymmer Infants') is a Community School located at Graigwen Road, Cymmer, Porth, to the rear of Cymmer Junior School and the school site consists of a traditional Victorian building, constructed in 1914. The Council has invested £273K of capital investment in this school since 2009, including new, remodelled accessible pupil toilets, disabled toilet, replacement windows and doors, improvement to foundation area classrooms including a new classroom extension and rebuilding of the retaining walls. However the backlog maintenance figure is still £319K and this does not include costs of improvements to meet the 21<sup>st</sup> Century School criteria. Based on the results of the Welsh Government commissioned building survey of all schools Cymmer Infants is graded a B for condition and a C for suitability, where A is the highest and D is the lowest performing building respectively.

The pupil numbers in Cymmer Infants' over the past four years are shown below and 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.

Cymmer Infants' School					
No on roll in January	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015*
<b>Total statutory</b>	69	62	71	61	98

<b>aged pupils</b>					
<b>Pre-nursery and Nursery pupils</b>	28	39	33	31	41

\* Numbers increased in January 2015 as a consequence of the closure of Rhiwgarn Infants', with the transfer of its pupils to Cymmer Infants'.

Over the next five years the pupil forecasts for Cymmer Infants', which are calculated in accordance with guidance issued by Welsh Government, are as follows:

Cymmer Infants' School								
Projected No on roll in January	Capacity of the School	2015 (Actual)	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	% surplus places in 2020
<b>Statutory aged pupils</b>	<b>125</b>	98	95	100	101	95	89	<b>28.8%</b>
<b>Pre-nursery and Nursery pupils</b>	<b>41</b>	41	47	41	40	38	37	-

Cymmer Infants' School was inspected by Estyn in October 2014 and the school's current performance was deemed good, with its prospects for improvement also good.

Estyn also set out that, in order to build upon the progress made to date, the school should:

- R1** Improve outcomes for more able pupils
- R2** Improve attendance further
- R3** Provide more opportunities for pupils to develop their thinking skills across the curriculum
- R4** Ensure that teachers' written comments record what pupils need to do to improve work
- R5** Provide opportunities for all members of the senior management team to observe and evaluate each other's work.

Since September 2012, the Council's School Improvement Services have been provided by the Central South Consortium, a regional school improvement services for the five local authorities of Bridgend, Cardiff, Merthyr Tydfil, Rhondda Cynon Taf and the Vale of Glamorgan. The Consortium categorises the performance of each school in the region and considers that:

*"Cymmer Infants' is currently classed as a 'Yellow' school within the National School Improvement and Categorisation Matrix (Green, Yellow, Amber, Red). This is because performance of the Foundation Phase Outcome Indicator has been consistently above the All Wales and LA average for the last 3 years. The school requires minimal support to raise overall standards and has good capacity to improve"*

The tables below set out the performance of Cymmer Infants' 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. The three year average of the percentage of pupils in receipt of free school meals (all pupils) is 33.1%.

***Percentage of pupils at the end of Year 2 achieving at least outcome 5, and the Foundation Phase Indicator***

	2012	2012 Benchmark Quartile*	2013	2013 Benchmark Quartile*	2014	2014 Benchmark Quartile*
<b>Foundation Phase Indicator</b>	85.71%	<b>1</b>	83.33%	<b>1</b>	94.4%	<b>1</b>
<b>Personal and social development wellbeing and cultural diversity</b>	90.48%	<b>2</b>	91.67%	<b>2</b>	100%	<b>1</b>
<b>Language literacy and communication skills English</b>	85.71%	<b>1</b>	83.33%	<b>1</b>	94.4%	<b>1</b>
<b>Mathematical development</b>	85.71%	<b>2</b>	87.50%	<b>2</b>	94.4%	<b>1</b>

\* - benchmark quartiles – 1 being the highest, 4 the lowest.

