



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

28 JANUARY 2021

21ST CENTURY SCHOOLS PROGRAMME – PROPOSALS TO IMPROVE EDUCATION PROVISION FOR YSGOL GYNRADD GYMRAEG LLYN-Y-FORWYN

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND INCLUSION SERVICES

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Schools and Transformation**

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek Members approval to begin the relevant and required statutory consultation for the proposal to:
- Carry out a regulated alteration to Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Llyn-y-Forwyn (“YGG Llyn-y-Forwyn”), by way of transferring the school to a new building on a new site.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:

- 2.1 Note the content of this report;
- 2.2 Give formal approval to commence consultation with relevant stakeholders on the proposal to transfer the current YGG Llyn-y-Forwyn to a new building on a new site whilst maintaining the existing catchment area for the school;
- 2.3 Note any proposal, should it be approved following completion of the required statutory processes, would be implemented by March 2024; and
- 2.4 Subject to 2.2 above, give delegated authority to the Director of Education and Inclusion Services to make any minor changes that are required to the proposed consultation document (attached at Appendix B to the report) prior to its publication and the consultation commencing.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To increase capacity and improve the quality of the Welsh medium primary education provision available to learners in the Rhondda Fach area of Rhondda Cynon Taf.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The Council school modernisation programme has been successfully making excellent progress in modernising our school estate, meeting demand for places and expanding pupil places where required including early years. The Council has been building new schools, remodelling and redeveloping schools across the County Borough providing 21st Century learning environments for our pupils, staff, parents and the wider community.

As part of the continuation of the programme urgent investment is needed to replace YGG Llyn-y-Forwyn which is currently one of the poorest buildings in the education portfolio. The rationale for bringing this proposal is set out in detail in the draft consultation document attached at Appendix B to this report.

The School

- 4.2 YGG Llyn-y-Forwyn is a traditional stone Victorian school building. The school is made up of two buildings set within an enclosed constrained site. A site condition survey conducted in 2019, indicated a grading of 'D' for condition and 'C' for suitability (where 'A' is the highest and 'D' is the lowest performing).
- 4.3 The current school is not accessible and as such not compliant with the Equality Act 2010, and given the restrictions of the site there is little that can be done to remedy this. The opportunities for outdoor play are limited; there are no external green spaces available and all of the hard play areas are affected by the sloping topography. There is no on-site staff car parking available which means that staff have to park in the neighbouring streets and the home to school transport drop-off area is located in the street below.
- 4.4 The school currently has a maintenance backlog in excess of £1.01Million.
- 4.5 The Estyn inspection carried out in January 2019 judged the school's current performance in all 5 inspection areas as 'good'. However, in their report Estyn commented on the outdoor areas of the school in that they 'have not been developed to the same standard, and use of them is very limited'.
- 4.6 Therefore, to address these issues, it is proposed a new Welsh medium primary school be created on a new site, with an investment in the region of £8.5Million to improve and expand facilities.
- 4.7 This investment would include:
- modern, flexible learning environments for all learners, a hall/dining area, and a multi-purpose learning resource area;
 - accessible internal and external facilities for wider community use;

- enhanced outdoor spaces to support the full range of curriculum activities, including an outdoor classroom and a 'forest schools' area; and,
 - improved traffic management including on site pupil bus drop off, and on site staff parking.
- 4.8 The new school would be built in accordance with Building Bulletin 99 and would be fully accessible and compliant with the Equality Act 2010.
- 4.9 65% of pupils that attend YGG Llyn-y-Forwyn use Home to School Transport. At the current site there are no drop off facilities with vehicles utilising the neighbouring streets for drop off and pick up at the beginning and end of the school day. The new school site will have dedicated on-site drop off and pick up facilities making this process safer, less disruptive for the community, and more manageable for staff at the school.
- 4.10 The investment would also include a review of safe routes to school and, if required, an investment in improvements to walkways, road crossings and traffic calming measures to ensure the required safety standards are met. This is the approach the Council has implemented in other communities through delivering the 21st Century Schools Programme with significant improvements being made.
- 4.11 To achieve these proposals, the Council is seeking to transfer the current YGG Llyn-y-Forwyn to a new building on a new school site. The catchment area of YGG Llyn-y-Forwyn would not be altered.
- 4.12 The proposal would create additional Welsh medium capacity within the Rhondda Fach area of Rhondda Cynon Taf and would contribute to the Welsh Government's ambition to have one million Welsh speakers across Wales by 2050. It would also support the delivery of some of the targets that are included within the new 10 year Welsh in Education Strategic Plan that will be brought before Cabinet in the coming months.

The Site

- 4.13 The new school building is proposed to be built on the land north side of Highfield, Ferndale, CF43 4AD, known locally as the former 'Chubb Factory'. This site was chosen as the preferred location for the school following a site appraisal of 11 areas, all located within the Rhondda Fach and each identified as potential candidate sites. Each site was appraised initially on its ability to meet the following criteria:
- Have an adequate site area;
 - Have satisfactory access which is capable of being improved;
 - Is free from any visual incumbents;
 - Close proximity to the current school;
 - Is a viable development opportunity subject to a detailed feasibility study.

