

21st CENTURY SCHOOLS PROGRAMME

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

A GUIDE for PARENTS and CARERS



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*(NB: Proposal 3 and 4 relate only to Pontypridd High School and Welsh medium education)

The Consultation process so far....

The Chair of Governors and Headteacher attended a meeting with the Chief Executive and other senior LA Officers on September 25th. At this meeting an outline of the proposals for the reorganisation of schools in Pontypridd was provided. This included 'background information' for Council members and a draft copy of the consultation document. A final copy of this document was released to schools and made public on October 15th.

Since receiving the document a number of different meetings have taken place in order to discuss the contents and form opinions on each of the three proposals. Important in forming such opinions has been to identify the information and rationale that gives justification for the Local Authority proposals based on the evidence provided and additional information available.

Meetings have taken place between:

- School Governors
- All teaching and non-teaching staff
- The Student Council and Senior staff and Governors
- The Headteachers of and Hawthorn High School and Pontypridd High School
- Headteachers, local Councillors and Politicians
- The Headteacher and parents/carers who have specific concerns about the proposals

A formal meeting has also taken place (November 12th) between the School governors, all staff and senior Local Authority Officers as part of the official consultation process (this included the Chief Executive of RCT - Chris Bradshaw and the Director of Education - Gaynor Davies). At this meeting the views of all people were presented in relation to each proposal and many questions were asked in particular in relation to Proposal 1 on changes to the Sixth Form. It is clear that much information presented in the proposal with regard to student outcomes, standards, class sizes and the overall comparison between Hawthorn High School (HHS), the Pontypridd Sixth Form (PSF), Bryncelynog Comprehensive School (BCS) and Coleg Y Cymoedd (CyC) is inaccurate and misleading. Following this meeting and with all information considered the school is now able to present its view of the 3 proposals.

It is now essential that all parents and carers have the opportunity to read through the outcomes of such discussions and therefore have a fully informed view of all information available. *It is important to state that any comments about BCS or CyC are only made in reference to information which is readily available and commentary provided by the LA in the consultation document. It is in no way our intention to criticise the work of other schools/colleges but rather to redress an imbalance in the way performance has been portrayed in the Council's consultation document.*

The time has now come to present our views clearly to the Local Authority; the deadline for doing so is **January 25th, 2019**. Please use this information guide to inform your own opinion and I am sure that our considered responses will make a strong case for a 21st Century Sixth Form provision in Pontypridd that the children of this proud university town are entitled to.

PROPOSAL 1

Proposal 1 : Removal of the Sixth Form of Hawthorn High School with post-16 students attending an alternative school or college that offers the choice of courses they require.				
Agree with this proposal	YES	NO	NOT SURE	

About the Pontypridd Sixth Form

For 10 years we have operated a joint sixth form provision with Pontypridd High School (Cardinal Newman were in that partnership for the first 3 years). Together we call our partnership the 'Pontypridd Sixth Form' and we are developing ever closer links with the University of South Wales who support our provision in many ways. This operates by offering a choice of A Level subjects between the two centres and, in some cases, accessing courses at Coleg Y Cymoedd (CyC - Nantgarw). By working together we are able to offer students a broader range of subjects to choose from and we can maximise the use of staff and facilities across the two schools. Students travel the short distance between sites by bus, provided as required and free of charge. This is a well established provision and we continually review it and make changes to ensure it is successful and meets the needs of our students.

What is significant and right is that by working together we are providing a school based sixth form provision within and around the town of Pontypridd.

We are objecting to the proposal to close the Pontypridd Sixth Form and relocate our students to so called Sixth Form 'Centres of Excellence' at either Bryncelynog Comprehensive School (BCS) or Coleg y Cymoedd (CyC) for the following reasons:

REASON 1

The first reason is related to the Partnership working that has already been attempted with the BCS / Y Pant Sixth Form partnership

