

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

22ND JANUARY 2014

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND LIFELONG
LEARNING**

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

REVIEW OF SCHOOL CATCHMENT AREAS

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To advise Members of the requirement to formally review school catchment areas in certain parts of the County Borough.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are recommended to:-

- 2.1 Note the information provided which outlines the need to review certain school catchment areas.
- 2.2 Agree to allow officers to make the necessary amendments to school catchment areas following the required consultation.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Welsh Government's School Admissions Code (Statutory Code 005/2013) places a requirement on local authorities to undertake annual consultation on their admission arrangements for those schools for which they are the admission authority. In Rhondda Cynon Taf, this covers all of our maintained schools, with the exception of voluntary aided (faith) schools.

- 3.2 This consultation must not commence before the beginning of the determination year (1 September), and must be completed by 1 March of that determination year. For the purposes of the proposals in this report, the determination date relates to the academic year September 2013 to August 2014, but the implementation date is for admissions from 1 September 2015.
- 3.3 Persons and organisations that must be consulted each year include all school governing bodies, neighbouring LA's, other admissions authorities (i.e. governing bodies of faith schools), the School Admissions Forum for RCT and where a significant change is being proposed to any individual school, parents of those children likely to be affected.
- 3.4 A change to a school catchment area would be considered under the aforementioned Code to be a significant change to the admission arrangements for that school.
- 3.5 The Council's published school admission policy booklet, 'Starting School' (page 42) indicates that school catchment areas are subject to review. This also corresponds with the statutory duty of the local authority to manage the supply of school places within its area, to ensure that, wherever possible, the supply of such places matches the demand.
- 3.6 Where demand for school places in any school exceeds the number of places the school has available, a review is undertaken to determine whether this demand for places is a sustained one, and likely to continue in future years. This review will also look at whether applications for places at the school are increasing from within the existing catchment area.
- 3.7 If the demand for places is coming from within the existing catchment area, consideration must be given to ensuring that this demand can be met. In many cases, the only option available is to provide an extension to a school, or to increase teaching space by internal remodelling of the existing building. Before capital works are considered however, local authorities must have regard to the guidance contained within the Welsh Government's School Organisation Code (Statutory Code 006/2013), which states (page 10) that 'it should not normally be necessary to provide additional places at schools when there are others of the same type with surplus places within reasonable distance'. The additional demand can be met, where circumstances permit in such cases by amending school catchment areas.

4. CATCHMENT AREAS REQUIRING REVIEW

4.1 Y Pant Comprehensive School

- 4.1.1 Pupil numbers at Y Pant Comprehensive School have been steadily rising in recent years, pupil data for January 2013 shows the school having just 53 surplus places across the seven year groups, which equates to a surplus capacity level of just 4%, well below the Welsh Government's recommended acceptable level of 10%. Our published forecast data for this school indicates that the school will exceed 100% capacity by January 2015. This forecast is considered to be accurate, and can be evidenced by the number of applications received for places in Year 7 for September 2014; at the closing date for applications, 301 applications had been received for the 214 places available.
- 4.1.2 The above figures show that there are 87 more applications for Year 7 compared to places available at this school for the next academic year. Of these 87 applications, 36 live within the current catchment area with the remaining 51 applicants living outside of the current catchment area.
- 4.1.3 Bryncelynog Comprehensive School is located in Beddau, and is just 3.8 miles from Y Pant Comprehensive, with a driving time between the two sites of under 10 minutes. Part of the Y Pant catchment (Llantrisant Old Town for example) is actually nearer to Bryncelynog than it is to Y Pant. Bryncelynog Comprehensive School is projected to have a surplus capacity of 24% (taking into account residential developments planned for that area) by 2018. As detailed in paragraph 3.7 above, the guidance contained within the Welsh Government's School Organisation Code (Statutory Code 006/2013) (page 10), 'it should not normally be necessary to provide additional places at schools when there are others of the same type with surplus places within reasonable distance'.
- 4.1.4 Although considerable improvements and developments are planned for the Y Pant site under the 21st Century Schools initiative, this involves, in the main, the removal of dilapidated mobile and other temporary accommodation, and renovation and refurbishment of the existing buildings. The new building that is being planned to replace the mobiles will have some extra accommodation included (approx 100 places), but this is to cater for housing development that is already under construction in the area, and for which Section 106 planning gain monies have already been received. The school site will eventually have a capacity of 1400 pupils.
- 4.1.5 Furthermore, the Council's 21st Century Schools Fund Strategic Outline Case for the £24.1m capital investment in Y Pant recently received approval from Welsh Government to proceed to the Outline

