

AGENDA ITEM 2**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL****CABINET****24TH SEPTEMBER 2015****REORGANISING PRIMARY SCHOOLS, SECONDARY SCHOOLS AND SIXTH FORM PROVISION IN THE RHONDDA VALLEYS AND TONYREFAIL****REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND LIFELONG LEARNING**

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1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To advise Members of decisions made by the Welsh Ministers in respect of the statutory proposals to reorganise school provision in the Rhondda and Tonyrefail areas of RCT, following their consideration of the statutory objections received.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are recommended to:-

- 2.1 Note that the Minister for Education and Skills, Huw Lewis AM, has decided that the proposals to reorganise school provision in the Rhondda and Tonyrefail areas do not require the approval of Welsh Ministers, with the exception of the proposal affecting Ferndale Community School.
- 2.2 In light of the Minister's decision outlined above, give final approval to the following proposals:
 - Close Porth County Community School, Llwyncelyn Infants School, Porth Infants School and Porth Junior School and create a new 3–16 Middle school on the site of the current Porth County Community School; Increase the capacity of YGG Llwyncelyn by approximately 100 places, by utilising the site of Llwyncelyn Infants School.

- Close Tonypandy Community College, Penygraig Infants School, Penygraig Junior School, Tonypandy Primary School and Ysgol yr Eos and create a new 3–16 Middle school on the site of the current Tonypandy Community College; Relocate the Primary pupil referral provision at the Tai Centre, Penygraig to the site of the existing Ysgol yr Eos.
- Close Tonyrefail Comprehensive School and Tonyrefail Primary School and create a new 3–19 Middle school on the site of the existing Tonyrefail Comprehensive School; Relocate YGG Tonyrefail to the site of the existing Tonyrefail Primary School.
- Transfer the Learning Support Class at Ysgol yr Eos and the three Learning Support Classes at Porth County Community School to the new 3–16 school at Porth.
- Transfer the Learning Support Class at Tonyrefail Comprehensive School to the new 3–19 school at Tonyrefail.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Members will recall that, at the meeting of Cabinet held on 23rd July 2015, it was noted that, following the publication of appropriate Statutory Notices, a total of 19 formal objections to the proposals outlined overleaf and above had been received.
- 3.2 The proposal to remove the sixth form provision at Ferndale Community School is still subject to determination by the Welsh Ministers and their decision on this particular proposal is awaited.
- 3.3 The new School Organisation Code, which was introduced by Welsh Government under the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 clearly states (at paragraph 5.2) that '*proposals require approval by the Welsh Ministers if a) the proposals affect sixth form education..*'
- 3.4 It was the opinion of this Council that all of the proposals consulted upon and outlined in the four statutory notices involved changes to sixth form provision at the schools in question. In order to ensure compliance with the legislation outlined overleaf, we clearly indicated during the consultation process (and in our published consultation document) that, should objections be received, all four proposals would be forwarded to the Welsh Ministers for final determination.

- 3.5 All objections received were therefore forwarded to the Welsh Ministers for consideration at the conclusion of the statutory notice period, which was on 2nd July 2015. In addition, as advised in the earlier meeting of Cabinet an Objections Report was published in accordance with the relevant legislation on 16th July 2015. A further copy of this Report, which outlines and summarises the objections received and the Council's responses to them is attached, at Appendix A. In addition to this, copies of the actual objections received have been presented to all Cabinet members for their information; they cannot be reproduced in this report as they contain the personal data of the individual objectors.
- 3.6 In a letter to the Director of Education and Lifelong Learning dated 14th August 2015, the Deputy Director of the Schools Management and Effectiveness Division of the Welsh Government outlined the Minister's initial response to the proposals. He advised that, in exercise of his powers under the 2013 Act, the Minister has decided that the proposals to reorganise school provision in the Rhondda Valleys and Tonyrefail do not require the approval of the Welsh Ministers, with the exception of the proposal affecting Ferndale Community School. The Minister will give full consideration to this proposal in due course, before deciding to approve, reject or modify it.
- 3.7 The reasoning behind the Minister's decision to refer three of the four proposals back to the Council for determination was that he did not consider that the four proposals were directly related to each other and therefore were not co-dependent on each other. He took the view that whilst the Council presented the proposals as a package, this did not necessarily mean that the proposal affecting the sixth form provision only at Ferndale could not be considered on its own merits, separately from the other proposals. The full decision of the Minister is contained within the letter attached as Appendix B to this report.
- 3.8 The proposals also involved the changes to certain schools' catchment areas; these did not receive any objections and can therefore be implemented as outlined, in accordance with the relevant legislation (the Welsh Government's School Admissions Code). Confirmation of the catchment area changes, which will take effect from September 2018 was included in the explanatory notes of the statutory notices, which were published on 5th June 2015.

- 3.9 The Equality Impact Assessment (EIA), Appendix C, has been updated to reflect the outcome of the statutory consultation processes and the recent consultation undertaken and decisions made on proposals to amend the Council's Learner Travel Policy. No revisions were necessary to the various Community Impact Assessments or to the Welsh Language Impact Assessment. Copies of the updated EIA, plus the other unaltered Assessments are attached for Members information, as Appendices D-H.
- 3.10 Members should note that an application for permission to apply for judicial review of the Cabinet Decision of 19th May 2015 has been lodged relating to these school proposals. The Director of Legal and Democratic Services will deal with this claim as authorised in the Council's Constitution. Members will be provided with an update as to the current status of the application at the Cabinet meeting.

4. SUMMARY

- 4.1 Elected Members are therefore requested to note the decision of the Minister for Education and Skills to refer these proposals back to the Council for final consideration and to make the appropriate determination of them as outlined in paragraph 2.2 of this Report.



Appendix A

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

OBJECTION REPORT

PROPOSAL: THE REORGANISATION OF PRIMARY SCHOOLS, SECONDARY SCHOOLS AND SIXTH FORM PROVISION IN THE RHONDDA VALLEYS AND TONYREFAIL

1. Purpose of the Objection Report

This report is prepared in accordance with the Welsh Government's School Organisation Code, statutory document 006/2013. Its purpose is to:

- Inform the outcome of the publication of the four statutory notices published for this proposal, which were published on 5th June 2015 for a period of 28 days; and
- Detail all objections received and the local authority's response to them.