- i) The fact that links for the Pontypridd Sixth Form with BCS (and Y Pant CS) have been discussed in the past and they did not materialise because of the distance between the school sites.
- ii) LA Officers confirmed in a meeting at Pontypridd High School on November 12th that it is likely that Sixth Form students at BCS school in 2022 would also travel to Y Pant CS for their A Levels because they will continue to work in partnership with BCS. This will also lead to additional transport for those students with some being asked to travel from places like Ynysybwl as far as Llantrisant.
- iii) The fact that only 5 students in all of PHS when surveyed expressed any interest in making the proposed move to BCS. Almost no post 16 students at HHS have responded positively to this Sixth Form proposal.
- iv) Both points (ii) and (iii) above pose the question whether £10 million spent at BCS would ever be accessed by the number of students that the council projects are likely to attend

there beyond 2022. As a school we remain confused by the numbers being projected to attend the BCS Sixth Form from the Pontypridd area. The Council continues to try to argue the benefits of students attending Coleg Y Cymoedd for their A Levels and yet simultaneously bases its projections for attendance at the BCS Sixth Form on the presumption that every A Level pupil in the Pontypridd area would travel to Beddau to study.

v) In a meeting at Hawthorn HS on November 12th, it was confirmed by RCT that the £10 million in the proposal which is earmarked for the Bryncelynog site would at least partially be used to finance general improvements to poor building quality at BCS and not specifically to develop a 'Sixth Form Centre of Excellence'. This questions the accuracy of the consultation document and the commitment to our students if they were to attend a post-16 centre at BCS.

REASON 2

The consultation document makes a number of statements about standards up to and including Summer 2017 results at Hawthorn High School, Pontypridd High School and the Pontypridd Sixth Form which are inaccurate and misleading. It appears that the intention of the document is to create an impression that standards are higher elsewhere and that, on that basis, a move to a Sixth Form Centre in another part of RCT should be welcomed by parents/carers and their children in our own community. This is evidenced by the following statements:

Firstly from Page 12 of the Consultation Document with regards to GCSE outcomes:

'The educational performance and pupil attendance of the 2 LA maintained secondary schools at Key Stage 4 is consistently in the third and fourth quartiles when compared to similar schools in Wales'

The two LA maintained schools referred to in this quote are Hawthorn High and Pontypridd High. Both schools feel extremely disappointed by this factually inaccurate analysis of performance and would point out that the Welsh Assembly has categorized them as being 'Yellow' schools for each of the last three academic years. The Welsh Assembly defines Yellow schools as being those that **"Have secured good levels of learner outcomes in key performance indicators."** WAG National School Categorisation Guide p19

It is important to understand the meaning of 'quartiles' and how such a reference is a negative rather than a positive statement. All secondary schools in Wales are divided into groups by the Welsh Government (WG) depending on the number of children in the school who are in receipt of free school meals. This is averaged out over a 3 year period to give a single figure. As a result, with 24.5% of our pupils currently being entitled to claim free school meals, HHS is in a group of Schools with a FSM entitlement of 20-30%). These are the groups in which comparisons are made of 'similar' schools' ('similar' does not necessarily mean local as they could be located anywhere in Wales). In effect scores are given to schools on the basis of whether their performance in a particular category places them in the top 25% of similar schools in Wales (quartile 1) down to performance in the bottom 25% (quartile 4).

BCS is placed in a group of schools with 10-15% FSM entitlement. **To that extent, by the**

Welsh Assembly’s own process, BCS is clearly not defined as being a ‘similar’ school to Hawthorn High and as such you should not compare outcomes between these two schools directly.

The following table shows GCSE outcomes at HHS for the previous three years in terms of whether performance was in either quartile 1, 2, 3 or 4:

Hawthorn High School

Welsh Assembly Indicator	2015	2016	2017
At least 5 GCSEs inc. Eng and Maths	3	1	2
At least 5 GCSEs A* - C	1	1	1
At least 5 GCSEs A* - G	3	1	3
Best 8 or 9 GCSE results	1	1	2
Best English GCSE A* to C	3	2	4
Best Maths or Numeracy GCSE A* to C	3	2	1
Numeracy GCSE A*-C			1
Maths GCSE A*- C			1
Science GCSE A* to C	3	3	1
Welsh Bacc Skills qualification			1

You will note that during the three years identified less than 34% of indicators have been in the third or fourth quartile for Hawthorn High School. **To draw the conclusion that HHS is ‘consistently in the 3rd or 4th quartile’ is therefore inaccurate and very misleading.** It would be more accurate to state the positive view that more than 66% of the time Hawthorn High has been in quartiles 1 and 2. It is very regrettable that the council has chosen to portray relative performance between schools in this fashion.