- 4.14 Following visual inspections of all sites undertaken by officers from Corporate Estates, and applying the identified criteria, the 11 sites were able to be quickly narrowed to just 3, these were:
- Candidate Site 2 (Land adjacent to Ferndale Swimming Pool);
 - Candidate Site 10 (Former Chubb factory site);
 - Candidate Site 3 (Land adjacent to the south of Ferndale Community School).
- 4.15 Further feasibility and site investigations focussed on just these 3 candidate sites which ultimately resulted in the former Chubb Factory site identified as the preferred location for YGG Llyn-y-Forwyn. This conclusion was reached for a number of reasons including its size, the existing infrastructure, current access arrangements, and its proximity to the existing school.

A map showing the locations of the existing school and the preferred site is included at Appendix A.

5. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Council has to satisfy its public sector duties under the Equalities Act 2010 (including specific Welsh public sector duties). Pursuant to these legal duties Councils must in making decisions have due regard to the need to (1) eliminate unlawful discrimination, (2) advance equality of opportunity and (3) foster good relations on the basis of protected characteristics.
- 5.2 Equality, Welsh Language and Community Impact Assessments are being prepared in respect of this proposal and would be published on the Council's website together with a consultation document that outlines the proposal in further detail and in accordance with the requirements of Welsh Government's School Organisation Code (2nd Edition) (011/2018) (the "Code").

6. CONSULTATION

- 6.1 The consultation processes in respect of this proposal would be undertaken under the arrangements outlined in the Code and the 'Changes to the School Organisation Code in response to the coronavirus outbreak' which were updated on 8th January 2021. These arrangements stipulate that consultation must be undertaken when the proposals are at a formative stage and that consultation documents must be prepared and circulated to prescribed consultees, as well as being published on the Council website.
- 6.2 The draft consultation document for the proposal outlined in this report is attached at Appendix B to this report, although it should be noted that this remains a working document which may be subject to some minor changes before the consultation document is formally published and the consultation process commences.
- 6.3 The proposed consultation period, if it is agreed to progress this matter, would run from 1st March 2021 to 30th April 2021. Details regarding engagement

opportunities would be added to the consultation documents before the formal consultation begins, and would be carried out in line with the latest COVID guidance available at that time.

- 6.4 The proposed potential timetable for completion of each statutory process is set out in the following table:

YGG Llyn-y-Forwyn – Proposed Consultation Timeline		
Action	Detail	Dates
Cabinet Permission to Consult	Cabinet to consider this proposal and give approval to commence consultation.	28 January 2021
Statutory Public Consultation	A consultation document would be published on the Council website for a minimum of 6 weeks.	March 2021
Report back to Cabinet	Cabinet would consider the consultation response report and determine whether to publish the report and approve the publication of the proposal in the form of a statutory notice.	May 2021
Publish Statutory Notice	The statutory notice must be published for a 28 day period (if approved by Cabinet).	June 2021
Decision by Cabinet	Report back to Cabinet on outcome of statutory notice period and details of objections received, with an appropriate recommendation.	August 2021
Implementation	In accordance with Cabinet decision either status quo or implementation of proposal.	Status Quo: August 2021 New school: March 2024

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no financial implications as a result of the recommendations in this report, however should the proposals go ahead a significant capital investment will be required. The funding package will be developed alongside the consultation and decision making process.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

- 8.1 Part 1 of the Education Act 1996 (“the 1996 Act”) imposes a number of general duties on all local authorities in Wales. The general duty in section 13 of the 1996 Act is to contribute (so far as the Council’s powers enable them to do so) towards the spiritual, moral, mental and physical development of the community by securing that efficient primary education and secondary education are available to meet the needs of the population of their area.
- 8.2 Section 13A(3) of the 1996 Act states that a local authority in Wales must ensure that their relevant education functions and their relevant training

functions are exercised by the authority with a view to promoting high standards, and promoting the fulfilment of learning potential by every person to whom the subsection applies, including those who are of compulsory school age or are below school age and are registered as pupils at schools maintained by the authority.

- 8.3 Section 14 of the 1996 Act then provides that the Council shall secure that sufficient schools for providing primary education and secondary education are available in the Council's area. Schools available for an area shall not be regarded as sufficient unless they are sufficient in number, character and equipment to provide for all pupils the opportunity for appropriate education.
- 8.4 Appropriate education means education which offers such variety of instruction and training as may be desirable in view of (a) the pupils' different ages, abilities and aptitudes; and (b) the different periods for which they may be expected to remain at school, including practical instruction and training appropriate to their different needs.
- 8.5 Powers for councils to develop school organisation proposals are governed by the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and the Code. Local authorities must, when exercising functions under Part 3 of the 2013 Act, act in accordance with any relevant requirements contained in the Code and must have regard to any relevant guidelines contained in it. A copy of the Code is found here:
<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-10/schoolorganisation-code-second-edition.pdf>

9. LINKS TO THE COUNCIL'S CORPORATE PLAN/FUTURE GENERATIONS (WALES) ACT 2015

- 9.1 There are links to RCTCBC's Corporate Plan for the period between 2020 to 2024, specifically the priority:
- Prosperity – Creating the opportunity for people and businesses to be innovative, entrepreneurial and fulfil their potential and prosper
 - Ensuring we have good schools so all children have access to a great education.
- 9.2 Due regard has been made to all seven well-being goals and the Five Ways of Working, as contained within the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 which requires the Council to think about the long-term impact of decisions, on communities to prevent consistent issues such as poverty, health inequalities and climate change.

This proposal would contribute to achieving the wellbeing goals by:

- Improving sustainability of school buildings in the Council portfolio through a commitment to achieving a zero carbon building and building to BREEAM excellent.

- Providing additional school places to meet WG targets and to promote the Welsh language in the Community.
- Opening new community facilities that would create opportunities for local people to utilise.