2. The Statutory Notices

The four Statutory Notices to progress this proposal, which were published on 5th June 2015 are reproduced below:

Notice 1 – Ferndale

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL
Education Directorate, Ty Trevithick, Abercynon CF45 4UQ

Notice is given in accordance with section 42 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and the School Organisation Code that Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council (RCTCBC), having consulted such persons as required, proposes to make a regulated alteration to Ferndale Community School Excelsior Terrace Maerdy CF43 4AR so that the age range of the pupils it can admit is amended to 11 – 16 years and that the Sixth Form provision be removed.

It is further proposed that the Sixth Form provision previously accommodated at Ferndale Community School shall transfer to Treorchy Comprehensive School, Pencelli, Treorchy CF42 6UL. It is proposed that the Sixth Form provision at Treorchy shall be able to accommodate up to 500 post-16 students.

Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council undertook a period of consultation before deciding to publish this proposal. A consultation report containing a summary

of the issues raised by consultees, the proposer's responses and the views of Estyn is available on the Council's website at www.rctcbc.gov.uk.

It is proposed to implement the proposals on 1st September 2017. The proposed capacity of Ferndale Community School after this proposal is implemented will reduce to 650 pupil places from its current figure of 903. This will be achieved by removing surplus accommodation from the school site and by offering other accommodation for use by local community organisations. From September 2018 the proposed admission number for the school will be 130 for pupils age 11 (Year 7).

Pupils will be provided with transport in accordance with the Council's Transport Policy. At present, the Council provides free transport for pupils who attend their relevant Secondary school if they reside beyond 2 miles walking distance to that school. The relevant school is the catchment school or the nearest school. This distance criterion is also applied to transport provision for post-16 students at present.

Within a period of 28 days of the date on which this proposal is published, that is to say by 2nd July 2015 any person may object to the proposals. Objections should be sent to the Director of Education and Lifelong Learning, School Planning Section, Ty Trevithick, Abercynon, Mountain Ash CF45 4UQ, e-mail schoolplanning@rctednet.net. RCTCBC will publish a summary of any such objections made (and not withdrawn in writing) within the objection period, together with their observations thereon, within the period of 28 days after the end of the objection period.

The local authority will submit the proposal to the Welsh Ministers for approval together with any other proposals that it considers are linked to this proposal.



Signed: _____

Chris Bradshaw
 Director of Education and Lifelong Learning
 For Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council
 Date: 5th June 2015

Explanatory Note of the Proposals

RCTCBC has recently undertaken a comprehensive consultation exercise in respect of the proposed reorganisation of school provision in the Rhondda and Tonyrefail areas of the County Borough, as part of its proposals under the 21st Century Schools Programme. The overall proposals seek to:

- Create two sixth form centres of excellence, based at Treorchy and Tonyrefail;

- Create two new 3-16 schools, in Porth and Tonypany, and one 3-19 school, in Tonyrefail, which will take a radically different approach to education in the areas, by sharing both primary and secondary sector resources;
- Increase the availability of Welsh medium primary provision in Porth and Tonyrefail;
- Improve the learning environment of primary aged pupils with additional learning needs.

The particular proposals in respect of Ferndale Community School are to close its sixth form and transfer the provision to the site of Treorchy Comprehensive School. The sixth form provision at Treorchy will be expanded to be able to cater for up to 500 post-16 students.

To reduce any disruption to learners, the removal of the 6th form will be phased over a two year period. The Year 12 cohort will be removed from September 2017, to allow students to undertake their entire post-16 courses in their new school. The Year 13 students will remain at the school until they conclude their courses in July 2018.

Work will also be undertaken to the Ferndale Community School site, to remove surplus accommodation and upgrade and improve the remaining facilities for the benefit of all pupils who may attend this school in the future. Some accommodation may be made available for use by local community groups and associations. The Council is also proposing to spend approx £8.5 million at Treorchy Comprehensive School, expanding the sixth form facilities and other infrastructure.

From September 2018 for the purposes of secondary education provision (11-16) the catchment areas of the former Aberllechau and Pontygwaith Primary Schools (currently in the Porth Community School catchment area) will be added to the catchment area of Ferndale Community School. This change formed part of the consultation.

The Council is also currently undertaking public consultation in respect of possible changes to its Home to School Transport policy. The consultation proposes the introduction of a charge for the discretionary elements of the Home to School Transport Policy that are over and above the requirements placed upon the Council by the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008. Details of the proposals and how you may give your views on them can be obtained from the Council website www.rctcbc.gov.uk or emailing HTSconsultation@rctcbc.gov.uk

Notice 2 - Porth

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL
Education Directorate, Ty Trevithick, Abercynon CF45 4UQ

Notice is given in accordance with sections 41, 42 and 43 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and the School Organisation Code that Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council (RCTCBC), having consulted such persons as required, propose to:

1. Discontinue the following schools currently maintained by RCTCBC:
 - Porth County Community School, Cemetery Road, Porth, CF39 0BS
 - Porth Junior School, Primrose Terrace, Llwynceilyn, Porth, CF39 9TU
 - Porth Infants School, Mary Street, Porth, CF39 9UH
 - Llwynceilyn Infants School, Heather Way, Llwynceilyn, Porth, CF39 9TL
2. Establish a new English Medium Community Middle School, to be maintained by RCTCBC at Cemetery Rd, Porth etc, on the site of Porth County Community School, for boys and girls aged 3 to 16 years.
3. Make a regulated alteration to YGG Llwynceilyn, Heather Way, Llwynceilyn, Porth CF39 9TL so that its capacity is increased by 100 pupil places. The current number on roll at the school is 273. The current capacity of the school is 272 pupil places, it is proposed to increase this to 370. Some of these additional places may be utilised to increase Nursery provision at the school.

The admission number at Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Llwynceilyn in the first school year in which the proposal has been implemented will be 46 for pupils age 4. There will be 46 nursery places in the first instance.

Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council undertook a period of consultation before deciding to publish this proposal. A consultation report containing a summary of the issues raised by consultees, the proposer's responses and the views of Estyn is available on the Council's website at www.rctcbc.gov.uk.

It is proposed to implement the proposals on 1st September 2018.

It is proposed that pupils currently attending the four schools listed above should transfer to the new Porth Middle School, on 1st September 2018, subject to parental preference. This school is proposed to be an English Medium Community Middle School. Building adaptations and other modifications will be undertaken prior to this date to ensure the accommodation is suitable for the pupils of the age ranges indicated.