There are a number of negative references made in the consultation document to A Level standards at HHS and the Pontypridd Sixth Form.

The following is taken from information provided to Council members prior to presenting the proposals for reorganization in the Pontypridd area:

‘The educational performance of the sixth forms has been mixed with two of the secondary schools (Pontypridd High and Hawthorn High) consistently being amongst the worst performing schools in respect of A Level performance’

‘The educational achievement and success at Key Stage 5 (in respect of the A Level results) of Hawthorn and Pontypridd High Schools are consistently below the Welsh averages and are amongst the lowest in RCT and Wales.’

These statements are inaccurate and misleading because they do not reflect actual outcomes at A Level when measured and compared against different performance indicators. These performance indicators are as follows:

*Green = above RCT average performance

		L3	AWPS	3 A*/A	3 A*/C
2014/15	Pontypridd High	95.2	856	3.2	68.3
	Hawthorn High	98.2	773	1.8	59.6
	RCT lowest			0	27.0
	RCT average	96.9	730	2.9	57.5
	Wales average	96.9	799	7.9	67.5
2015/16	Pontypridd High	100	928	5.9	64.7
	Hawthorn High	97.6	772	0	61.9
	RCT lowest			0	40.2
	RCT average	97.0	765	4.0	65.2
	Wales average	98.0	823	6.7	70.6
2016/17	Pontypridd High	100	820	5.6	42.6
	Hawthorn High	100	739	2.1	41.7
	RCT lowest			0	16.3
	RCT average	96.3	678	5.5	45.1
	Wales average	97.1	731	10.5	54.7

The comparisons being drawn are also inappropriate in that the Welsh Average is being used as a 'like for like' comparison to compare performance between HHS, PHS and BCS. This is unfair as the Welsh average entitlement of a school's population to free school meals stands at 16.5%. BCS's entitlement is 14.5%, PHS is 19.5% and HHS is 24.5%. **Clearly it is unfair and inappropriate to suggest that the expectation for pupils to achieve Welsh average performance or better should be the same in all three schools.**

Thorough, impartial and accurate analysis of this data reveals that the term 'consistent' and 'below' are totally inappropriate, very negative and not a true representation of the actual outcomes within the Pontypridd Sixth Form; as the chart reveals there are very similar outcomes at BCS and the Pontypridd Sixth Form between 2015 and 2017 even when we do not consider that the latter has a significantly less affluent catchment area as defined by the Welsh Assembly.

The following is taken from Page 29 of the Consultation Document:

'The educational achievement and success at Key Stage 5 (in relation to the Average Wider Points Score) in the County Borough is well below Welsh averages and among the lowest in Wales.'

Each A Level grade that a student achieves is equal to a certain number of points (for example, an A grade at A Level is worth 270 points, a B grade 240 points and so on). All of these grades/points are added up to give a total points score. The Average Wider Points

Score is made up of the total points achieved by each student which is then divided by the number of A Level students in the year group. Points are awarded for A/S results in Year 12 and for the WBQ and Skills Challenge Certificate. They are one of the key factors in meeting the requirements of a successful University or College application.

Whilst this statement makes no specific reference to HHS and the Pontypridd Sixth Form, it again implies that outcomes are not acceptable. More thorough and detailed analysis would show that:

- HHS, PHS and therefore the Pontypridd Sixth Form exceed both the Wales and RCT averages every year, on most occasions by more than 100 points which is very significant. This reflects the fact that each student is given quality learning experiences and a range of support and guidance which enables them to study different courses and complete them successfully.

The third aspect in relation to statements about standards relates to further information provided for the Council members prior to presenting the proposals for reorganisation in the Pontypridd area:

'However, Bryncelynnoq Comprehensive School is an improving school and has consistently performed above the Welsh average for A level provision.'

Despite recent year on year improvements in outcomes at HHS in many important indicators, there is no reference to HHS being an 'improved school' which again creates the impression that an unfair comparison is being made, justified by an inaccurate analysis and interpretation of data.