This proposal would achieve the five ways of working by:

- Creating a new school environment that can deliver the new curriculum for Wales as set out in the national mission statement.
- Provide first class learning facilities for pupils and the wider community and contribute towards a healthier Wales by providing additional outdoor sport facilities for pupils.
- Contributing towards a prosperous Wales by committing to opportunities for local tradespeople and to use local resources, wherever possible to build the new school.
- Engaging with the community on a thorough consultation with opportunities for all stakeholders in the Community to engage throughout the process.

9.3 An Equality Impact Assessment which would include further detail on the contribution of the proposal to the Wellbeing of Future generations Act would form an integral part of the consultation document. This would be available for all stakeholders to view and comment upon as a part of the consultation process. A Welsh Language Impact Assessment will also be undertaken as part of the consultation.

10. **CONCLUSION**

10.1 The proposal to construct a new school builds upon the momentum gathered to improve Welsh medium education provision throughout the County Borough, providing improved facilities and increasing the number of pupil places available. This proposed investment in YGG Llyn-y-Forwyn provides the opportunity for more learners to benefit from improved educational facilities taught through the medium of Welsh.

10.2 It is recommended therefore, that Members give approval to officers to commence the consultation processes necessary, in accordance with the School Organisation Code 2018, to achieve the proposal outlined in this report.



Other Information:-

Relevant Scrutiny Committee-

Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

Background Papers-

None



RHONDDA CYNON TAF

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

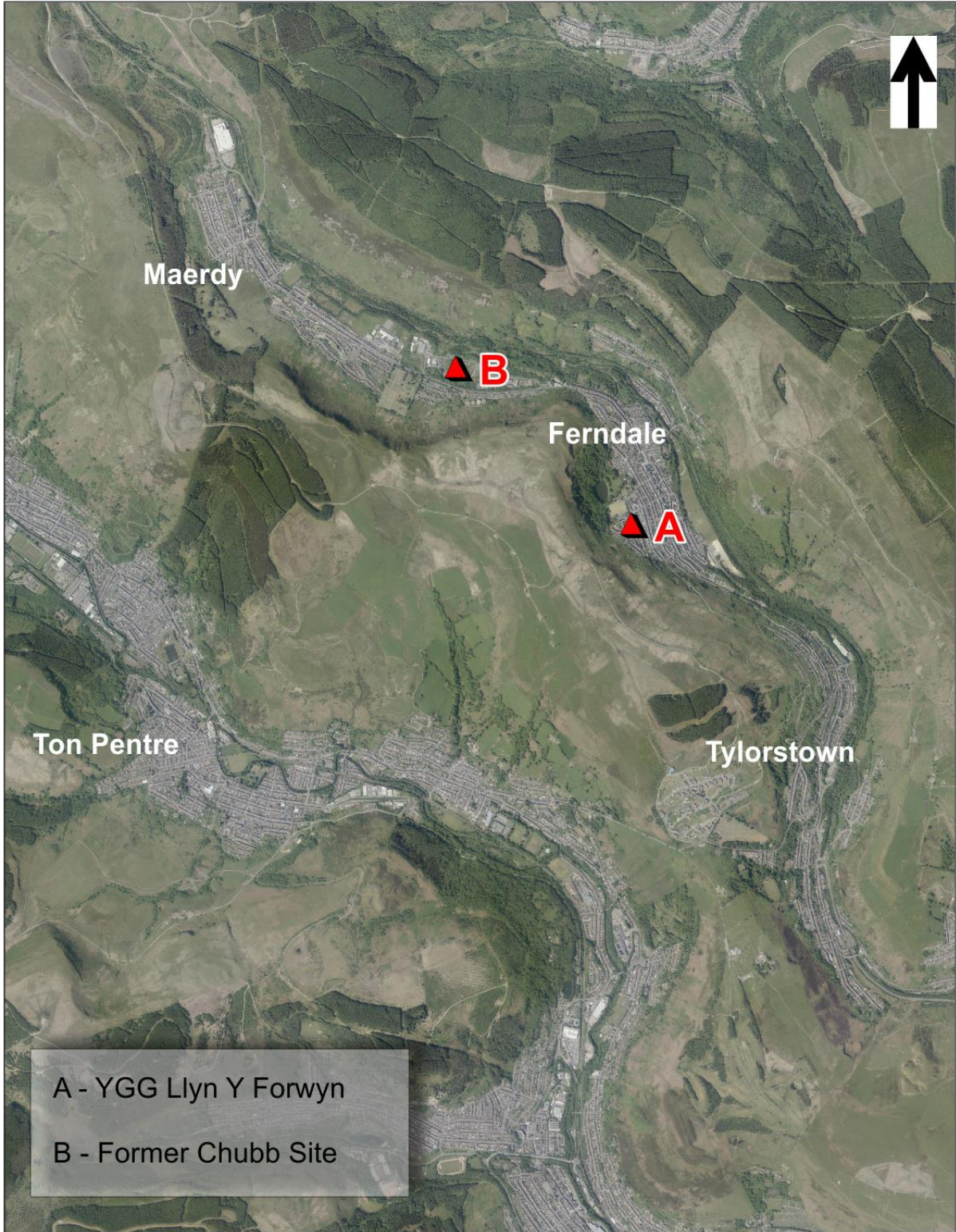
28th JANUARY 2021

APPENDIX A



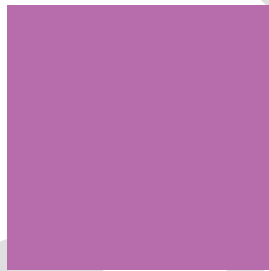
Candidate Sites In Rhondda Fach

Map produced by Corporate Asset Data Team based on information supplied



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21ST CENTURY SCHOOLS



CONSULTATION ON A PROPOSAL TO CARRY OUT A REGULATED ALTERATION AND TRANSFER YSGOL GYNRADD GYMRAEG LLYN Y FORWYN TO A NEW BUILDING ON A NEW SITE