RCTCBC will be the admission authority and there will be no arrangements for pupil banding. The proposed capacity of the Primary Department of the new Middle School shall be 330 pupils, which includes Nursery provision for at least 40 children. The admission number at age 4 to the Reception Class will be 42. The proposed capacity for the Secondary Department shall be 810 pupils and the admission number at age 11 to Year 7 will be 120 so that each secondary year group will make provision for 162 pupils.

Pupils will be provided with transport in accordance with the Council's Transport Policy. At present, the Council provides free transport for pupils who attend their relevant Primary, Infant or Junior School, if they reside beyond 1 ½ miles walking distance to that school; this distance is 2 miles for pupils attending Secondary schools. The relevant school is the catchment school or the nearest school.

Within a period of 28 days of the date on which these proposals were published, that is to say by 2nd July 2015 any person may object to the proposals. Objections should be sent to the Director of Education and Lifelong Learning, School Planning Section, Ty Trevithick, Abercynon, Mountain Ash CF45 4UQ, e-mail schoolplanning@rctednet.net. RCTCBC will publish a summary of any such objections made (and not withdrawn in writing) within the objection period, together with their observations thereon, within the period of 28 days after the end of the objection period.



Signed: _____

Chris Bradshaw
 Director of Education and Lifelong Learning
 For Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council
 Date: 5th June 2015

Explanatory Note of the Proposals

RCTCBC has recently undertaken a comprehensive consultation exercise in respect of the proposed reorganisation of school provision in the Rhondda and Tonyrefail areas of the County Borough, as part of its proposals under the 21st Century Schools Programme. The overall proposals seek to:

- Create two sixth form centres of excellence, based at Treorchy and Tonyrefail;
- Create two new 3-16 schools, in Porth and Tonypany, and one 3-19 school, in Tonyrefail, which will take a radically different approach to education in the areas, by sharing both primary and secondary sector resources;
- Increase the availability of Welsh medium primary provision in Porth and Tonyrefail;
- Improve the learning environment of primary aged pupils with additional learning needs.

The particular proposals in respect of the Porth area are:

- Close Porth County Community School sixth form and transfer the sixth form provision to Treorchy Comprehensive School and a new 3-19 school in Tonyrefail;
- Close Porth County Community School, Llwynceilyn Infants' School, Porth Infants' School, and Porth Junior School and create a new 3-16 middle school on the site of the current Porth County Community School;
- Provide a 1,140 capacity 3-16 School for Porth, for 330 pupils aged 3-11 and 810 pupils aged 11-16. It is proposed that the Sixth Form provision previously

accommodated at Porth County shall transfer to the new proposed Middle School to be created at Tonyrefail, which is the subject of a separate statutory notice.

- Transfer the Learning Support Class at Ysgol Yr Eos, and the three Learning Support Classes at Porth County Community School to the new 3-16 school at Porth, to create specialist provision for the four key stages. The new proposed Community Middle School will provide SEN provision for children with Communication Disorders and Autistic Spectrum Disorders.
- Increase the capacity of Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg, Llwynceilyn by approximately 100 places, utilising the site of the existing Llwynceilyn Infants' School.

To achieve this change the Council is proposing to invest £7.4m to improve the buildings at Porth County to ensure they meet the learning and safeguarding requirements of a 3-16 school. It is proposed that a further £0.4m will be invested to improve the school buildings at the YGG Llwynceilyn site.

From September 2018 for the purposes of secondary education provision (11-16) the catchment areas of the former Aberllechau and Pontygwaith Primary Schools (currently in the Porth Community School catchment area) will be added to the catchment area of the Ferndale Community School. This change formed part of the consultation.

The Council is also currently undertaking public consultation in respect of possible changes to its Home to School Transport policy. The consultation proposes the introduction of a charge for the discretionary elements of the Home to School Transport Policy that are over and above the requirements placed upon the Council by the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008. Details of the proposals and how you may give your views on them can be obtained from the Council website www.rctcbc.gov.uk or emailing HTSconsultation@rctcbc.gov.uk.

Notice 3 – Tonypandy

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Education Directorate, Ty Trevithick, Abercynon CF45 4UQ

Notice is given in accordance with sections 41 and 43 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and the School Organisation Code that Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council (RCTCBC), having consulted such persons as required, propose to:

1. Discontinue the following schools currently maintained by RCTCBC:

- Tonypandy Community College, Llewellyn Street, Penygraig, CF40 1HQ
- Tonypandy Primary School, Primrose Street, Tonypandy, CF40 1BQ
- Penygraig Junior School, Hendrecafn Road, Penygraig, CF40 1LW
- Penygraig Infants School, Hendrecafn Road, Penygraig, CF40 1LJ
- Ysgol yr Eos, Bishop Street, Penygraig, CF40 1PQ

2. Establish a new English Medium Community Middle School, to be maintained by RCTCBC at Llewellyn St, Penygraig, on the site of Tonypany Community College, for boys and girls aged 3 to 16 years. Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council undertook a period of consultation before deciding to publish this proposal. A consultation report containing a summary of the issues raised by consultees, the proposer's responses and the views of Estyn is available on the Council's website at www.rctcbc.gov.uk.

It is proposed to implement the proposals on 1st September 2018.

RCTBC will be the admission authority for the new community school, and the admission arrangements will make no provision for pupil banding.

It is proposed that pupils currently attending the five schools listed above should transfer to the new Tonypany Middle School, on 1st September 2018, subject to parental preference. This school is proposed to be an English Medium Community Middle School. Building adaptations and other modifications will be undertaken prior to this date to ensure the accommodation is suitable for the pupils of the age ranges indicated.

The proposed capacity of the Primary Department of the new Middle School shall be 480 pupils, which includes Nursery provision for at least 60 children. The admission number will be 60 for pupils age 4 (Reception Class). The proposed capacity for the Secondary Department shall be 780 pupils and the admission number will be 96 for pupils age 11 (Year 7) so that the secondary department will in effect be able to accommodate 156 pupils per year group.

Pupils will be provided with transport in accordance with the Council's Transport Policy. At present, the Council provides free transport for pupils who attend their relevant Primary, Infant or Junior School, if they reside beyond 1 ½ miles walking distance to that school; this distance is 2 miles for pupils attending Secondary schools. The relevant school is the catchment school or the nearest school.