***Percentage of half-day sessions attended by pupils of statutory school age during the academic year***

	2011 %	2011 Benchmark Quartile	2012 %	2012 Benchmark Quartile	2013 %	2013 Benchmark Quartile	2014 %	2014 Benchmark Quartile
<b>% attendance</b>	91.33	<b>3</b>	92.23	<b>3</b>	92.36	<b>3</b>	93.9	<b>2</b>

**Information on the Schools – Cymmer Junior School**

Cymmer Junior School (Cymmer Junior) is a Community School located at High Street, Cymmer, Porth, immediately in front of Cymmer Infants' School (the two sites are separated only by a roadway) and the school site consists of a traditional Victorian building, constructed in 1881, with a more recent two storey extension to the rear. The Council has invested £52K of capital investment in this school since 2009, including refurbishment to provide new doors, windows and flat roof replacement works. However the backlog maintenance figure is still £491K and this does not include costs of improvements to meet the 21<sup>st</sup> Century School criteria. Based on the results of the Welsh Government

commissioned building survey of all schools Cymmer Junior is graded a B for condition and a C for suitability, where A is the highest and D is the lowest performing building respectively.

The pupil numbers in Cymmer Junior over the past four years are shown below and are obtained from the statutory annual pupil count (PLASC) which must be undertaken in January each year.

Cymmer Junior School					
No on roll in January	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Total statutory aged pupils*	146	130	121	120	119

\* Excludes the LA SEN class

Over the next five years the pupil forecasts (excluding the LA SEN class) for Cymmer Junior, which are calculated in accordance with guidance issued by Welsh Government, are as follows:

Cymmer Junior School							
Capacity of the School	2015 (Actual)	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	% surplus places in 2020
217	119	119	117	108	111	108	51.3%

Cymmer Junior School was inspected by Estyn in May 2013. The school's current performance was deemed to be adequate, and its prospects for improvement good.

Estyn also set out that, in order to build upon the progress made to date, the school should:

- R1** Raise standards in science and ICT
- R2** Improve pupils' ability to apply their numeracy skills across the curriculum
- R3** Continue to improve rates of attendance
- R4** Establish target setting arrangements to enable pupils to consistently identify and recognise their progress
- R5** Develop the role of the governors as critical friends

A monitoring visit by Estyn in June 2014 judged the school to have made good progress in respect of the key issues for action identified in May 2013 and the school was subsequently removed from the list of schools requiring Estyn monitoring.

Since September 2012, the Council's School Improvement Services have been provided by the Central South Consortium, a regional school improvement services for the five local authorities of Bridgend, Cardiff, Merthyr Tydfil, Rhondda Cynon Taf and the Vale of Glamorgan. The Consortium categorises the performance of each school in the region and considers that:



*“Cymmer Junior is currently classed as a ‘Yellow’ school within the National School Improvement and Categorisation Matrix (Green, Yellow, Amber, Red). This is because the school has successfully been removed from Estyn monitoring and has shown that it has good prospects for improvement. The quality of whole-school leadership is good”.*

The tables overleaf set out the performance of Cymmer Junior 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. The three year average of the percentage of pupils with free school meals is 43.01%.

***Percentage of pupils at the end of Year 6 who have achieved the expected level***

	2011 %	2011 Benchmark Quartile	2012 %	2012 Benchmark Quartile	2013 %	2013 Benchmark Quartile	2014 %	2014 Benchmark Quartile
<b>Core Subject Indicator</b>	70.73	<b>2</b>	70.27	<b>3</b>	72.73	<b>3</b>	76.67	<b>3</b>
<b>English</b>	70.73	<b>3</b>	70.27	<b>4</b>	72.73	<b>4</b>	80.0	<b>3</b>
<b>Maths</b>	78.05	<b>2</b>	75.68	<b>3</b>	75.76	<b>3</b>	83.3	<b>3</b>
<b>Science</b>	73.17	<b>3</b>	72.97	<b>4</b>	78.79	<b>3</b>	80.0	<b>3</b>

***Percentage of half-day sessions attended by pupils of statutory school age during the academic year***

	2011 %	2011 Benchmark Quartile	2012 %	2012 Benchmark Quartile	2013 %	2013 Benchmark Quartile	2014 %	2014 Benchmark Quartile
<b>% attendance</b>	90.41	<b>4</b>	90.76	<b>4</b>	92.02	<b>3</b>	93.21	<b>3</b>

**What is the basis for this Proposal?**

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.