This consultation document and appendices are also available on the 'Get Involved' page on the Council website



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Introduction

The Council wishes to seek the views of stakeholders on the proposal to carry out a regulated alteration to:

- Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Llyn y Forwyn (YGG Llyn y Forwyn), by way of transferring the school to a brand new building on a new site. The new school building is proposed to be built on the land north side of Highfield, Ferndale, CF43 4AD, known locally as the former 'Chubb Factory'. It is proposed that the regulated alteration will take place by March 2024.

This proposal is made in accordance with the School Organisation Code – 2018 (011/2018). Section 2.3 of the School Organisation Code – 2018 refers to regulated alterations to a school, which includes:

- The transfer of any school to a new site or sites.

Who will we consult with?

We are seeking the views of the following stakeholders:

- The Governing Body of YGG Llyn y Forwyn.
- Parents/carers, prospective parents/carers where possible, and staff members of YGG Llyn y Forwyn.
- Pupils of YGG Llyn y Forwyn.
- Other Governing Bodies of neighbouring primary schools.
- Neighbouring Local Authorities
- The Church in Wales and Roman Catholic Diocesan Authorities.
- Welsh Ministers.
- Members of the Senedd for the Rhondda, Cynon and Taf constituencies and regional Members of the Senedd for the area.
- Members of Parliament for the Rhondda, Cynon and Taf Constituencies.
- Estyn.
- Teaching and staff trade unions.
- Central South Consortium Joint Education Service.
- Police and Crime Commissioner for the area.
- Childcare providers.
- Mudiad Meithrin.
- Menter Iaith
- Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership.
- Children and Young People's Partnership.
- Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board.
- Welsh Language Commissioner.

What will the consultation process entail?

The consultation will start on Monday March 1st 2021 and will be completed at 5pm on Friday April 30th 2021. The feedback from the consultation will be collated and summarised, and a report presented to the Council's Cabinet in May 2021. This consultation report will be available for all persons to view on the Council's website and copies can be obtained on request from the address detailed on Page 4 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.

If Cabinet decide 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 2018 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 and Inclusion Services will publish an objection report providing a summary of the objections and their response to them within 7 days of the day of the determination of the proposal. This report will also be available for all persons to view on the Council's website and copies can be obtained on request from the addresses detailed on Page 4 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 will be no later than March 2024 for the transfer of YGG Llyn y Forwyn to the new site.

What do you have to consider?

The remainder of the consultation document sets out the rationale for the proposed transfer of YGG Llyn y Forwyn to a new school on a new site. 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. A new school building to accommodate all children who require a place at YGG Llyn y Forwyn is proposed to be built on the site of the former Chubb factory.

How do you make your views known?

In order to comply with the Welsh Government's most recent Covid guidance, face-to-face meetings will not be arranged. However, virtual sessions with the staff and Governing Body at YGG Llyn y Forwyn will be organised.

A consultation questionnaire is attached on page 21 of this document, it is also available on the Council's website on the 'Get Involved' page.

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

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

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

E-mail: schoolplanning@rctcbc.gov.uk

All correspondence should be received no later than 5pm on Friday April 30th 2021.

Please note that responses to the consultation will not be counted as objections to the proposal unless expressly requested. Objections can only be forwarded following the publication of the statutory notice.

The views of children and young people

The Council has acknowledged that the voice of young people is about involving them as active participants in the development, delivery, management and improvement of their educational and student experience.

Young people have a right to express their views in all matters affecting them and for their views to be heard and given due consideration in accordance with their age and maturity. As such, the 21st Century Schools Team will ensure that suitable arrangements are made to involve pupils as active participants throughout this consultation process, and if a decision is made to progress the proposal, throughout the implementation process.

The Council will consult with pupils who attend YGG Llyn y Forwyn by producing a children and young people's version of the consultation document and consultation response form. In order to comply with Welsh Government's latest guidance on Covid-19, we will work collaboratively with YGG Llyn y Forwyn to facilitate a virtual meeting using video conferencing technology (Microsoft Teams/Zoom) to discuss the proposal with pupils at the school, and talk them through the child friendly version of the consultation document. Notes from this discussion will be included in the documentation forwarded to the Council's Cabinet for consideration once the consultation period has ended.

Community, Equality and Welsh Language Impact Assessments

As set out in the Welsh Government School Organisation Code 2018, it is a requirement to publish Community Impact, Welsh Language Impact and Equality Impact Assessments. These have been produced as an annex to this document and are also available on the Council's website.

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Background to the proposal

YGG Llyn y Forwyn – Where we are now...

YGG Llyn y Forwyn is a Welsh medium community school located at Darran Terrace, Ferndale. The school site consists of a traditional stone Victorian School building. According to the condition survey of the school carried out by the Council in 2019, YGG Llyn y Forwyn is graded D for condition and C for suitability, where A is the highest and D is the lowest performing building respectively. It is acknowledged that this is the worst school in the Council's education portfolio in terms of condition and suitability.



The view of the existing school building from Darran Terrace.