Finally, in relation to standards there is no reference at all to outcomes at Coleg Y Cymoedd (CyC) despite the fact that this institution is proposed to be an option for HHS students as a 'Sixth Form Centre of Excellence'. This is a concern because:

- The A Level provision at CyC has been in place since it was built as part of a £45million investment 8 years ago. It is intended to be a minimum of 350 students which is only 3% of the total student roll at CyC.
- Cardinal Newman Sixth Form was based at CyC for 5 years until 2015; they withdrew at that time over concerns about the quality of A Level provision.
- The consultation document contains no information on A Level standards at CyC. Despite requests at the meetings at both HHS and PHS with LA Officers on November 12th for an analysis of the previous four years' data re. A Level performance at CyC the Council were unable to present any information on outcomes which is interesting given they have committed our students to going there should this proposal be accepted.
- In the meetings on November 12th LA Officers referred to excellent results at CyC in 2018. This is apparently a reference to 98% 'pass rate' reported through a press release on exam results day in August 2018. It appears that they achieved 98% Level 3 threshold (those passing two A Levels). *The A Level results table on page 16 allows parents to consider how this compares to similar Level 3 pass rates in the Pontypridd Sixth Form for the previous four years.* The fact remains these proposals were

confirmed prior to the 2018 results being available and commentary in the document relates to data up to 2017.

- In 2017 an Estyn report on provision at CyC concluded that overall standards were **ADEQUATE**. This was because the majority of learning areas have success rates significantly below national averages. In addition, standards on academic programmes, including AS and A levels, were deemed by ESTYN to be “**well below national comparators**”. This is not referred to in the consultation document even though standards in HHS were referred to as ‘below average’ on more than one occasion.
- Estyn made the following recommendations following their inspection of CyC in 2017:
R1 : Improve standards and outcomes achieved by learners on AS and A level courses
R4 : Make sure that teaching strategies engage and challenge all learners
R5 : Make sure that all teachers support learners to develop their literacy, numeracy and digital literacy skills
- In the meeting on November 12th, LA Officers were asked what action they had led in response to this inspection report. They confirmed that they have no significant role to play in managing and leading provision, other than some positions on the board, at CyC and as such the LA had not responded in any way to the Estyn recommendations. This is a concern because it shows there is no commitment from the Local Authority to any HHS students who could attend CyC if this Sixth Form proposal to be a Centre of Excellence is accepted.

REASON 3

The third reason why we object to the proposed removal of a Sixth Form from Hawthorn High is related to the inaccurate and misleading information provided in the consultation document in relation to the educational and financial viability of our present sixth form.

In relation to viability, Page 12 of the Consultation document states:

‘Hawthorn and Pontypridd High Schools combined have small sixth forms of less than 250 pupils (the national recommended minimum number for an efficient and effective sixth form), and with relatively poor educational performance.’

And on Page 14 of the consultation document:

‘A viable sixth form, both educationally and financially should, ideally, have at least 250 students; In January 2018 (source : PLASC return), Hawthorn High had 114 sixth form students attending and Pontypridd High 131, just 245 in total between the two schools. Bryncelynnoq Comprehensive had 147 sixth form students at the same point in time.’

It is recognised that both PHS and HHS are in a budget deficit situation and that BCS is presently in a surplus situation. However, we question these statements because:

- It is unclear where a figure of 250 for a viable Sixth Form has been taken from.

- Can it be assumed that BCS with only 147 in its Sixth Form is by the LA's own figures also unviable?
- The Pontypridd Sixth Form with 245 students is presently more viable and a good basis for a £10 million investment.

Number of A Level classes with 5 students or less

	2016	2017	2018
RCT Calculation (as presented in proposal)	28	25	n/a
Pontypridd Sixth Form actual number	17	8	3

The table above illustrates the advantages of working in partnership and how the Pontypridd Sixth Form of 245 students is more financially viable than the council's figures seem to be intended to suggest. The number of classes with less than 5 students has been reduced significantly in recent years by increasingly sharing provision between ourselves and PHS. RCT calculations presented in the consultation document only consider each school's provision in isolation and take no account of students from both schools in each class. As a result, they seem to have chosen to present figures which completely ignore the efficiencies which have been achieved for many years by working in partnership. This creates an unfairly negative picture of the Pontypridd Sixth Form.

Average A Level classes size

	2016	2017	2018
RCT Calculation (as presented in proposal)	5	5	n/a
Pontypridd Sixth Form actual number	11	14	14

The table above also shows the average A level class size which has grown over the three years, again as a result of sharing provision. RCT calculations only consider each school and take no account of students from both schools in each class.