Within a period of 28 days after the publication of these proposals, that is to say by 2nd July 2015 any person may object to the proposals. Objections should be sent to the Director of Education and Lifelong Learning, School Planning Section, Ty Trevithick, Abercynon, Mountain Ash CF45 4UQ, e-mail schoolplanning@rctednet.net. RCTCBC will publish a summary of any such objections made (and not withdrawn in writing) within the objection period, together with their observations thereon, within the period of 28 days after the end of the objection period.



Signed: _____
 Chris Bradshaw
 Director of Education and Lifelong Learning
 For Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council
 Date: 5th June 2015

Explanatory Note of the Proposals

RCTCBC has recently undertaken a comprehensive consultation exercise in respect of the proposed reorganisation of school provision in the Rhondda and Tonyrefail areas of the County Borough, as part of its proposals under the 21st Century Schools Programme. The overall proposals seek to:

- Create two sixth form centres of excellence, based at Treorchy and Tonyrefail;
- Create two new 3-16 schools, in Porth and Tonypany, and one 3-19 school, in Tonyrefail, which will take a radically different approach to education in the areas, by sharing both primary and secondary sector resources;
- Increase the availability of Welsh medium primary provision in Porth and Tonyrefail;
- Improve the learning environment of primary aged pupils with additional learning needs.

The effect of the particular proposals in respect of the Tonypany area are:

- Close Tonypany Community College and make sufficient sixth form provision at a new 3-19 school in Tonyrefail;
- Close Tonypany Community College, Penygraig Infants' School, Penygraig Junior School, Tonypany Primary School, Ysgol Yr Eos and create a new 3-16 middle school on the site of the current Tonypany Community College;
- Provide a 1,260 capacity 3-16 School for Tonypany, for 480 pupils aged 3-11 and 780 pupils aged 11-16;
- Transfer the Learning Support Class from Ysgol Yr Eos, and the three Learning Support Classes at Porth County Community School to the new 3-16 school at Porth (which is the subject of a separate statutory notice), to create specialist provision for the four key stages for pupils with Communications Disorders and Autistic Spectrum Disorders;
- Relocate the specialist primary pupil referral unit provision at the Tai Centre to the site of the current Ysgol Yr Eos.
- Transfer the Sixth Form provision previously accommodated at Tonypany Community College to the new proposed Middle School to be created at Tonyrefail, which is the subject of a separate statutory notice.

To achieve this change the Council is proposing to invest £8.6m to improve the buildings at Tonypany to ensure they meet the learning and safeguarding requirements of a 3-16 school.

From September 2018 SEN provision currently provided by Ysgol Yr Eos will be provided by the new 3-16 school to be established on the site of Porth Community School.

From September 2018 for the purposes of secondary education provision (11-16) the part of the catchment area of Williamstown Primary School that is currently in the

Tonyrefail Comprehensive School catchment area will be added to the catchment area of the new 3-16 school on the site of Tonypandy Community College. This change formed part of the consultation.

From September 2018 for the purposes of secondary education provision (11-16) the catchment areas of Gelli and Bodringallt Primary Schools that are currently in the Tonypandy Community College catchment area will be added to the catchment area of Treorchy Comprehensive School. This change formed part of the consultation.

The Council is also currently undertaking public consultation in respect of possible changes to its Home to School Transport policy. The consultation proposes the introduction of a charge for the discretionary elements of the Home to School Transport Policy that are over and above the requirements placed upon the Council by the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008. Details of the proposals and how you may give your views on them can be obtained from the Council website www.rctcbc.gov.uk or emailing HTSconsultation@rctcbc.gov.uk.

Notice 4 – Tonyrefail

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL
Education Directorate, Ty Trevithick, Abercynon CF45 4UQ

Notice is given in accordance with sections 41, 42 and 43 of the School Standards and Organisation Act 2013 and the School Organisation Code that Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council (RCTCBC), having consulted such persons as required, propose to:

1. Discontinue the following schools currently maintained by RCTCBC:
 - Tonyrefail Comprehensive School ,Gilfach Road, Tonyrefail, CF39 8HG
 - Tonyrefail Primary School Martin Crescent, Tonyrefail, CF39 8NT
2. Eestablish a new English Medium Community Middle School, to be maintained by RCTCBC at Gilfach Road, Tonyrefail etc, on the site of Tonyrefail Comprehensive School, for boys and girls aged 3 to 19 years.
3. Make a regulated alteration to Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Tonyrefail by transferring the school to the site currently occupied by Tonyrefail Primary School.

The new Middle School will provide SEN provision for pupils with complex learning difficulties.

RCTCBC undertook a period of consultation before deciding to publish this proposal. A consultation report containing a summary of the issues raised by consultees, the proposer's responses and the views of Estyn is available on the Council's website at www.rctcbc.gov.uk.

It is proposed to implement the proposals on 1st September 2018.

It is proposed that pupils currently attending the two schools listed above should transfer to the new Tonyrefail Middle School, on 1st September 2018, subject to parental preference. This school is proposed to be an English Medium Community Middle School. New school buildings will be provided to ensure that all accommodation is suitable to meet the needs and requirements of pupils of all ages that will attend this school.

RCTBC will be the admission authority for the new school which will make no provision for pupil banding.

The proposed capacity of the Primary Department of the new Middle School shall be 300 pupils, which includes Nursery provision for at least 38 children. The admission number will be 38 at age 4 (Reception Class). The proposed capacity for the Secondary Department for pupils aged 11-16 will be 690 pupils and the admission number will be 100 age 11 (Year 7) so that each year group from 7-11 will accommodate up to 138 pupils. There will be up to 500 places available for post-16 students, the admission number will be 250 age 17 (Year 12).

Pupils will be provided with transport in accordance with the Council's Transport Policy. At present, the Council provides free transport for pupils who attend their relevant Primary, Infant or Junior School, if they reside beyond 1 ½ miles walking distance to that school; this distance is 2 miles for pupils attending Secondary schools. The relevant school is the catchment school or the nearest school.

Within a period of 28 days after the publication of these proposals, that is to say by 2nd July 2015 any person may object to the proposals. Objections should be sent to the Director of Education and Lifelong Learning, School Planning Section, Ty Trevithick, Abercynon, Mountain Ash CF45 4UQ, e-mail schoolplanning@rctednet.net. RCTCBC will publish a summary of any such objections made (and not withdrawn in writing) within the objection period, together with their observations thereon, within the period of 28 days after the end of the objection period.