The view of the tarmac yard servicing the infant block.

The site consists of two early 20th century dressed stone buildings, set within a sloping tarmac covered site with both properties extending over two storeys. A site condition survey undertaken by the Council in 2019 reported that the roof is now nearing the end of its natural life.

The site itself and both school buildings are not accessible and do not comply with the Equality Act 2010.

The survey also reported that both blocks show water ingress through the fabric of the building, which has resulted in damaged plasterwork and rotten timber with varying levels of water damage to all rooms in the school. The current figure for the backlog maintenance work that would be essential to make YGG Llyn y Forwyn safe, watertight and warm is over £1.01 million.

The site is enclosed on all sides by large retaining walls and a sloping topography. The school is in the centre of a residential area making access to the site challenging. There are no on-site car parking facilities for staff, and no on-site drop off for the home to school transport. The neighbouring streets are used to accommodate both provisions which can be challenging on occasions given the numbers of residents and private vehicles in the locality.

The topography of the site is challenging given the severely sloping outdoor, hard play areas of the site and as a result staff face regular challenges in the delivery of outdoor activities. To their credit they use the best of the facilities that are available to them locally, as they use the nearby park to deliver aspects of the curriculum and their after-school sports clubs. This situation, although adequate, is far from ideal.

The pupil numbers in YGG Llyn y Forwyn over the past four years are shown in the following table and are obtained from the statutory Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC) which must be undertaken in January each year. The number of nursery age pupils for each year is shown separately, as required by the Welsh Government’s statutory School Organisation Code (2018).

YGG Llyn y Forwyn					
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Total statutory aged pupils	165	168	167	160	156
Nursery pupils	36	30	21	38	26

Over the next five years the pupil forecasts for YGG Llyn y Forwyn, which are calculated in accordance with guidance issued by Welsh Government, are as follows:

YGG Llyn y Forwyn								
	Capacity of the School	2020/2021 (Actual)	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025	% surplus places in 2024/2025
Statutory aged pupils	197	156	150	155	151	148	144	26.9%

Nursery pupils	28	26	33	31	29	32	31	-10.7%
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What is the basis for this proposal?

It was acknowledged in the 2019 Estyn inspection report for YGG Llyn y Forwyn that ‘the school is a happy community’ where ‘pupils use the Welsh language with pride’. This very positive observation is something that will not change as the ethos of the school will be transferred to the new school building at the new site, with current staffing being maintained for pupils to continue to benefit from.

Due to its sloping, enclosed site and the limitations of the building, YGG Llyn y Forwyn cannot be physically developed from a technical perspective. The site, as a whole, is severely restricted and the age and construction of the buildings prevent the school from receiving any significant upgrades which would allow it to be deemed a 21st Century Schools’ provision.

The Council believes that this proposal represents the best opportunity to safeguard and sustain educational standards for the future and provides a platform for further improvement through significant investment in permanent and fit for purpose facilities. This investment will create a stimulating teaching and learning environment with 21st Century facilities including improved ICT provision, creative outdoor play areas and access to community facilities. The design will be focused on creating a flexible environment that fosters pupils’ personal growth in communication, collaboration, creativity and leadership skills.

Improved school buildings and improved school performance will potentially lead to additional pupils accessing Welsh Medium education locally, increasing the critical mass and providing more professional teaching opportunities for teachers. A new 21st Century school environment will have a positive impact on both pupil and staff wellbeing and will provide strengthened opportunities for developing a community focused school.

The existing school buildings at YGG Llyn y Forwyn require significant repairs and are no longer fit for purpose, with outstanding maintenance in excess of £1.01 million. The school also lacks any outdoor green space, which limits the breadth of curriculum that teaching staff can deliver outside. The benefits of outdoor learning in the early years is well documented as this can have positive health and wellbeing benefits and can also help to connect children to the environment. Learning outside the classroom can also be an effective tool for teaching and learning which has been proven to raise attainment and achievement, improve behaviour and enhance the engagement of all groups of pupils, including those who are hard to engage inside the classroom environment.

The proposal to carry out a regulated alteration to YGG Llyn y Forwyn is considered necessary due to the existing school building not being fit for purpose. It is the Council’s view that a new, purpose-built 21st Century School building will help the school to further cultivate a learning environment which nurtures and supports pupils, staff and the use of the Welsh language.

What alternative options have been considered?

Given the limitations of the existing school site, and the challenging topography of YGG Llyn y Forwyn's catchment area, the number of alternative options available for consideration are limited.

The land north side of Highfield, Ferndale, CF43 4AD, known locally as the former 'Chubb Factory,' was chosen as the preferred location for the school following an assessment of a number of sites all located within the catchment area of YGG Llyn y Forwyn. Each site was appraised initially on its ability to meet the following criteria:

- Have an adequate site area;
- Have satisfactory access which is capable of being improved;
- Is free from any visual incumbents;
- Close proximity to the current school;
- Is a viable development opportunity subject to a detailed feasibility study.

Following the site assessment, the site known locally as the former 'Chubb Factory' was ultimately chosen for a number of reasons including its size, the existing infrastructure, current access arrangements, and its proximity to the existing school.