And on page 14 of the consultation document:

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

Proposed Sixth Form Numbers

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

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

The table above shows the planned Sixth Form numbers should this proposal be accepted. We question the strategic value of this statement and its claim that significant numbers of students (110) from HHS and PHS will attend a sixth form at BCS because:

- Previous attempts at partnership workings with BCS have not materialised because of the additional travel time for students (especially those in the northerly parts of PHS' catchment).
- In a survey of all PHS students only 5 expressed any interest in attending a Sixth form at BCS.
- Experience of sixth form reorganisation in the Rhondda suggests that significant numbers of students do not transfer to another school for post-16, preferring instead to attend a college environment, an option already questioned in this document. If similar choices are made by Pontypridd students (as they are being encouraged to do in the Council's proposals) the projected numbers at BCS' 'Centre of Excellence' in 2022 will be nothing like the Council's projections.
- The LA also accept that should this proposal be accepted it is likely students will move elsewhere over the next 3 to 4 years to the extent that alternative post-16 destinations will already have been established should the new Centre of Excellence at BCS open in 2022
- For these reasons it is highly unlikely that the proposed figure of 388 Sixth Form students at BCS in January of 2023 will be reached through additional students from the Pontypridd Sixth Form.

REASON 4

The fourth reason is related to the equity of provision that our students will have access to if proposal 1 regarding the Sixth Form is accepted in its present format. Within Hawthorn High and the Pontypridd Sixth Form we are committed to:

- Giving learners from deprived backgrounds access to the highest quality learning and teaching so that the individual's learning pathway meets their needs and aspirations

- Providing the support and guidance to each student to ensure a seamless progression and transition from school to school and from school to further and higher education

We are very pleased that standards achieved by those students who are entitled to FSM have improved at GCSE level each year and as such the overall number who are and progressing into the Pontypridd Sixth Form is also increasing.

Our aims support Welsh Government priorities and the present proposal for removing Sixth Forms from PHS and other Pontypridd schools questions how this can be achieved in the future. Such priorities are outlined in two government reports:

1. ‘Prosperity for All – A National Strategy’ (2017) sets out a long-term aim to make Wales healthy and active, prosperous and secure, ambitious and learning, and united and connected. It aims to do this by:

- supporting young people to make the most of their potential
- building ambition and encouraging learning for life
- equipping everyone with the right skills for a changing world.

2. Education in Wales – Our national Mission (2017-2021) has two related objectives:

Enabling objective 1: Developing a high-quality education profession

To continue the 21st Century Schools and Education Capital Programme in order to deliver learning environments that meet the needs of all learners

Enabling objective 3: Strong and inclusive schools committed to excellence, equity and well-being

All learners must be supported to be emotionally and physically ready to learn in a safe and supportive environment. Equity requires that we ensure that the system, at school, local and national level takes account of and responds to the unique challenges that present themselves to individuals or groups of learners.

The proposal to remove the Sixth Form from Pontypridd does not fit with the priorities of the Welsh government as it reduces choice, builds barriers to extended learning options and therefore reduces the likelihood of a student progressing into a school based Sixth Form within the Pontypridd area. This becomes more relevant when consideration is given for the increasing number of children entitled to FSM at Hawthorn High.

	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11
eFSM %	27.4%	30.6%	22.8%	23.6%	18.9%

This is a concern because the younger year groups will be those most directly affected by the proposed changes in Sixth Form from September 2022.

Our success in improving outcomes for such learners has been based on familiarity, specific roles for staff, family engagement and raising aspirations. The proposal for changes in Sixth

Form will not support this well established way of working and to that extent it questions whether the key government priorities can also be met.

PROPOSAL 2

Proposal 2: Create a new, 3-16 'all through' school for Hawthorn High				
Agree with this proposal	YES		NO	NOT SURE

We accept this proposal but recognise the views of those connected with Heol Y Celyn Primary School in particular who may have to experience a significant change should this proposal be implemented. We also only accept this proposal on the basis that suitable arrangements can be made for our post 16 students in the Pontypridd locality which are under the influence of RCT. **In agreeing with this proposal we do not by implication accept proposal 1 in its current incarnation.**