Signed: _____

Chris Bradshaw
 Director of Education and Lifelong Learning
 For Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council
 Date: 5th June 2015

Explanatory Note of the Proposals

RCTCBC has recently undertaken a comprehensive consultation exercise in respect of the proposed reorganisation of school provision in the Rhondda and Tonyrefail areas of the County Borough, as part of its proposals under the 21st Century Schools Programme. The overall proposals seek to:

- Create two sixth form centres of excellence, based at Treorchy and Tonyrefail;
- Create two new 3-16 schools, in Porth and Tonypandy, and one 3-19 school, in Tonyrefail, which will take a radically different approach to education in the areas, by sharing both primary and secondary sector resources;
- Increase the availability of Welsh medium primary provision in Porth and Tonyrefail;
- Improve the learning environment of primary aged pupils with additional learning needs.

The particular proposals in respect of the Tonyrefail area are:

- Close Tonyrefail Comprehensive School and Tonyrefail Primary School and create a new 3-19 middle school on the site of the current Tonyrefail Comprehensive School;
- Provide a 1,490 capacity 3-19 School for Tonyrefail, for 300 pupils aged 3-11, 690 pupils aged 11-16 and 500 post 16 students. The Sixth Form provision will be sufficient to accommodate demand formerly accommodated at Tonypandy Community College and Porth County Community School, which shall transfer to the new proposed Middle School to be created at Tonyrefail. Proposals relating to these schools are the subject of separate statutory notices. It is proposed that the Sixth Form provision at the new Middle School will be able to accommodate up to 500 post-16 students.
- Transfer the Learning Support Class at Tonyrefail Comprehensive School to the new 3-19 school for Tonyrefail.
- Relocate Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Tonyrefail to the site of the current Tonyrefail Primary School.

To achieve this change the Council is proposing to invest £44.8m to build a new 3-19 school at the Tonyrefail Comprehensive School site, and upgrade the existing Tonyrefail Primary School site to ensure they are 21st Century learning environments.

From September 2018 for the purposes of secondary education provision (11-16) the part of the catchment area of Williamstown Primary School that is currently in the Tonyrefail Comprehensive School catchment area will be added to the catchment area of the new 3-16 school on the site of Tonypandy Community College. This change formed part of the consultation.

The Council is also currently undertaking public consultation in respect of possible changes to its Home to School Transport policy. The consultation proposes the introduction of a charge for the discretionary elements of the Home to School Transport Policy that are over and above the requirements placed upon the Council by the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008. Details of the proposals and how you may give your views on them can be obtained from the Council website www.rctcbc.gov.uk or emailing HTSconsultation@rctcbc.gov.uk.

3. Details of Objections Received

- A total of 19 objections were received by the published closing time and date, namely 5pm on 2nd July 2015. They consisted of 19 letters and e-mails, from:
 - Welsh Liberal Democrats, RCT
 - Plaid Cymru, RCT
 - Save our Rhondda Schools group
 - Assembly Members, South Wales Central (2)
 - Member of school staff
 - Retired headteachers (2)
 - Parents of pupils currently attending schools in the area (3)
 - Grandparents of pupils currently attending schools in the area (2)
 - Parent of child due to start school in the area
 - Local residents (3)
 - School Governor at one of the schools included in the proposal
 - National Union of Teachers, RCT.

4. The Objections and our Responses.

- **3–16/19 schools will not work; you cannot have children of such varying ages accommodated in a single school.**

Our consultation document provided detailed evidence on how this model of provision, known as a 'Middle School' can operate successfully. Information on similar models, in Lampeter, Scotland and the English Academies was provided, together with details of an actual example of this provision in Rhondda Cynon Taf, namely Ysgol Llanhari. The Headteacher of Ysgol Llanhari was present at two of our 'open evening' events, she presented information on how her school operates and answered many questions put to her by attendees.

We also provided attendees details on how a similar provision in RCT, at the Garth Olwg Community Campus (where a Primary and Secondary school share a site, buildings and facilities, together with a public library, day nursery and community learning facility) operates and works successfully. Whilst the two schools at Garth Olwg Campus are independent schools, the play areas of each school are adjacent to each other and the Year 6 class is based in the secondary school, with no concerns expressed by staff, parents or most importantly, the children attending these schools.

- **Safeguarding concerns at 3–16/19 schools; younger children being influenced or even put at risk by being in close contact with teenagers.**

We outlined in our consultation document and reiterated at the open evenings that the safeguarding and wellbeing of children is the highest priority for the local

authority. The Primary age children in a Middle School will be completely segregated from the Secondary age pupils and no unauthorised or unsupervised 'transfer' of pupils between the two sectors will take place; there will be secured doors etc, only accessible by keypads or 'fobs' to prevent free movement by children who are not accompanied by staff. This can be further assisted by recommended 'staggered' start and end times of the school day (e.g. Secondary pupils will arrive and leave at least 30 minutes before the Primary children; lunch and other breaks will also be held at different times). The two age ranges will have separate play areas and outside space and separate entrances and exits to and from the school buildings. Again, an actual example of how this operates successfully at Ysgol Llanhari has been provided.

- **Primary schools not included in the 'Middle School' model will be at a disadvantage. Children are not being treated equally.**

We believe that the key to ensuring that this does not occur is improved transition between all schools 'associated' with the Secondary department of the new school. We will ensure that appropriate measures are put in place to ensure that work is undertaken in this area. We consider that the other partner/associate primary schools will also benefit from the proposal. In Lampeter, where there is a similar arrangement, the independent pilot evaluation has highlighted that the remaining primary schools have sought to strengthen their relationship and transition arrangements with the primary and secondary phase of the 3-19 school, in order that their pupils benefit fully from the future all-through developments and to ensure that they will not be disadvantaged when they join the new school in Year 7.

If all the associated schools in the community work together on an effective transition plan, there is no reason why pupils attending other schools should not receive the same level of transition and support provided to the Primary children attending the Middle School, including use of the school's facilities.

- **No evidence provided to support the 3–16/19 model of education delivery**

Our consultation document gave clear information on a school in Rhondda Cynon Taf that already operates this model; in addition, the Headteacher of the school in question, Ysgol Llanhari, actually attended some of the consultation events held to give her personal views, with evidence, of how this model is working very successfully at her school. We also provided evidence of how this model is working, again successfully in a school in Lampeter and in the school system in both Scotland and England.

- **Attendance rates will fall**

No documented evidence to support this statement has been provided, it is therefore considered to be personal opinion only.