In accordance with the School Organisation Code 2018, further alternative options were also identified and consciously considered. Some of the benefits and disadvantages of each of the discounted options are listed in the table that follows:

Option	Benefits	Disadvantages
Retain the status quo.	<p>No capital investment required by the Council.</p> <p>No disruption to the pupils, parents/carers and staff.</p> <p>No impact on home to school transport.</p>	<p>Aspects of the school building have reached the end of their life and the building is now beyond economic repair.</p> <p>Not of a 21st Century schools standard with in adequate outdoor space. As such delivering the New Curriculum for Wales will be a challenge.</p> <p>Inaccessible site - not compliant with the Equality Act 2010.</p> <p>Backlog maintenance of £1.01m will remain.</p> <p>Parking issues will not be resolved.</p>

<p>Build a new school on the existing site.</p>	<p>No impact on pupils in terms of travel distances.</p> <p>No impact on home to school transport.</p>	<p>Significant capital investment required.</p> <p>Temporary classrooms will need to be utilised for the duration of the construction and given the site restrictions may need to be located elsewhere.</p> <p>The topography of the site restricts the ability to build a fully accessible school fit for the 21st Century.</p> <p>Site restrictions limit the ability to improve the outdoor areas.</p> <p>Parking issues will not be resolved due to location.</p>
<p>Create a 3 to 19 Welsh medium school on the site of an associated school of YGG Llyn y Forwyn.</p>	<p>Larger school departments will promote the sharing of skills and expertise.</p> <p>Greater opportunities for staff to move between key stages and further develop expertise.</p> <p>Reduce the anxiety caused by transition.</p> <p>Improve the range and quality of facilities and learning resources available to the benefit of all pupils.</p>	<p>Pupils will have a longer distance to travel to school.</p> <p>Home to school transport costs will increase.</p> <p>There will be Human Resources implications for staff.</p> <p>The topography of the associated school site severely restricts the ability to build a fully accessible school fit for the 21st Century.</p> <p>The traffic impact of additional school transport in the community is unsustainable and the existing site cannot support additional school transport.</p>

Benefits and Disadvantages, Risks and Mitigation Factors

Any proposals involving school reorganisation will inevitably cause some disruption and uncertainty, although experience shows that this can be kept to a minimum through meaningful engagement throughout the consultation process, and if a decision is made to progress with the proposal, during the implementation phase.

The benefits and disadvantages of the proposal are highlighted below, as is information as to how any identified risks can be managed by the Council and the school.

Benefits			
A new 21 st Century standard school will deliver a significant improvement in the quality of the educational provision, having a significant positive impact upon the educational performance of the pupils and staff morale.			
The school will be designed to be energy efficient and will include renewable energy systems including photovoltaic panels and rainwater harvesting. The school will be built to BREEAM Excellent standards, contributing to both the Council's commitment to becoming a 'carbon free Council by 2050' and the Welsh Government's Climate Change Strategy.			
There will be significant traffic improvements with the inclusion of a dedicated staff car park and an on-site home to school transport drop-off area.			
The school will be designed to be a fully accessible and fully integrated community school. A dedicated area will be designed within the school itself so that the local community will be allowed to safely utilise the facilities at the school, both during and after the school day.			
Improving and enhancing the physical aspect of the Welsh medium provision throughout the County Borough is a critical factor of the WESP in supporting the achievement of the target to increase the number of seven-year-old children being taught through the medium of Welsh. This proposal is another example of the Council's commitment to ensure that these targets are met.			
The external areas will allow staff, pupils and the community to experience a greater breadth of teaching and learning experiences.			
Given the proposed location of the new school, it is anticipated that there will be no additional transport costs.			
The proposed site is within the existing catchment area and so there will be limited disruption for pupils, staff and parents/carers.			
Disadvantages			
The capital cost of the new school will be significant.			
Some of the pupils and staff will inevitably live further from the new school site.			
Moving to a new school site could cause some anxiety for some pupils, staff, and parents/carers.			
Risks	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating Actions
Parents choose to send their children to another school	Low	Low	Engagement with parents/carers will continue throughout the consultation period, and if a decision is taken by Cabinet to implement the proposal, this engagement will continue.

YGG Llyn y Forwyn – Where we'd like to be...

It is being proposed that a new school building for YGG Llyn y Forwyn will be constructed on the site known locally as the former 'Chubb Factory' site, Ferndale. The school will be a replacement for the existing school building and will cater for children aged between 3 and 11 years of age who require Welsh medium education. It will have a proposed admissions number of 30 pupils per year group, and an overall pupil capacity of 210 (plus nursery).

The new school will be built in accordance with Building Bulletin 99 and will be fully accessible and compliant with the Equality Act 2010.

The accommodation will consist of:

- Modern, flexible learning environments for all pupils, a large hall/dining area, a multi-purpose learning resource area and fully accessible facilities.
- Internal and external areas for use by the local community.
- Some additional capacity and space for additional learning needs interventions.
- Enhanced outdoor spaces to support the full range of curriculum activities, including an outdoor classroom and a 'forest schools' area.
- Improved traffic management including on site bus drop off for pupils and on-site staff parking.



A multi-purpose learning resource area or 'heart space' at a 21st Century School delivered by the Council.



Typical junior classroom in a 21st Century School delivered by the Council.



Typical junior classroom in a 21st Century School delivered by the Council.

The school will be built in accordance with Building Bulletin 99 which requires new primary schools to include provision for team sports, including a playing field area suitable for team games for pupils aged 8 and over and a Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) for sports such as basketball and netball. New schools are also required to include soft play areas, commonly made up of grassed space for pupils to sit and socialise, alongside hard surfaced playgrounds and sheltered space to complement the soft play areas around the school site. The new school will also include a habitat area which will act as a space for outdoor learning and provide a valuable teaching and learning resource.



External view of Cwmaman Primary School opened by The Council in 2018.