We understand that this proposal is very much in line with the strategic change across RCT and that the timescale for implementation sits alongside significant curriculum change and learning experiences planned across in Wales in 2022. The Governing Body has reservations that the level of investment proposed (£12 million) may not be sufficient to develop all aspects of the Hawthorn site to '21st Century' standards and note the level of investment recently made in other secondary school sites to this end (Y Pant - £23 million and Tonyrefail upwards of £40 million). To this extent we would accept this proposal whilst also recognising that all planning and delivery will be the responsibility of a new School in 2022. It will be for them to meet the demands of such a change as outlined in the following statements:

On Page 11 of the consultation document:

'A single workforce in a school reflecting on and jointly developing and designing what works for five-year olds, teenagers and young adults is capable of a wider range of points of reference and a wider range of practices that a smaller group of teachers with a one-phase window to consider. These changes to what pupils learn and how they learn it are easier to manage in an all-through environment than in a single-phase school or group of schools.'

And on Page 16 of the consultation document:

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

Transition work with all cluster schools is essential so that all children have similar experiences and access to quality resources in a 21st Century learning environment. To

achieve this the LA must ensure sufficient funding exists that enables each child to make use of such resources at the new school from September 2022.

PROPOSAL 5

Proposal 5 : Amendment of the catchment area Hawthorn High School				
Agree with this proposal	YES	NO	NOT SURE	

We accept this proposal but recognise the views of those connected with the primary schools and parents/carers involved who may have to experience a significant change should this be the case.

On Page 36 in the consultation document:

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

-include the catchment area of Gwauncelyn Primary School, Tonteg (which is currently in the catchment area of Bryncelynoq Comprehensive).

- exclude the Graig area of Pontypridd that is in the catchment area of Maesycoed Primary School.

- exclude the catchment area of Coedpenmaen Primary School, which will be included in the catchment area of the new Pontypridd 11-16 school....With surplus places in both new 3-16 schools for the foreseeable future, the choice of both schools will remain for pupils and parents.

We understand that this proposal is very much in line with the strategic change across RCT. The Maesycoed proposal is also a solution to a longer-term issue with the catchment boundaries between ourselves and PHS and primary liaison with the school has always been problematic for Hawthorn High.

We regret the reorganisation of Coedpenmaen Primary into the catchment for Pontypridd High School as relationships between Coedpenmaen and HHS have been strong historically. We recognise that surplus places are likely to provide a choice for parents for the foreseeable future and that transport issues to the two new schools may still need to be based on historical precedents.

We would be very pleased to welcome pupils from Gwauncelyn Primary school into the Hawthorn catchment but recognise that this proposal is, in our opinion, also likely to leave a choice of secondary schools for parents in the Tonteg area because, as we have made clear elsewhere in this proposal, we do not accept that the Council's Sixth Form numbers estimates beyond 2022 for BCS are accurate. If this is indeed the case, there are likely to be surplus places in Bryncelynog should the £10 million pound investment go ahead. This is a concern for projected numbers at the new Hawthorn 3-16 school should Coedpenmaen Primary become part of the catchment for the new Pontypridd school.

With the aforementioned reservations, we would accept this proposal and can give our full assurance to the transition process that will allow all children to be successful at Hawthorn High from 2020 in a new school from September, 2022.

Other considerations in relation to Proposals 2 and 5

We welcome the commitment to improved road safety measures where appropriate to any implementation of these proposals. This was made clear by the statement below:

On Page 9 of the consultation document:

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

LA Officers on November 12th acknowledged the cost of ensuring such measures are put in place and confirmed that the funding to undertake such work **will not be taken from the 21st Century schools funding already outlined as a commitment to our school.**

Conclusions

Hawthorn High School does not accept Proposal 1 to remove the Sixth Form provision because the two alternatives given in the consultation document are not acceptable for different reasons. These include:

- The tone through much of the consultation document appears to question standards achieved by HHS, PHS and the Pontypridd Sixth Form. Unfair and statistically inaccurate comparisons are made in the consultation document about standards and outcomes between Hawthorn High School, Pontypridd High School, the Pontypridd Sixth Form and other schools.
- Performance data at both GCSE and A Level used does not justify the proposals. In fact outcomes alongside other schools are mostly as expected and to suggest one school is improving is as statistically sound as reporting that standards at HHS and PHS are amongst the worst in Wales.
- According to the consultation document, this is a plan for schools in Pontypridd and geographically a Centre of Excellence at BCS will not serve the majority of students from Pontypridd. Nor will such a distant provision encourage them to be aspirational about their own futures by furthering their studies at A Level.
- Evidence already shows that students are highly unlikely to take up the option of a Sixth Form Centre at BCS. Strategically this must question the allocation of £10million of funding and the fact that such funding will not be accessed by our students.
- It has been confirmed that the aforementioned funding for BCS will be used in a more general way to address the state of school buildings. Such a statement is at odds with the commentary in the document and the spirit of a 'Centre of Excellence' for post-16 students.
- The Pontypridd Sixth Form at present is a more viable solution through its partnership working. This is a foundation for further investment.
- It is not clear what pastoral, support and transition arrangements would be available through Sixth Form Centres of Excellence. This is important to all students and in particular the most vulnerable for whom a safe transition into post-16 in familiar surroundings and where staff know each individual and their family well.
- The Estyn report of 2017 would suggest that CyC is no better placed than the present Pontypridd Sixth Form partnership to become a Centre of Excellence.
- Cardinal Newman has already removed its 6th Form provision from CyC due to concerns about standards. The college's level of accountability to RCT is also a concern.

Hawthorn High School accepts Proposal 2 to become a 3-16 'all through' school

Hawthorn High School accepts Proposal 5 to amend catchment areas as outlined in the consultation document.

Further questions...?

- What is the justification for moving all Sixth Form provision out of the town area of Pontypridd? This is not clear from the document or from responses given in meetings with LA Officers.
- Should the £10million earmarked for BCS actually be used to develop a Sixth Form provision within the Pontypridd area, at a site appropriate to both PHS and HHS ?
- In what ways can a Centre of Excellence at Coleg Y Cymoedd be created when the LA has no significant input into how that is created, monitored or measured?
- How will the LA recognise the opinions of the students who firmly want a sixth form provision within the town of Pontypridd ?

And thoughts....

- Pontypridd is a university town and should be offering a vibrant Sixth Form provision. This is as much about standards as it is a matter of geography, fairness and an equitable location of a Sixth Form provision for children who grow up and live in Pontypridd.
- Within this proposal there needs to be new consideration for an appropriate and suitable location in Pontypridd using 21st Century funding to deliver post-16 provision which can be built around the 3-16 model and which is delivered by staff who are often known to students and who have A Level teaching experience.
- Such a Sixth Form provision should have a leadership and management structure which is accountable to the LA, meets the aspirations of students and makes use of facilities and future investment planned for this important and well serviced central location within RCT.

What happens next ?

- i) Following the deadline for responses in January 2019 all information will be recorded, reported and discussed.
- ii) A decision will be made by the Council Cabinet in March, 2019. Following this there is a period when objections can be heard.
- iii) If proposals are agreed then the initial stage, most likely in the Autumn of 2020 will be to appoint a temporary governing body for the new school and staff appointments will take place from that time.
- iv) Changes to catchment areas will take effect from September, 2020
- v). **Appendix 5 on page 17** shows a copy of the Consultation response form that needs to be used as part of this process. Please use:
 - information on pages 3 to 12 to answer question 1 on Proposal 1
 - information on pages 12 to 13 to answer question 2 on Proposal 2
 - information on pages 13 to 14 to answer question 3 on Proposal 5

Thank you for your support, it is very much appreciated.

The Consultation Response Pro-forma

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

Completed questionnaires should be returned to:

Director of Education and Inclusion Services

21st Century Schools Team

Ty Trevithick

Abercynon

CF45 4UQ

or email schoolplanning@rctcbc.gov.uk

The Proposals

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

1. Do you agree with proposal 1? YES / NO / NOT SURE

Please let us know the reasons for your choice

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

2. Do you agree with proposal 2? YES / NO / NOT SURE

Please let us know the reasons for your choice

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

3. Do you agree with proposal 5? YES / NO / NOT SURE

Please let us know the reasons for your choice

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4. Please state any alternative views or points which you would like to be taken into account

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5. Please indicate who you are (e.g. parent of a pupil at named school, governor at named school etc.)

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6. Name (optional)

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7. Please provide contact details if you wish to be notified of publication of the consultation report

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Please forward completed questionnaires to the above address no later than Thursday, 31st January 2019

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

Additional Information Sheet

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