Business Case stage. In order to progress through the funding stages and be considered for funding approval at Full Business Case stage, the Council has to consult on limiting the pupil capacity of Y Pant and consider realigning the catchment areas to reduce the over-supply of places at other neighbouring local secondary schools.

- 4.1.6 The proposed change to be made to the catchment area of Y Pant Comprehensive will therefore involve part of its catchment area being transferred to the catchment area of Bryncelynnog Comprehensive. This area is the current catchments of two of the associated Primary schools to Y Pant, namely Llantrisant Primary and Penygawsi Primary Schools. The communities that will transfer include Llantrisant Old Town, Cross Inn, Penygawsi and Groesfaen. Any children resident in these catchment areas will be allowed to continue their education at Y Pant after these changes are introduced, in September 2015. In line with previous practice, any younger siblings of children in the aforementioned areas who are attending Y Pant in September 2015 will have their applications for admission considered as if they were still resident within the school's defined catchment area, and this protection will continue until the youngest sibling leaves the school. Details of the proposed new catchment area are attached, at Appendix 1; larger print versions will be displayed at all of the schools detailed in this paragraph.
- 4.1.7 Pupils will be provided with free home to school transport providing they meet the qualifying criteria (distance from home to school, or whether the route is classified as 'dangerous').
- 4.1.8 The change in catchment areas which is proposed, combined with the respective residential developments in each area demonstrate that this strategic approach reduces surplus places at Bryncelynnog Comprehensive whilst at the same time maximises the use of existing buildings. It optimises value for money by utilising existing surplus places, whilst also ensuring that there is adequate provision of accommodation at Y Pant Comprehensive School.