Example of MUGA servicing Tonyrefail Community School.



Example of outdoor learning area at Cwmaman Primary School.

There will be on-site provision for staff parking as well as an on-site dedicated drop-off area for the home to school transport vehicles.

A new Cylch Meithrin will also form a part of the new school site and will offer pre-school Cylch Meithrin sessions for 2 to 3 year olds. This provision is already operating at the existing school site, however, given the limitations on the space available numbers are relatively low. It is anticipated that being able to offer this provision in brand new facilities as part of the YGG Llyn y Forwyn site will encourage pupil numbers to grow. This will assist in ensuring a language continuum of Welsh medium provision for children from the age of two to eleven years, within one primary school site.

The Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP)

All Local Authorities in Wales must produce a Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP). The WESP is a long term language planning tool which sets the direction for the strategic planning, delivery and growth in Welsh medium and Welsh language education. Through the WESP, and effective strategic planning and investment, The Council aims to contribute significantly to achieving the vision of one million people in Wales being Welsh speakers by 2050 as set out in Cymraeg 2050. The Council's current WESP can be viewed and downloaded from the Council website via:

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

The new ten year WESP for the period between 2022 to 2032 is currently being written and will be subject to a statutory consultation process shortly. Included amongst the list of strategic developments, actions and outcomes the Council will undertake to help achieve the targets set out in the WESP are:

- New and improved school buildings with appropriate capacity levels to fully meet forecasted demand for Welsh medium provision in their catchment areas.

The proposal to transfer YGG Llyn y Forwyn to a new purpose built 21st Century standard school building with an increased capacity will contribute to RCT's goal of increasing the number of year one pupils accessing Welsh medium education. This proposal will expand the opportunities for pupils to pursue an education through the medium of Welsh and will have a positive impact upon Welsh language provision.

Admission Arrangements

There will be no changes to the catchment area for YGG Llyn y Forwyn. The school will cater for children aged between 3 to 11 years of age requiring Welsh medium primary education. It will have a proposed admissions number of 30 pupils per year group, and an overall pupil capacity of 210 (plus nursery).

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

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

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

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

The likely impact of the proposal

The educational case for the proposal

This proposal forms a part of the Council's wider 21st Century Schools Investment Programme and contributes to the delivery of sustainable schools fit for the 21st Century and supports the better strategic management of the Council's education estate.

In addition to this objective, school organisational proposals should highlight 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.

YGG Llyn y Forwyn was inspected by Estyn in January 2019 and the school's current performance in the five inspection areas was follows:

Inspection area	Judgement
Standards	Good
Wellbeing and Attitudes to Learning	Good
Teaching and Learning Experiences	Good
Care, support and guidance	Good
Leadership and management	Good

Estyn also set out recommendations for the school to implement in order to build upon the progress made to date. Estyn's recommendations were as follows:

- R1** Ensure appropriate opportunities for pupils in the Foundation Phase to make choices in relation to their learning so that they develop as independent learners.
- R2** Improve pupils' information and communication technology skills.
- R3** Ensure that Key Stage 2 teachers provide a balanced curriculum and develop pupils' scientific knowledge and understanding, in particular.

It is the Council's view that the transfer of YGG Llyn y Forwyn to a new, purpose built school building fit for the 21st Century would help the school to make progress towards achieving these recommendations and have a major positive impact on all five Estyn inspection areas, as follows:

1. **Standards** – A new school building fit for the 21st Century would provide staff and pupils with enhanced teaching spaces, dedicated resource areas, stimulating learning environments, state-of-the-art information and communication technology equipment, all of which would support the school to raise standards, and achieve Estyn's recommendation of improving pupils' ICT skills.
2. **Wellbeing and Attitudes to Learning** – The existing school site has extremely limited outdoor space, with no green areas. Transferring YGG Llyn y Forwyn to a new site would provide extensive outdoor space, including green space, for pupils to learn and play in. It is the

Council's view that pupil wellbeing and attitudes to learning would benefit from a diverse and engaging outdoor space.

3. **Teaching and Learning Experiences** – A fit for purpose school building would ensure that staff are able to provide a balanced curriculum at all key stages in line with the new Curriculum for Wales – 2022, particularly in the areas of physical education, Science and ICT, which would support the school in achieving its third Estyn recommendation. A 21st Century learning environment will also provide pupils with greater flexibility and therefore greater choice in their learning experience, supporting the school in making progress towards recommendation one.
4. **Care, Support and Guidance** – A new 21st Century School building will enable the school to build upon the good working practices and initiatives that YGG Llyn y Forwyn already have in place. Providing a significantly improved external environment and the provision of green spaces will provide opportunities to further develop extra-curricular activities to encourage healthy lifestyles for the school community. A fully accessible building and the provision of flexible spaces will allow the school to extend its good practice to allow further engagement with families. The new building will allow the school to nurture and grow this aspect of its ethos exponentially.
5. **Leadership and Management** – A purpose built school building would allow the already effective leadership team at YGG Llyn y Forwyn to focus more on working towards Estyn's recommendations. It would remove the burden of time consuming and expensive maintenance issues present in the existing school building, which would allow staff to focus on delivering the best teaching and learning and outcomes for their pupils.

In addition, the new school, which would be built to 21st Century school standards would have a positive impact on the ability of the school to deliver the full curriculum at the Foundation Phase and each Key Stage of education. There would be no limitations in this regard.

What is the likely impact of the proposals on pupils?