Estyn's conclusion in March 2012 on the quality of education services for children and young people in Rhondda Cynon Taf was:

**Overall Judgement – Adequate** (Strengths outweigh areas for improvement);  
**Capacity to Improve – Adequate.**

In addition Estyn made the following recommendations for the Council:

- R1 - raise standards in schools particularly in key stage 4;
- R2 - improve attendance rates in all schools;
- R3 - improve the evaluation and analyses of data across service areas and partnerships to drive improvements in outcomes for learners;
- R4 - use the full powers available to the authority to improve leadership and management in schools;
- R5 - reduce surplus places; and
- R6 - improve the rigour and the level of scrutiny and challenge across all services and partnerships.

Over the past eighteen months the Council had focused its attention on these six recommendations, and in particular Recommendations 1, 2 & 5, which will have the greatest impact on pupil achievement in our schools. As a result, schools that, when compared with similar schools across Wales based on free school meals, are in the third and fourth quartiles are being subject to significant challenge, scrutiny and support.

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 & Skills in June 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 have accepted Estyn's recommendations and have undertaken a review of our school provision. The criteria we have 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 of statutory school age;
- 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.

Cymmer Infants' and Junior Schools have been assessed against the aforementioned criteria:

The schools are 'paired' with each other, i.e. the children usually progress from the one to the other;  
 The schools are located on sites that are immediately adjacent to each other;  
 Both have surplus places in excess of 25%; the Junior School has 45% of its capacity surplus, this is forecast to rise to 51% within 5 years:  
 Between the two schools there is a maintenance backlog of £810K, which equates to £3,723 per pupil;  
 Both schools have mixed aged classes;  
 Pupil attendance at has consistently been in the third and fourth quartiles when compared to similar schools in Wales, although the Infants' School is now showing some improvement.

The opportunity exists to bring the two schools together to create a larger, more educationally viable Primary school.

### What is the educational case for closing Cymmer Infants' and Cymmer Junior Schools and creating a Primary School?

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 a Primary school for the communities of Cymmer and Trebanog will improve educational outcomes and provision for the following reasons;

A single school vision and ethos, with a single governing body and management team providing leadership across the full primary age range, using consistent policies and practices;  
 Improved transition from the Foundation Phase to Key Stage 2 (Yr 2 to Yr 3) and overall progression;  
 Greater consistency of teaching and learning for pupils across the key stages including:  
 Seamless curriculum planning and co-ordination;  
 Shared schemes of work, assessment and tracking of pupil progress;  
 Greater continuity in terms of expectations, behaviour, partnerships with parents and  
 Day to day organisation;  
 Less change for parents and pupils;  
 Greater continuity of support for vulnerable groups of pupils;  
 Opportunities for staff to move between key stages and further develop expertise;  
 Potential for financial savings in terms of staffing structures and purchase of services, which accrue to the single school; and  
 The future capital investment benefits that would arise from the modernisation of one institution rather than two.

There are opportunities for the teaching and support staff. An 'all-through' Primary school for Cymmer could offer:

A larger school with a bigger role;  
 A more flexible organisation;  
 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

It is proposed that the new Primary school will occupy the buildings currently used by the Infants and Juniors; however, consideration will be given to restricting access to the small roadway that separates the sites at present, this will in effect create one large site with two school buildings on it. Merging the sites in this way will improve road safety by allowing for a dedicated staff/visitor parking area to be created and it will also improve the security of the whole site. Both school buildings will be refurbished and remodeled to create a 21<sup>st</sup> Century learning environment, together with improved outdoor learning and play spaces for pupils

The Infants' school building was extended in January 2015 to create additional capacity following the closure of Rhiwgarn Infants School in December 2014, with the pupils of that school transferring to Cymmer. Further improvement works will be undertaken to both buildings, including refurbishment of pupil toilets, teaching areas and the outside space to benefit all pupils who will attend the new Primary school in the future.

There is sufficient space at both current school buildings to comfortably accommodate all pupils resident within the existing catchment area of the Infants and Junior Schools (including the former catchment area of Rhiwgarn Infants, which has been incorporated in to that of Cymmer) who will require a school place both now and in the future. A new Primary School for Cymmer will be able to provide greater flexibility and opportunity for pupils due to an extended, more enhanced and secure financial situation. Overall, the single, larger Primary School will be more financially viable than the Infants' and Junior schools in their current form.