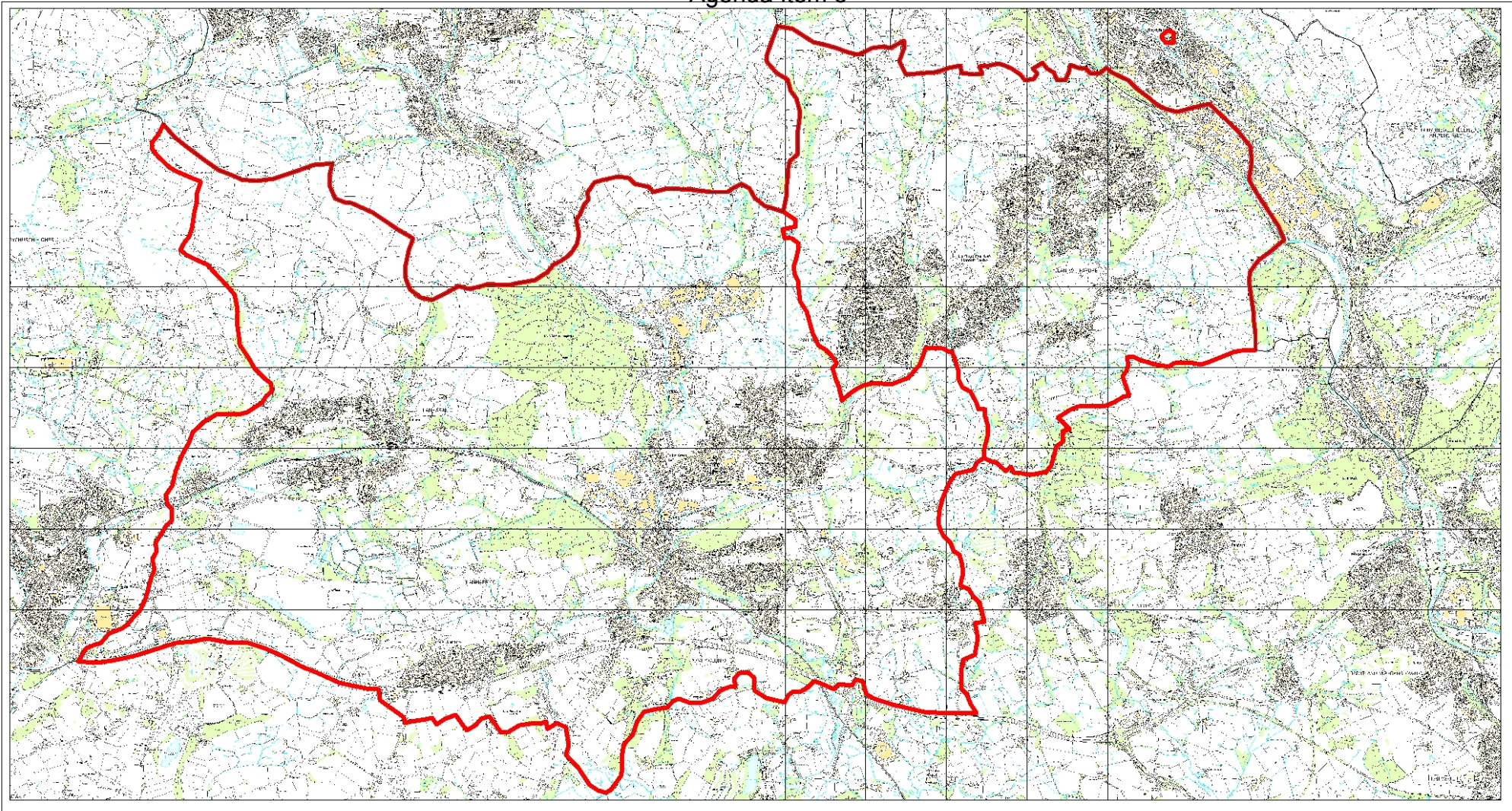
4.2 Dolau Primary School


- 4.2.1 Pupil numbers at this popular dual language school have also been rising in recent years and the school was extended in 2010 to cater for this evidenced demand. However, indications show that the rise in pupil numbers is still continuing; for the Nursery age group for September 2014, 80 applications for places have been received by the closing date, with only 64 places available.
- 4.2.2 Llanharan Primary School is located just one mile from Dolau Primary School, and has surplus capacity available at the present time. Part of the catchment area of Dolau is in fact closer to Llanharan Primary than it is to the designated catchment school.