We do however have actual data that contradicts this statement. We have recently undertaken the reorganisation of Secondary schools in Aberdare and the reorganisation of Primary schools in Abercynon; in both examples three existing

schools closed and were replaced by a single new school. Walking distances to the new schools and associated issues such as the potential impact on attendance were raised as objections to these proposals, as they have with the proposals currently being considered. Actual attendance data shows that current attendance levels at both the new Aberdare Community Secondary School and Abercynon Community Primary School are in fact higher than they were at the schools they replaced (Aberdare Girls, Aberdare High and Blaengwawr Comprehensives and Carnetown, Abertaf Primaries and Abercynon Infants).

- **Increased traffic at the Middle Schools will pose a health and safety risk; all three schools included in these proposals have poor access and parking at present.**

In any school closure proposal, traffic management is a concern. Initial traffic assessments have been already undertaken and if these proposals progress, detailed traffic assessments will be undertaken at every site, to assist in preparing possible resolutions to the issues raised. All routes to the schools will be fully assessed using national criteria used by the 'Safe Routes to Schools' initiative and every effort will be made to ensure appropriate improvements, where possible, are implemented.

The initial plans displayed at our open events did give information on proposed highway improvements both on and in the vicinity of all of the school sites. Senior officers from the Council's Highways Division attended all of the open events and provided information and answers to questions wherever possible. The initial plans, presented ideas to improve the access into the three proposed middle schools. These included opportunities to significantly improve the existing pupil drop-off, car parking, access points and the management of vehicles to and from the school sites.

- **The distances to the Middle Schools are too far for young children to walk and involve negotiation of busy main roads and hilly terrain. Taking education provision further away from the communities it serves will be damaging**

We have undertaken checks of the potential distances Primary age children may have to walk (if this is their parents chosen method of travelling to school) to the new Middle School sites. The distances from the outer limits of the primary catchment areas for the schools are as follows:

Porth (residence at Nythbran Terrace, Llwyncelyn) – 1.7 miles by road, 1.49 miles on foot

Tonypandy (residence at Appletree Road, Dinas) – 1.7 miles by road, 1.58 miles on foot

Tonyrefail (residence at Collenna Road, Tonyrefail) – 1 mile by road and on foot.

We do not consider the short distances outlined above to be 'taking education away from villages and communities' as claimed by the objectors.

All walking distances have been calculated using routes deemed to be available following assessment using national criteria published by Road Safety GB. This Council currently provides free transportation to Primary pupils who reside more than 1.5 miles walking distance from school. The above information indicates that only a limited number of addresses in the Tonypanyd catchment may qualify under this distance criterion. The distance **currently** used by RCT for determination of free transport provision for primary children is more generous than that dictated by national legislation, which is 2 miles for primary children. Therefore, if the Council's home to school transport policy was in accordance with the legislative requirements, no child would qualify for free transport provision.

Many of the routes to schools in RCT involve the negotiation of steep hills and hilly terrain; this is an accepted part of life in valley communities. We do not provide transportation in such circumstances as this is not one of the road safety criteria used to assess whether a route is dangerous or not. All routes involved in these proposals will be properly assessed for safety using the aforementioned national criteria and in accordance with the Welsh Government's Learner Travel Measure, consideration of transport provision will be made in respect of any such routes that do not meet the standard to be considered as available or safe under these criteria.

- **Concern at overcrowding on trains taking pupils to Treorchy Comprehensive and other related safety concerns at Ton Pentre station**

It must be noted that this Council does not provide rail transport to Treorchy Comprehensive School as part of its home to school transport provision; in addition, the area of Ton Pentre does not qualify for transport provision in any case as it does not meet the current distance criteria of 2 miles. This mode of travel is therefore the choice and full responsibility of parents and this Council has no input or powers of intervention over it.

- **Concern regarding the proposal to create a 6th Form College at Treorchy with an extra 500 students attending and the impact this will have on local residents, especially car parking**

It has been explained to this objector that this proposal does not involve the creation of a 6th form College; neither will it mean an additional 500 students attending. The existing 6th form, which already accommodates 360 students will be expanded to cater for up to 500. Car parking will also be looked at as part of the proposals for this school.

- **Provision for Primary pupils in Porth will not be in their catchment area**

Catchment areas are also being revised as part of these proposals, this is clearly stated in the consultation document. Large scale maps were displayed at all of the public consultation events depicting the proposed changes also. The response to the question overleaf clearly depicts the relatively short travelling distances these proposed changes will mean for pupils attending the new schools.

- **Closure of Primary schools within a community is not a positive move; communities will be damaged**

Primary education provision will still be delivered within the communities the new proposed Middle schools will serve as already advised. The relatively short distances between the current Primary schools and the new proposed school sites have already been provided.

- **The secondary school sites (at Porth and Tonypandy) are too small to accommodate the number of children proposed to attend the new Middle schools**

We will ensure that the accommodation provided at these schools, for pupils of both Primary and Secondary age is suitable to meet the educational needs of all of the pupils that will attend the school in the future, and will offer sufficient space in accordance with Welsh Government requirements. Our proposals will involve considerable capital expenditure (under the 21st Century Schools initiative) to remodel and refurbish these school sites to ensure their suitability for pupils of an extended age range. This will involve providing additional teaching accommodation that will be specifically designed and built to cater for younger children.

It is also important to note that:

- Porth and Tonypandy secondary schools currently have a high number of surplus places – Porth County had 30.1% (441 places) of surplus capacity as at January 2014, and Tonypandy Community College had 20.4% (207 places) of surplus capacity;
 - These proposals involve the removal of the 6th forms at these schools, which will release accommodation, 222 places in Porth and 185 places in Tonypandy. This information is contained within the consultation document that was widely circulated in October 2014.
- **The plans that were presented at the consultation events were not final versions and did not depict exactly how the new schools will look once complete.**

We made it very clear that the plans we presented at all of the events held were initial drafts of concepts and ideas only at this very early consultation stage. Many of the 'artists impressions' presented as examples of classrooms and other accommodation to be provided were in fact actual examples of similar accommodation already provided at new or refurbished schools in RCT, this was clearly explained.

We stressed to all persons attending these events that our plans at this stage were draft only as this is a consultation stage in respect of proposals that have not yet been agreed; to have presented firm, definite plans at such an early stage of the process would have given the impression that we are pre-empting the decisions of the Welsh Ministers, in addition to have presented finalised plans at this stage would

have incurred considerable expenditure which may be wasted should the proposals be rejected.