### What will this Proposal mean for the school pupils?

In making the proposed change, most things will not change for the children at all; indeed, there are several perceived benefits that can be realised:

Being in classes with predominantly their own age group, the teacher will be better able to offer the 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, providing that pupil numbers remain stable at their current levels, the large majority of the staff currently employed in Cymmer Infants and Cymmer Junior Schools will simply 'slot' in to similar posts in the new Primary School, if they wish to do so;

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 engage in a wider range of curricular and extra-curricular activities.

Build on the achievement gained at both schools by bringing together a larger team of staff to share expertise and experience.

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.

The catchment area of the new Primary School will not change, i.e. it will continue to be the same as the current catchment area of Cymmer Infants' and Cymmer Junior Schools. The Council's policy regarding free school transport, which is under review at the present time, will continue to apply.

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:

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

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

#### What is the likely impact of the Proposal on the staff of the schools?

As with any major change, there could be some short term and possibly longer-term changes in the staffing structure. As this is a new school provision, a temporary governing body will be established if a decision to proceed with amalgamation is agreed. The main role of this temporary governing body will be to establish a staffing structure for the new Primary School, appoint its senior management team and make decisions with regard to the method of 'slotting in' of all other staff to the posts that are available in the new Primary School. The Council has well established Human Resource policies and procedures that give reassurance to staff and employers about the management of organisational change.

The Headteacher of Cymmer Infants' School retired from her post in August 2015 and the governing bodies of both schools have jointly agreed that the Headteacher of Cymmer Junior School will lead the Infants (as well as the Junior) School, in an acting capacity, from September 2015. If the proposal is agreed, the temporary governing body will determine how the post of Headteacher of the new Primary School is to be appointed.

A new permanent governing body will be appointed for the new Primary School when it opens in September 2016; the temporary governing body will remain in place until all governor appointments are made. The existing governing bodies of Cymmer Infants' and Cymmer Junior Schools will also remain in office for the 2015/16 academic year, with their terms of office ending on 31<sup>st</sup> August 2016 when the both schools close.

There would also be benefits for teaching staff, which should improve teaching standards within the School. Currently, pupils are taught in mixed age groups. If the proposal proceeds, the new Primary School will have greater than 220 pupils of statutory school age which will equate to 7 teachers for 7 age groups. Therefore, the majority of pupils will be

taught in their own age group, which makes it considerably easier for the class teacher to provide an appropriate curriculum and support for all pupils. This should result in higher standards of teaching and learning and better educational outcomes. There will be also greater flexibility with regard to the usage of the teaching accommodation; older Infant children could, for example be taught in the current Junior building, which will assist their transition from the Foundation Phase to Key Stage 2.

Teaching (and also support) staff would be able to gain experience in working across the whole Primary phase, rather than being restricted to just one key phase of education, as they are at present. This additional experience will bring benefits in respect of staff development and future promotion opportunities for all persons employed at the new Primary school.

The creation of a larger Primary School would also provide staff with the opportunity to specialise in specific areas of the curriculum. The Primary school will require one co-ordinator for each subject area of the curriculum and for areas of school management such as child protection and additional learning needs; at present the separate Infants' and Junior Schools have one such co-ordinator per school. Being a small school with fewer staff means that staff have to take on multiple roles, leading to greater workloads and less opportunities to specialise. A larger Primary school with more staff allows for such specialism with the ability to share workload more effectively and therefore gives staff more opportunities to progress their careers.

#### What will be the likely impact of the Proposal on the communities of Cymmer and Trebanog?

The Cymmer ward is a Communities First Area and is part of the new Porth Communities First region that has secured Communities First Funding with the potential to match with Pupil Deprivation Grant funding to support educational improvement across the Porth cluster of schools. Trebanog is also a Flying Start Area.

A community impact assessment and an equality impact assessment have been completed for this proposal. These will be updated after the consultation has been completed to ensure that they include pertinent issues that have arisen and need to be taken into account. The community impact assessment and equality impact assessment will be presented to the Council's Cabinet in the report that sets out the consultation feedback received in respect of this proposal. A copy of the community impact assessment and equalities impact assessment are available from the contact details at the start of this document and are also available on the Council website.

#### What are the financial implications of the Proposal?

The purpose of creating all through primary schools, as the principal model of school organisation is not driven by financial considerations. Savings that do arise initially benefit

the remaining school, as they enable school improvements to be made, and then schools as a whole through redistribution of the savings across the County Borough.