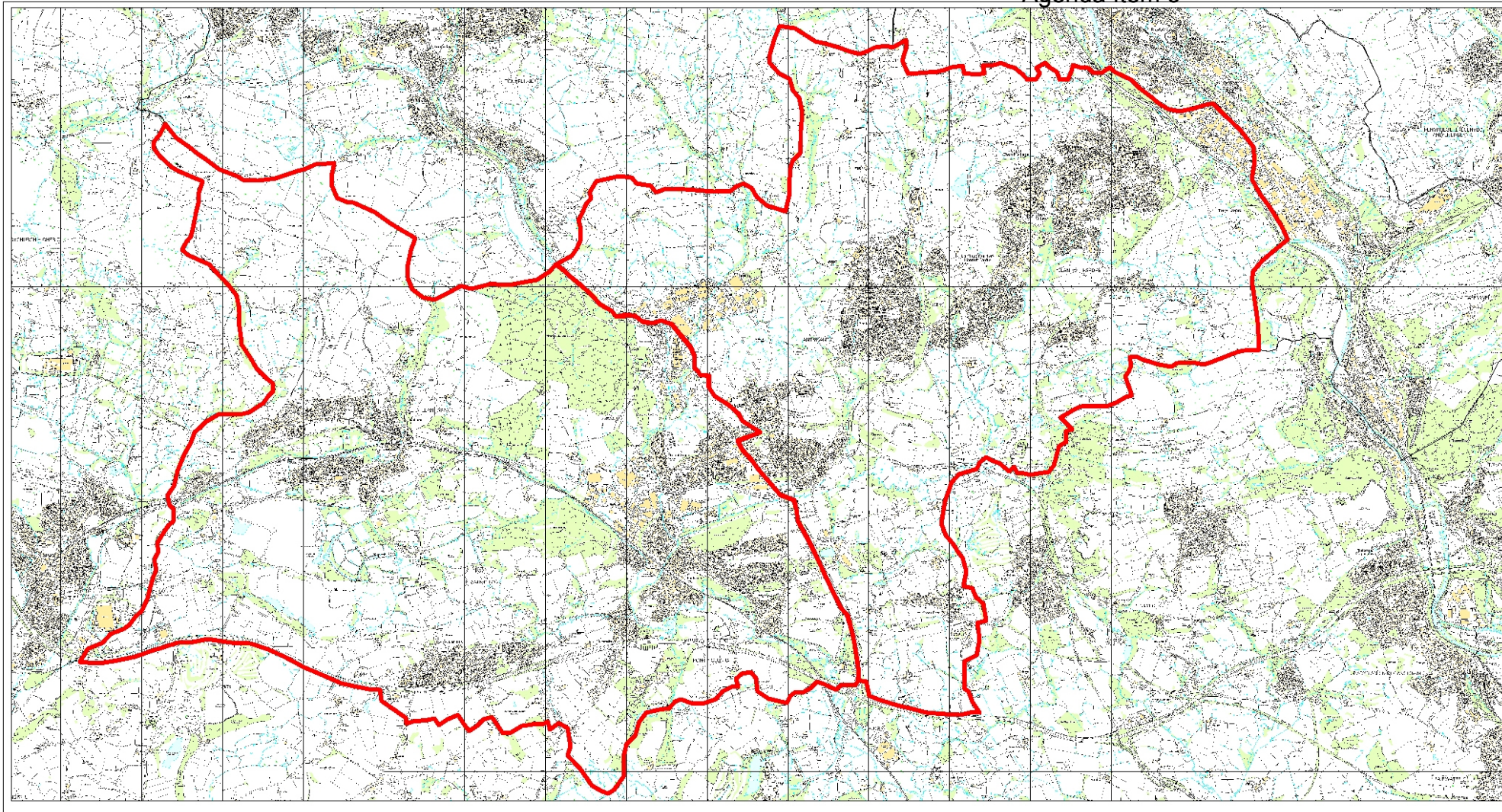
- 4.2.3 There is an anomaly in this area, in that some addresses in the Brynnau Primary School catchment area (Bethlehem View) are also much closer to Llanharan Primary than the designated catchment school. This is a historical issue, as catchment area boundaries were traditionally drawn along electoral ward boundaries; in addition there has been extensive house construction in this area and housing estates now exist in areas where there were no dwellings previously.
- 4.2.4 It is therefore proposed that the catchment area boundaries of all three schools be realigned, as indicated in Appendix 2. This will help to address the oversubscription issue at Dolau, whilst at the same time utilising spare capacity that exists at Llanharan. The 'sibling rule' referred to in paragraph 4.1.6 will also apply in this instance.
- 4.2.5 It must be noted that this change will only apply to the English Medium section of the school; the Welsh Medium section has a larger catchment area which already encompasses the communities of Brynna and Llanharan for those parents who choose this language medium for their children.
- 4.3 Ysgol Gyfun y Cymer
- 4.3.1 Members will be aware that the former Ysgol Gyfun Rhydfelen relocated to the new Garth Olwg Campus in Church Village in 2005. No amendments to the catchment area of the relocated school were undertaken at that time.
- 4.3.2 Part of the Rhondda electoral ward falls into the lower part of the village of Trehafod, approximately 100 houses in total. This area was part of the catchment area of the former Ysgol Gyfun Rhydfelen, even though the catchment Welsh Medium Primary school for these properties was YGG Llwynceilyn.
- 4.3.3 YGG Llwynceilyn is an 'associated' school to Ysgol Gyfun y Cymer, and these addresses in Trehafod are in fact much closer to this school than they are to Ysgol Gyfun Garth Olwg.
- 4.3.4 It is therefore proposed that these addresses in lower Trehafod transfer to the catchment area of Ysgol Gyfun y Cymer for Welsh Medium Secondary education provision. Only two children at present reside in these properties and claim free transport to Garth Olwg; this current transport entitlement will remain in place until these children, and any younger siblings leave school. This will correct an historical anomaly that should have been addressed 8 years ago when Ysgol Gyfun Garth Olwg opened.