It is anticipated that the proposed changes will not adversely impact upon pupils. Numerous benefits can be realised – the principal change will be an improvement in the quality of the educational setting, and this should have a significant impact on educational performance of the pupils.

The catchment area of the primary school will not change, i.e. it will continue to be the same as the current catchment area of YGG Llyn y Forwyn. A number of the Lower Super Output Areas within the catchment area are amongst the most deprived in Wales according to the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019 Report.

The Council's policy regarding home to school transport provision will continue to apply. The difference in time taken to travel to the new school site will be negligible as it is in close proximity to the existing school. Some pupils may have a slightly longer journey to school but many will have a shorter one. Overall, we consider the impact on pupil travel arrangements to be neutral.

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

1. Have a flying start in life.
2. Have a comprehensive range of education and learning opportunities.
3. Enjoy the best possible health and are free from abuse, victimisation and exploitation.

4. Have access to play, leisure, sporting and cultural activities.
5. Are listened to, treated with respect, and have their race and cultural identity recognised.
6. Have a safe home and a community which supports physical and emotional wellbeing.
7. Are not disadvantaged by poverty.

The Council considers that this proposal benefits the pupils attending YGG Llyn y Forwyn in accordance with the seven core aims set out above.

Further information relating to the likely impact of the proposals on pupils, including how the proposal contributes to all seven goals of the Well-Being of Future Generations Act 2015 and an assessment of the proposal on the five ways of working, can be found in the Equality Impact Assessment which is at Appendix B.

What is the likely impact of the proposal on staff?

In making the proposed change, most things will not change for the staff at all. The school, including all staff will be relocating en masse, so there are no Human Resource implications as a result of implementing these proposals. Indeed, the expectation is that the proposed change will impact upon staff positively.

The principal change will be an improvement in the quality of the educational setting and the working environment and as a result we anticipate that this will have a significant impact on staff morale, well-being and retention.

Financial implications of the proposal

YGG Llyn y Forwyn is not currently operating within a deficit budget and there is no evidence that these proposals will affect this positive financial position. In addition, no increase in home to school transport costs are projected.

There is an expectation that while some savings will be identified given that the new school will be maintenance free and more importantly more energy efficient, which is in stark contrast to the poor condition of the existing school building, it is anticipated that there will be an increase in the rates payable for the new school building. It is not possible to be precise about future revenue costs, as much would depend upon the future decisions of the Governing Body, however the projection is that any increase in costs and any savings realised will negate the other with there being a neutral overall budgetary impact. What is certain is that this proposal will remove a significant backlog maintenance figure in excess of £1.01 million and eliminate day-to-day costs associated with the failing buildings.

This proposal will deliver a newly constructed school for YGG Llyn y Forwyn at an estimated capital cost of £8.5 million. This capital element of the proposal will be funded by the Council's Capital Investment Programme. Project costs will be developed alongside the consultation process and approvals sought in line with the Council's decision making procedures.

Home to School Transport Provision

There is a statutory duty placed upon all Local Authorities in Wales to provide pupils with free transport to their nearest suitable school if they reside beyond safe 'walking distance' to that school. The term suitable school applies to the catchment area English, Welsh, dual language or

voluntary aided (faith) mainstream school or special school/class as appropriate. The law relating to safe 'walking distance' is defined as two miles for pupils of compulsory school age receiving primary education and three miles for pupils of compulsory school age receiving secondary education.

The Council has exercised the discretionary powers afforded to it under the provisions of the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008 to make a more generous provision to pupils. The relevant information in relation to YGG Llyn y Forwyn is set out below:

- The eligibility criterion for walking distance for pupils receiving compulsory primary education at their nearest suitable school has been set at 1½ miles, instead of 2 miles as required by the Measure.
- Free transport to their nearest suitable school, where places are available, is provided to pupils who meet the 1½ mile eligibility criterion from the start of Foundation Phase (the start of the school term after their third birthday), rather than from the start of compulsory education (the start of the school term after their fifth birthday) as required by the Measure.
- The term suitable school applies to the catchment area English, Welsh, dual language or voluntary aided (faith) mainstream school or special school/class as appropriate.

The full information in relation to the Council's Home to School transport provision viewed and downloaded from the Council website via:

<https://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/EN/Resident/ParkingRoadsandTravel/Travel/SchoolandCollegeTransport/SchoolandCollegeTransport.aspx>

Land and buildings information

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

Consultation Response Pro-forma

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

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

Or

Email: schoolplanning@rctcbc.gov.uk

The Proposal

To relocate YGG Llyn y Forwyn from its existing site to a newly constructed school building on the built on the land North Side of Highfield, Ferndale, CF43 4AD, known locally as the former 'Chubb Factory'.

Do you agree with proposal 1? Yes No Not sure

Please let us know the reasons for your choice

- Do you think the proposal could impact opportunities for people to use and promote the Welsh Language (Positive or Negative)?

- Do you think the proposal in any way it treats the Welsh Language less favourably than the English Language?

- How positive effects on the Welsh Language could be increased, or negative effects be decreased?

The Council is committed to keeping your personal information safe and secure and keeping you informed about how we use your information. To learn about how your privacy is protected and how and why we use your personal information to provide you with services, please visit our Consultation privacy notice:

<https://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/EN/Council/DataProtectionandFreedomofInformation/DataProtection/serviceprivacynotices/ChiefExecutives/ConsultationPrivacyNotice.aspx>

And

<https://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/EN/Council/DataProtectionandFreedomofInformation/DataProtection/DataProtection.aspx>

DRAFT



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