A move from a position with, ‘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 head teacher 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 new Primary School’s Governing Body, a summary of the known budgetary impacts is set out overleaf.

	<b>Cymmer Junior (Current)</b>	<b>Cymmer Infants’ (Current)</b>	<b>Cymmer Primary (Future)</b>	<b>Revenue Savings</b>
	<b>£’000</b>	<b>£’000</b>	<b>£’000</b>	<b>£’000</b>
Annual Revenue Budget based on 2015/16 budget	483	590	917	156

Building improvements will be made to both current school buildings and sites to address the maintenance backlog and improve the accommodation and facilities at the new Primary School. It is estimated that the total cost of this work will be in the region of £2 million, and will be funded from the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Programme, 50% of which will be funded by the Welsh Government.

#### What are the disadvantages of this proposal?

Some parents may feel that two smaller schools are better for pupils rather than one larger school – in other words there could be a view that smaller schools may be more personal and less daunting, particularly for new entrants. The new Primary School after the amalgamation will still only be the size of an average Rhondda Cynon Taf primary school, with approx 220 statutory age pupils in attendance and there are many much larger, very successful primary schools in the County Borough.

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 which is why the temporary governing body will, as soon as possible, once the statutory processes are complete, address the staffing issues. In practice, governing bodies seek to keep as much continuity in the staffing as is possible in these situations.

The Council considers that the educational advantages of the proposal outweigh the short-term impact of the changes for pupils and parents.

#### What alternative options have been considered other than the amalgamation of Cymmer Infants’ and Cymmer Junior Schools?

The current position is that we have two relatively small ‘paired’ schools, located just metres away from each other on adjacent sites with over 100 surplus places between the

two schools, the majority of which are in the Junior School at present. If the option were to 'do nothing', this would not change the current position of the two schools at all and there would not be any opportunities to utilise this spare capacity in a more effective and efficient way.

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

Close both schools and create a new Primary school on the site of the existing Infants' and Junior Schools, which is within in the catchment area of the combined schools – the current proposal;

Close both schools and create a new Primary school in a new building on a suitable site in the catchment area of the combined schools;

Federate the two schools, maintaining the two school buildings but with one governing body and Headteacher.

At present, we do not have an alternative suitable site to build a brand new school for the Cymmer ward.

In respect of the option to federate the governing bodies, this would create a two -site school under one Headteacher and one governing body. Two separate legal entities would continue employing two sets of staff. This option would not enable the educational benefits that accrue from deploying the teachers across both schools and improving the standards of teaching and learning that arise from creating a single school. As the two schools are separate legal entities, the funding criteria of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Programme would not allow us to improve the learning environment for all pupils by being able to rationalise the building stock and upgrade the combined site to a high standard. Both schools would still be subjected to separate inspections by Estyn also.

Therefore, the other options have been discounted and the preferred option is that proposed in this consultation document.

#### What is the statutory process to close a school?

The Code on School Organisation ("The Code") is made under Sections 38 and 39 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013. The Code came into force on 1 October 2013 and applies in respect of all school proposals published by way of a statutory notice after that date. Proposals to close a school have to follow the following process:

The Council's Cabinet considers the Code and authorises a consultation on the changes to the schools;

At the start of the consultation period the Council **must** provide consultees with a consultation document and give them at least 42 days in which to respond, with at least 20 of these days being school days. If the Council considers it appropriate meetings are held with stakeholders during the consultation period;

Consultation comments are collated and summarised by the Council. This summary together with the Council's officers own responses is published in a consultation report within 13



weeks of the end of the consultation period and presented to the Council's Cabinet for consideration;

The Council's Cabinet decide whether to proceed with the changes within 6 months of the end of the consultation period. If the decision is to proceed, Step 5 is taken. If a new option emerges during the consultation which the Council's Cabinet wish to consider, then Steps 1-3 are repeated;

Statutory notice is published providing a 28 day notice period for objections. The notice **must** be published on a school day and with 15 school days (not including the day of publication) in the notice period;

If objections are received, the Council **must** publish an objection report providing a summary of the objections and their responses to them within 28 days of the end of the objection period;

The Council's Cabinet must decide to issue its decision on the proposal within 16 weeks of the end of the objection period;

If the proposals receive approval they should be implemented in accordance with the date given in the statutory notice, or any subsequent modified date.