This is the approach we have adopted with other recent school reorganisation proposals such as those in Aberdare and Ynysboeth, where the new school buildings are of a high quality but look very different from the initial artist designs the Council originally presented during the first consultation period.

- **Why is a new building being proposed for Tonyrefail, but not for Tonypany or Porth?**

All building works being proposed reflect and take in to account the information and data held by the Council on building condition, sufficiency, suitability and statistical information in respect of pupil numbers.

The school buildings at Porth and Tonypany are in a significantly better standard and condition than those at Tonyrefail. Our plans for Porth and Tonypany involve major remodelling, refurbishment and repair of existing buildings, to ensure that their facilities meet the 21st Century Schools standards and more importantly, that they are suitable and sufficient to cater for an extended age range of pupils. We believe that this can be achieved at both sites with major capital investment that does not involve a complete re-build. This has been the case at Ysgol Llanhari where the former sixth form centre, built in the 1960's of CLASP design, has been converted into a 240 place primary school that meets the 21st Century Schools standards.

With regard to the Tonyrefail site, we are restricted with the amount of remodelling and refurbishment of existing buildings we may undertake by two main factors; firstly, the Lower School building has listed building status which severely constrains the amount of physical alterations we can make to it. Secondly, the Upper School building is a three storey CLASP construction which is in a relatively poor condition overall, and difficult to remodel or refurbish due to the presence of asbestos in its internal structures. The site is the largest of all of the schools under consideration at the current time, making it more favourable and suitable for a major redevelopment such as a new school building.

- **Surplus places will not be removed with these proposals**

Surplus capacity at the Secondary school sites will be removed by the remodelling of the sites (which also could involve demolition of buildings) to accommodate pupils of Primary school age; in addition, closure of the Primary schools will also remove the surplus capacity that exists at those schools presently. The schools will all have sufficient capacity to meet current and future forecasted demand for places from within their catchment areas.

- **All Secondary schools should have 6th forms. Removing them could result in major recruitment difficulties, as the best staff will not want to work in a school without a 6th form. Pupils will have further to travel, could decide to leave education as a result. Creates inequality.**

Our consultation document (pages 14 and 15) clearly outlined what we considered to be the educational benefits to learners in creating larger, more viable 6th form provisions. We clarified and clearly explained all of this at the meetings held at all five comprehensive schools included in these proposals, these meetings involves the staff, governors and members of the School Councils (pupils). We also outlined the educational, practical and financial concerns and difficulties experienced with the current pattern of provision. This included setting out the educational improvements we expect the larger sixth form provisions should achieve, which include a greater range of courses available to learners, larger, viable and stimulating classes and greater financial stability for the 6th form provision, with no 'subsidisation' from the budgets provided for education at Key Stages 3 and 4.

Pupils will receive transport to the 6th form provisions in accordance with our published Learner Travel Policy (this was also made clear at the consultation meetings). We have also clearly advised that changes to our transport policy are being consulted upon at the current time (details are included in the statutory notices).

- **My son will have to change schools for his final A level year only, causing him considerable disruption**

This is not the case. We made it clear in our consultation documentation that, if these proposals are agreed, transitional arrangements will be put in place from September 2017, so that no student will have to transfer schools mid way through their A Level studies.

- **If pupils from Ferndale choose to attend a school in Aberdare instead of Treorchy for post-16 provision, will this threaten the viability of Treorchy Comprehensive?**

Parents and learners are able to exercise their right of choice with regard to post-16 provision and we would actively support them to do this. Treorchy is already a popular and successful school (it is also the largest school by pupil population in RCT), so we do not consider that it will be adversely affected by this issue in any way.

- **A significant minority of pupils will not continue into post 16 provision as it will involve travelling**

As with the comment above, there is no documented evidence to support this statement; this was also not raised as a concern by school pupils in the meetings held with the respective School Councils during the consultation period.

- **The consultation process was flawed. (in respect of persons consulted, lack of advertising/publicity of events held and quality/clarity of documentation produced, including the Consultation Document).**

The consultation was undertaken strictly in accordance with legislation outlined in the School Organisation Code. The consultation document was produced to fully comply with this guidance and met all statutory requirements. All prescribed consultees outlined in the Code were properly consulted and provided with copies of the document, or given details of how it could be accessed. All supplementary documents, including the Community, Equality and Welsh Language Impact Assessments followed the prescribed format recommended in the Code and were produced, and therefore available, from the start of the consultation process.

We do **not** agree with the criticism made by some objectors that the consultation document was difficult to read, or the statement made (by the Save the Rhondda Schools group) that *'it is not unreasonable to assume that in a deprived area such as the Rhondda where education and skills attainment is recognisably low a significant number of people did not have the capacity to fully digest such a document.'* In addition to receiving hard copies of the document (or advice of how to obtain it, including website links), all consultees had full information regarding the various consultation events organised (detailed in the consultation document), where Council officers were available to answer questions in person and to provide any additional information or clarification as required.

The consultation document was available to the wider community via the Council website, as was the questionnaire for any person to forward their views and opinions on the proposals. A series of consultation events were held, at the local secondary schools and at a local leisure centre, all of which were completely accessible and were open to any person who wished to attend. Attendance numbers at each open event were as follows:

- Treorchy Comprehensive School (6th form), 12/1/15 – 36
- Tonyrefail Comprehensive School (6th form), 13/1/15 – 52
- Porth Community School (3–16 proposal), 20/1/15 – 113
- Tonyrefail Comprehensive School (3–19 proposal), 21/1/15 – 35
- Tonypandy Community College (3–16 proposal), 22/1/15 – 240
- Ystrad Sports Centre (all proposals), 18/2/15 – 80

Taking into account the length of the consultation the number of meetings held with pupils, parents, staff, governors and the wider community, the Council has exceeded the expectations of the School Organisation Code. Indeed the Code is quite clear in stating that there is no requirement for the proposer to hold consultation meetings.

- **Council officers were selective in determining which responses were included in the Consultation Report; only the supportive quotes from Estyn, for example were included.**

The School Organisation Code clearly states that the consultation report should contain a **summary** of all of the issues raised by consultees; it does not require individual responses to be actually published or reproduced in full. We also do not provide any personal data on consultation respondents as this would breach data protection law. We consider that the Consultation Report **does** respond to the main issues that arose from the consultation. It should be noted that copies of all actual

objections received will be forwarded to the Welsh Government for consideration in their entirety, as well as being summarised in this Objections Report. The Consultation Report also included 7 appendices in which further information and details were provided, including the **full** responses provided by Estyn in respect of their views of these proposals.