5. **SUMMARY**

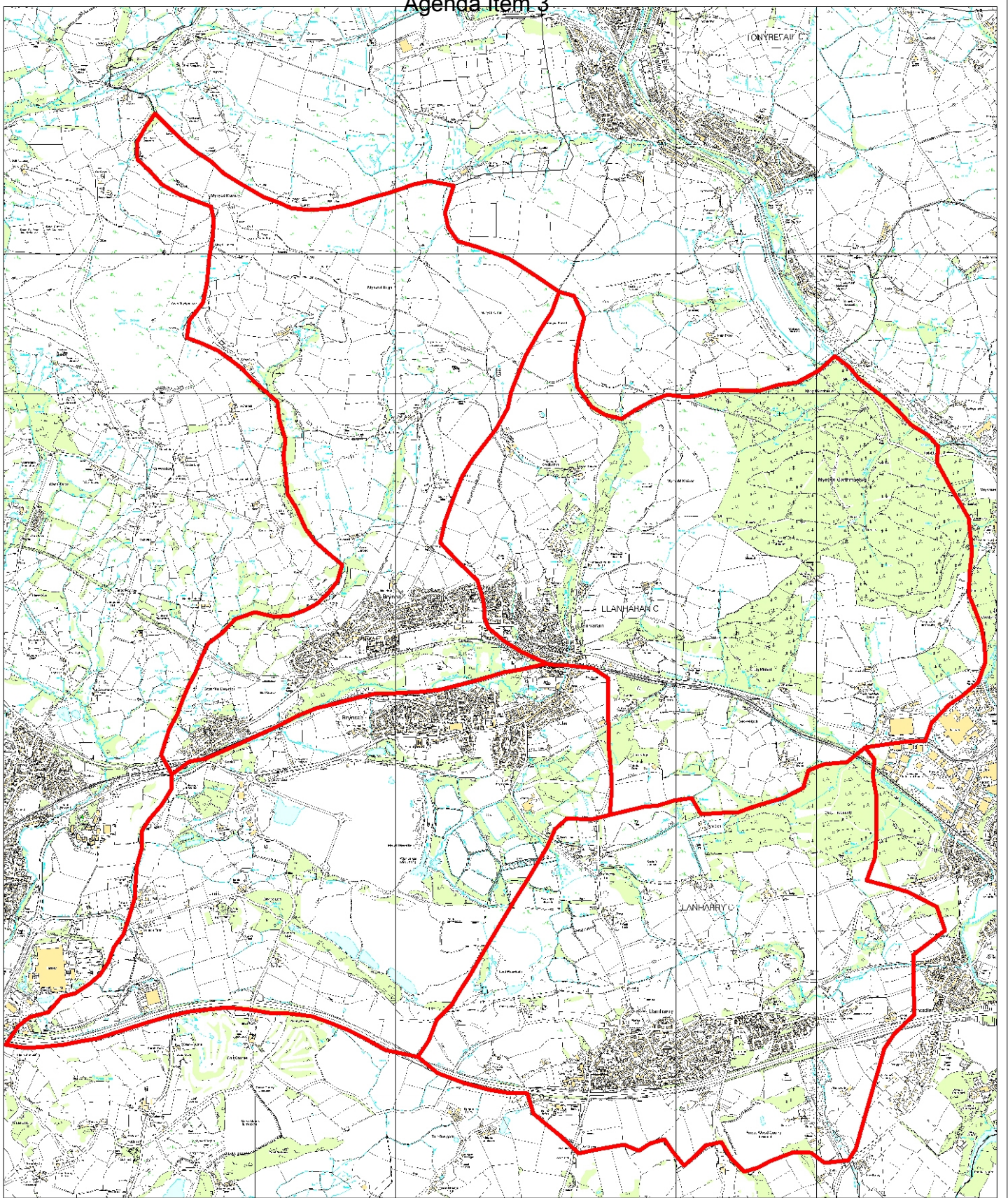
- 5.1 Catchment areas are only taken into account when admission criteria have to be applied to school applications in the case of oversubscription, or to determine a pupil's eligibility for free transport. The law allows parents complete choice when expressing a preference for a school for their child; if the school of their preference has places available in the year group requested, the admission will be agreed, irrespective of whether the pupil lives in the catchment area or not. If a pupil does not reside in the catchment area of a particular school, they will not be eligible for consideration for transport provision to that school.
- 5.2 If a school receives more applications for places than the number available, published admissions criteria are applied to determine who is allocated the places that are available. This is when pupils who reside within a school's designated catchment area are given priority over those who reside outside the area.
- 5.3 Members are therefore asked to give approval to commence consultation on the proposed changes outlined in this report.