## Consultation Response Pro-forma

---

In order to help the Council reach a decision, it would be very helpful if you could answer the following questions. Completed questionnaires should be returned to:

*Director of Education and Lifelong Learning  
School Organisation and Planning Unit  
Ty Trevithick  
Abercynon  
CF45 4UQ  
or by fax to 01443 744201, or e-mail [schoolplanning@rctednet.net](mailto:schoolplanning@rctednet.net)*

### The Proposal

The proposal is to close Cymmer Infants and Cymmer Junior Schools and transfer all the pupils to a new Primary School for Cymmer. It is proposed that the current two schools would close on 31 August 2016 with the pupils transferring to the new Primary School on 1 September 2016.

1. Do you agree with the proposal? Yes  No  Neither

Please let us know the reasons for your choice

2. Please state any additional views or points which you would like to be taken into account (attach additional sheets if necessary)

3. Please indicate who you are (eg parent of a pupil at named school, governor at named school etc.)

4. Name (optional)

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire

*Please forward completed questionnaires to the above address no later than 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2015.*

## ***Appendix 2***

### **Notes of a meeting held with the members of the School Council of Cymmer Junior School on 8<sup>th</sup> September 2015, to consider the proposal to amalgamate Cymmer Infants' and Cymmer Junior Schools.**

#### Present

Mrs S Walker, Head of Primary Achievement  
Mrs J Hadley, School Organisation Manager  
Mrs I Elliott, Headteacher  
Member of school staff  
11 members of the School Council of Cymmer Junior School

Mrs Walker and Mrs Hadley opened the meeting by introducing themselves and then asked the children to introduce themselves also.

Mrs Walker explained that she and Mrs Hadley were here today to discuss an idea to join together Cymmer Junior with Cymmer Infants to make a Primary School. She then asked the children if they were aware of these plans (they confirmed they were) and what they thought of them, were they good or bad?

One pupil said that he wasn't sure, but had no reasons for his choice, he had only joined the school last week. His former school was already a Primary School and it was a good school.

A pupil said that he didn't think it was a good idea as he didn't get along with some of the children in the Infants' School.

One pupil said it would be OK as he would be in the same school as his brother, another said the same thing as she would be with her sister.

One pupil said that she was nervous when she transferred from the Infants to the Juniors, being in a Primary will make this easier as the school will have the same staff.

One pupil said that a negative would be that we might hurt the little ones when we play football in the yard. Mrs Walker assured him that the little ones would have their own, separate yard.

Mrs Elliott then reminded the children that they had done a project on 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools last year and would they like to tell the officers how this could make their school better? The responses were that there would be one school uniform and the children could design the new logo. Both schools already use the same reading books and Maths schemes.

The pupils also said that they do separate activities in the Infants and Juniors, but also share some common ones. In a Primary school they could share school trips, discos etc. It will mean that we will have more friends and the Infant pupils could play with their friends in

the Juniors. There will also be no need for transition between Years 2 and 3 and they will be in the same school as their old friends.

A pupil asked who will make decisions about the new school uniform. He was told that this is down to the school staff and governors, but pupils will have an input.

A pupil asked will we still have 'buddying'? Mrs Walker advised that this will be up to the Headteacher to decide, but the Junior pupils can help the younger ones now if they want to.

A pupil asked if the Nursery would be moving in to the Junior building. He was told that the school would become a Primary, but the Nursery children would not be coming in to this building.

A query was raised as to what the name of the school would be, information on this was given.

A pupil then said that he thought that the plans were a good idea, we would all have the same break times and would be happy, as we could spend time with our younger brothers and sisters.

Mrs Hadley then told the children that they could have some input in to the building works that were being planned, for example they could choose colours and the design of the toilets etc. The children replied that they were looking forward to this.

Other questions asked included, could Year 2 children come down to this building (they were told yes) and was the computer suite big enough (again advised yes).

Mrs Walker and Mrs Hadley then thanked the children for their comments and for attending, the meeting was then closed.

**Notes of a meeting held with the members of the School Council of Cymmer Infants' School on 8<sup>th</sup> September 2015, to consider the proposal to amalgamate Cymmer Infants' and Cymmer Junior Schools.**

Present

Mrs S Walker, Head of Primary Achievement  
Mrs J Hadley, School Organisation Manager  
Mrs I Elliott, Headteacher  
6 members of the School Council of Cymmer Infants' School

Mrs Walker and Mrs Hadley opened the meeting by introducing themselves and then asked the children to introduce themselves also.

Mrs Walker explained that she and Mrs Hadley were here today to discuss an idea to join together Cymmer Junior with Cymmer Infants to make a Primary School. She then asked the children if they were aware of these plans (they confirmed they were) and what they thought of them, were they good or bad?

One pupil said that the road separating the two schools was a problem, we need a tunnel.

Mrs Walker asked them, would one single school be nice? They all answered yes.

Mrs Walker then asked them what they might like about one single school. The pupils replied that they could see their friends in the Juniors. The pupils were asked whether they had any brothers or sisters in the Juniors. They replied that none of them had at present as some had already left for the Comprehensive, but they did have cousins there.

A pupil asked if all the children would have the same uniform. Mrs Walker said that this would be up to the school staff and governors to decide. The pupil then said that one single uniform would be easier and that the children should be involved in designing it.

Mrs Walker said that the School Council may want to look at ways in to the school, to make them safer perhaps? Children could possibly walk to school with their friends. She also asked how the children get to school now, do they walk? Most of the children replied that they did.

Mrs Walker also asked if the pupils would want to be members of one big school council. They replied that they would, as they would have more ideas. They also said that they were in favour of having one big Primary school.

Mrs Walker and Mrs Hadley then thanked the children for their comments and for attending, the meeting was then closed.

## **Notes of a meeting held with the members of the staff and Governing Bodies of Cymmer Infants' and Cymmer Junior Schools on 8<sup>th</sup> September 2015, to consider the proposal to amalgamate Cymmer Infants' and Cymmer Junior Schools.**

### Present

Mrs E Thomas, Service Director Schools and Community  
Mrs S Walker, Head of Primary Achievement  
Mrs J Hadley, School Organisation Manager  
Mrs E Williams, HR Adviser  
42 members of staff and governors of Cymmer Infants and Cymmer Junior Schools

The officers present opened the meeting by introducing themselves .

Mrs Thomas (ET) then outlined the proposal in question, namely to amalgamate Cymmer Infants' and Cymmer Junior Schools to create a new Primary school, utilising the sites and buildings of the two current schools. She outlined the reasons and rationale behind the proposals, as advised in the detailed consultation document that had been widely circulated. The purpose of this meeting is to assist the consultation process, by affording staff and governors the opportunity to ask questions or raise comments, statements etc in respect of the proposals as outlined. Every effort will be made to answer questions if possible. The statutory process that must be followed was also outlined. It was noted that this part of the process is consultation; the receipt of objections is not appropriate at this time.

The meeting was then opened to questions and comments:

- Access to both schools is problematic and there are issues with parking. Advised that this issue will be looked at as part of the proposal. Consideration will be given, if possible and appropriate, to closing the narrow roadway that separates the two school sites.
- Parents are very concerned at the message conveyed by the local press that the schools are closing. ET outlined and explained the Welsh Government process that had to be followed, in essence the proposal is that the schools are to close in name only and are being replaced by a new Primary school. The Council has no control over the local press, governors and staff were asked to relay the correct information where they could to help allay any fears created by misreporting.
- Comment made that this proposal will protect the future of school provision on this site.
- A discussion was held on possible ways of creating one large school on this site.
- Comment made that this is a positive move for the two schools, it will assist transition, recording and standardisation.