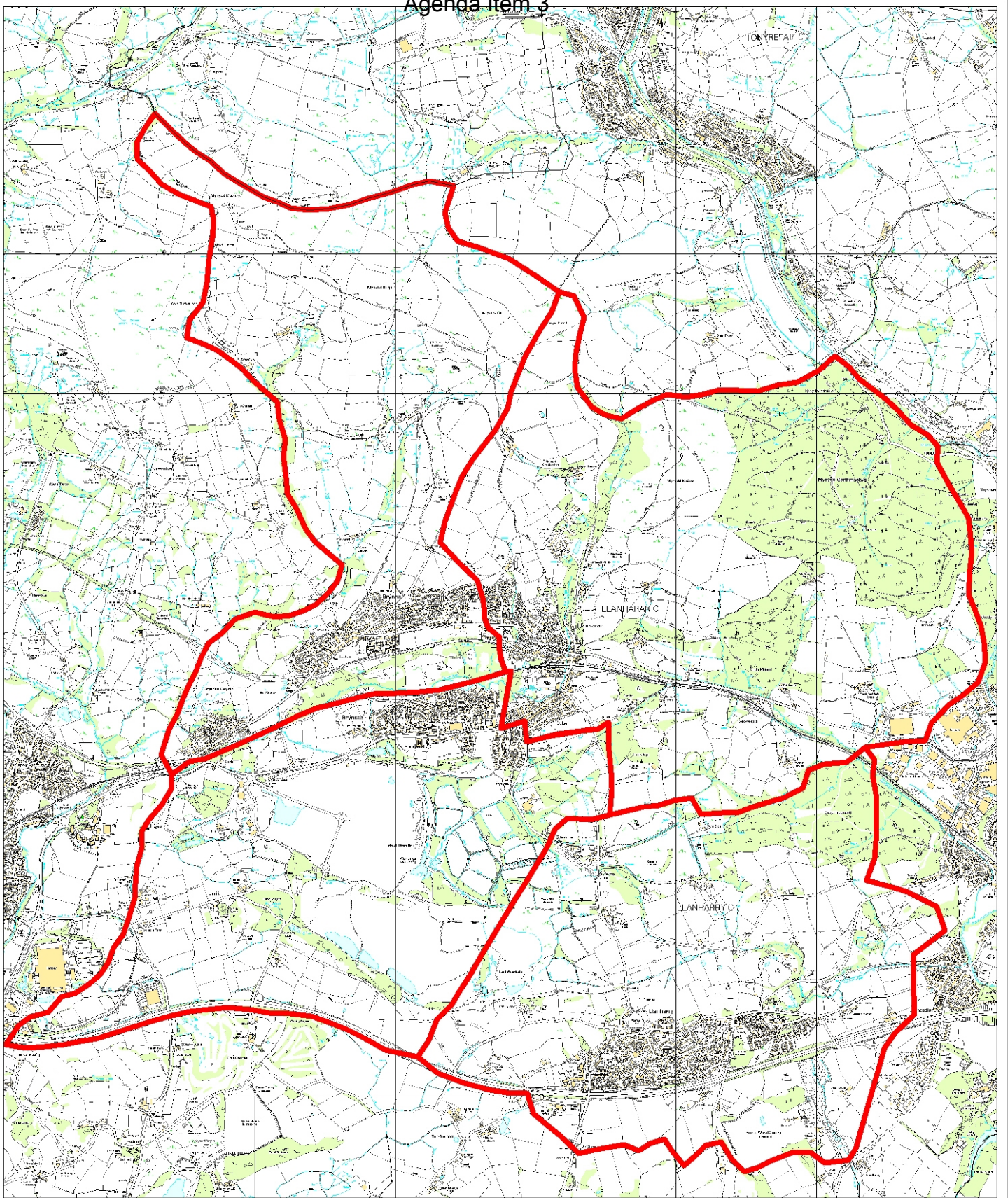
| | | | | |
|---|--|-------------|--------------|---|
|  | Drawing Title Y Pant Existing Catchment | Date | Scale | Location e: 000000, n: 000000 |
| | Reproduced from Ordnance Survey with permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationary Office (C) Crown copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown copyright and may lead to prosecution/civil proceedings. LICENCE No LA 100023458. 2006 | | | |
| | Atgynhychwyd o Fapiau'r Ordnance Survey gyda chaniatod Rheolwr Llyfrfa Ei Mawrhydi (C) Hawlfraint y Goron. Y mae atgynhyrchu heb awdurdod yn torri Hawlfraint y Goron a gall arwain at erlyniad neu achosion sifil. RHIF Y TRWYDDED LA 100023458. 2006 | | | |