- Welsh Government is driving the issue of good school attendance. Can transport for the children travelling from Rhiwgarn be looked at as this is causing issues in this regard? Advised that this can be referred to the Transport Unit for consideration, but provision of transport in this instance does not meet with the terms of the Council's Learner Travel Policy. Cllr. M Tegg indicated that she would seek further discussion on this matter.
- A question was asked regarding the appointment of staff and the structure of the new school. JH advised that this would be determined by the new temporary governing body that would be appointed. EW gave information on the process to be followed, eg a recommendation to ringfence posts in the first instance would be made.
- Advised that HR will meet with staff as requested to discuss all such issues with them as required.
- A question was raised regarding the appointment process for the temporary governing body. JH gave details.
- Will the SEBD Unit remain at the school? Advised yes.
- The two schools have different financial arrangements, one has a chequebook system, the other does not. What will happen under these circumstances? Advised that this will be a matter for the Headteacher and governing body to determine.
- What work will be undertaken to the sites and buildings? ET advised that this has not been determined at this point in time, as no decision on the proposal has yet been taken, but further information and ideas will be presented at the open event scheduled for 21<sup>st</sup> October.
- What will the £2million planned for the buildings be spent on? Advised that this has not yet been determined, see previous response.
- Information on the statutory process to be followed and timescales for this were given.
- The roles of the temporary governing body and the current governing bodies were clarified.
- Will there be a project manager appointed? Information was provided.
- What will happen to the balances in the school budgets? This issue will need to be clarified with Finance colleagues.
- A query was raised with regard to Estyn inspections. It was confirmed that a Primary school would be subject to one inspection only and that as a new school this would probably occur within 18 months of it opening.
- A query was raised regarding kitchen provision. This is to be determined in conjunction with the planned works for the school.

Mrs Thomas thanked everyone for their attendance and valued input, the meeting was then closed.

**QUESTIONNAIRE FEEDBACK FOR THE PROPOSAL TO AMALGAMATE CYMMER INFANTS AND CYMMER JUNIOR SCHOOLS**

Agree with Proposal	Completed by	Comments	Additional Views
No	Parent of a pupil	I believe that the increased class sizes will not be beneficial for the children.	Instead of improving the 2 schools at a cost of £2m, it would be better to build a new school and offer more jobs for qualified teaching assistants.
Not sure	Parent of a pupil	Builders could not finish the Infants extension in time let alone a whole new school in 6 weeks, where are the children going to go? This will disrupt their education and is a waste of money	The condition of the schools is already of a high standard, this amalgamation should be in the future so that all of the money already spent on the buildings will not go to waste.
Yes	County Secretary NASUWT	In favour of proposal, with some concerns at the potential impact on staff	One page letter with further details attached
Yes	Parent	I think it makes more sense, one management team, one uniform, less disjointed, it is important to keep up with 21st Century Schools	I have concerns regarding the safety of the road between the schools, it would also improve this area.
Yes	Parent Governor	I think it is the natural progression for both schools, the older age classes in the Infants need the extra space.	Outdoor space and play areas need to be improved, traffic issues need to be considered not only for the roadway separating the schools but also the impact of the works on the one way system and local residents. Timing of the works needs consideration.
Yes	Parent Governor	I think it is a good way of safeguarding both schools for the future, providing a smoother transition between key stages as well as utilising space on both sites.	The road between the two schools should be closed off and made part of the site with traffic and parking a major consideration. Outdoor space for play for all children should be improved.
Yes	Staff member Junior School	Good for transition between key stages, good for the community and a good solution to the issue of amalgamation	Please reconsider using the hall for dining space when we have excess rooms in the school. The hall is in constant use and this will impact on teaching and learning
Yes	Teacher, Junior School	Smoother transition between key stages, promotes community spirit and saves money.	Please consider using surplus extension to locate the dining facilities. Losing the hall would be a huge disadvantage to teaching and learning.
Yes	Parent Governor, Juniors	I think it would improve the facilities, ie the buildings and playgrounds and improve transition of pupils between schools.	It will hopefully make the whole site safer for parents and children when dropping off and collecting.



## **Consultation evening, 21st October 2015**

### **Summary of 'scribble board' comments made**

The main worry is the road between schools. Parking facilities need to be improved for the safety of the children.

Play area for yard in infants school, no cars.

Keep IT suite for skills lessons.

Close road between schools. Keep infant children separate from junior school age.

Please consider extra toilets for the foundation phase.

Agree with plan to demolish canteen. Shame if the hall was used for dining, could the surplus extension be used to locate a kitchen/dining hall?

Where will the infants children play? Thought more practical and fun things could be added to the yard, ie undercover area

Would like the canteen to stay independent, for access, deliveries etc. If not, do not want use of the hall for dining

Please reconsider using hall for dining when surplus classes could be used instead.

Under cover areas for playgrounds?

The only good proposal is the closure of the road between both buildings

Seating area in junior top yard

**This page is left Blank.**