| | | | | |
|--|---|-------------|--------------|---|
|  <p>STRONG HERITAGE STRONG FUTURE RHONDDA CYNON TAF TRAFADAETH GADARN DYFODOL SICR</p> | <p>Drawing Title</p> <p>Y Pant Altered Catchment</p> | <p>Date</p> | <p>Scale</p> | <p>Location</p> <p>e: 000000, n: 000000</p> |
| | <p>Reproduced from Ordnance Survey with permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationary Office (C) Crown copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown copyright and may lead to prosecution/civil proceedings. LICENCE No LA 100023458. 2006</p> | | | |
| | <p>Atgynhychwyd o Fapiau'r Ordnance Survey gyda chaniatad Rheolwr Llyfrfa Ei Mawrhydi (C) Hawlfraint y Goron. Y mae atgynhychu heb awdurdod yn torri Hawlfraint y Goron a gall arwam at erlyniad neu achosion sifil. RHIF Y TRWYDDED LA 100023458. 2006</p> | | | |



| | | | |
|--|---|---|-------|
|  <p>STRONG HERITAGE STRONG FUTURE RHONDDA CYNON TAF TREFTADAETH GADARN DYFODOL SICR</p> | Drawing Title Dolau/Llanharan Existing Catchment | Date | Scale |
| | Location e: 000000, n: 000000 | (C) Crown copyright All rights reserved LA 100023458. 2006 | |
| | (C) Hawlfraint y Goron. Cedwir pob hawl LA 100023458. 2006 | | |
| | | | |



| | | | |
|---|--|------|-------|
|  <p>STRONG HERITAGE STRONG FUTURE RHONDDA CYNON TAF TREFTADAETH GADARN DYFODOL SICR</p> | Drawing Title Dolau/Llanharan Altered Catchment | Date | Scale |
| | Location e: 000000, n: 000000 | | |
| | (C) Crown copyright All rights reserved LA 100023458. 2006 | | |
| | (C) Hawlfraint y Goron. Cedwir pob hawl LA 100023458. 2006 | | |