- **The 4 Welsh Medium schools in RCT will be greatly affected by these proposals. Why were they not included?**

This proposal does not involve any changes whatsoever to the structure or organisation of the 4 Welsh Medium Secondary Schools in RCT, which is why they have not been included in our consultation process (although Ysgol Gyfun y Cymer was consulted due to its close proximity to the schools involved). The relatively long distances between the schools makes collaboration and consortium arrangements for Key Stage 4 and post-16 provision difficult and impractical. We do not agree, therefore that these schools will be 'greatly affected', as is being claimed.

- **Why don't you simply create new Primary schools in these areas and leave the Comprehensives as they are?**

Our consultation document clearly outlined our rationale behind these proposals, with evidence as to why we consider the 3–16/19 model of provision to be our preferred method of delivery in these areas. We have given clear information on the work we propose to undertake to all sites to ensure that they have sufficient and suitable accommodation and capacity to cater for children of all age ranges attending that school. No account appears to have been taken of the considerable capital costs of making the alternative provision that has been suggested and neither does it take in to account the fact that there is no building land or surplus site of the size required (to comply with the relevant school building regulations) to construct a large Primary school facility in either Porth or Tonypany.

- **What will the empty school sites and buildings be used for?**

It has been made clear that, as these are proposals only at this stage, no decisions have been taken on this aspect. The future of any schools sites that may subsequently become surplus will be considered in accordance with the agreed Council protocol regarding such matters.

5. Conclusion

As outlined during the consultation process, these proposals involve the removal of 6th form provision from three schools, as well as the closure of others or extension to provision. The School Organisation Code, statutory document 006/2013 clearly states that any proposal affecting 6th form provision requires the approval of the Welsh Ministers. Details of all objections received have therefore been forwarded to the Welsh Ministers, in compliance with the Code and we await their determination of the outcome of our proposals.

Yr Adran Addysg a Sgiliau
Department for Education and Skills



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Appendix B

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

Our Ref: qA1184205

14 August 2015

Dear Chris

PROPOSALS TO REORGANISE SCHOOL PROVISION IN THE RHONDDA VALLEY AND TONYREFAIL

1. On 17 July 2015, Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council (“the local authority”) submitted proposals published under the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 (“the 2013 Act”) to the Welsh Ministers. In accordance with Section 50 of the 2013 Act, the proposal to make a regulated alteration to Ferndale Community School so as to reduce the age range from 11-18 to 11-16 clearly required approval from the Welsh Ministers before it could proceed. In addition, the local authority submitted a number of other proposals to the Welsh Ministers as it considered that they were related proposals. The 2013 Act has not defined the term “related proposals”. However, the Minister considers that proposal A will be considered to be related to proposal B if its implementation or non-implementation would prevent or undermine the implementation of proposal B (“co-dependant”).
2. Huw Lewis AM, Minister for Education and Skills, one of the Welsh Ministers, has considered whether or not certain of the local authority’s proposals to reorganise school provision in the Rhondda Valley and Tonyrefail areas require the approval of Welsh Ministers, on the grounds that they are related to a proposal that requires approval under Section 50 of the 2013 Act.
3. I am directed by the Minister to say that in accordance with the 2013 Act and the School Organisation Code he has considered the information provided by the local authority in connection with their submission. In exercise of his powers under the 2013 Act the Minister has decided that the proposals to reorganise school provision in the Rhondda Valley and Tonyrefail do not require the approval of Welsh Ministers, with the exception of the proposal affecting Ferndale Community School. The

Minister will give full consideration to this proposal in due course, before deciding to approve, reject or modify it.

4. The background to the decision in relation to the remaining proposals, and the Minister's reasons for his decision are contained in the following paragraphs.

Legal provisions

5. The School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 (the 2013 Act) included a new legal framework for school organisation proposals.
6. The 2013 Act created a new process for determining school organisation proposals which receive objections. Previously, all such proposals came to the Welsh Ministers for approval. Under the new system most proposals which receive objections will be decided by the local authority.
7. Section 42 of the 2013 Act gives local authorities in Wales the power to propose a regulated alteration for the introduction or ending of sixth form provision at a community school and with the consent of Welsh Ministers the power to introduce or end sixth form provision at a voluntary school or a foundation school. Section 48 prescribes that any such proposal must be published and consulted upon in accordance with the School Organisation Code.
8. Proposals published under section 48 of the 2013 Act as regulated alterations to introduce or end sixth form provision require the approval of Welsh Ministers under section 50 of the 2013 Act.
9. Section 52 of the 2013 Act provides that related proposals must be submitted to Welsh Ministers and that Ministers will decide whether they are related to the proposals that they must decide as a result of Section 50 of the 2013 Act. If Ministers decide that they are related, then they must consider them as if they required approval under Section 50 of the 2013 Act. The Minister would need to decide that the proposals were in effect co-dependent were he to take the view that his decision was required.

Consideration of whether the proposals are related

10. The Minister understands that the local authority conducted one consultation and considered in doing so, that the proposals to reorganise school provision in the Rhondda Valley and Tonyrefail could be seen as a whole. The proposals have also been set out in a bid for capital funding as a strategic plan. The Minister takes the view that whilst the local authority presented the proposals as a package, this does not necessarily mean that the proposal affecting Ferndale could not be considered on its own merits separately from the other proposals.
11. The effect of the proposals on the Porth and Tonypany secondary schools is that whilst they are not regulated alterations to remove sixth forms, the schools will be replaced by schools with a wider age range, but no sixth form. They would therefore have a similar outcome in terms of provision for older pupils. The Minister has borne in mind that in designing the legislation which became the 2013 Act, Ministers decided that proposals solely adding or removing 6th forms should be decided by them as post 16 education was directly funded. However the legislation did not

extend to cover whole school closures even when these schools included a sixth form. The Minister has acknowledged the similar effects in reaching his decision, but this has not altered his view on whether the proposals are co-dependant.

12. The Minister notes that if all the proposals were implemented, then in future, pupils from both Ferndale and Porth could access 6th form provision at Treorchy. The Minister takes that view that whilst this seems to make the proposals affecting these 2 schools related, it does not make them co-dependent. He is aware that in the course of implementing proposals, the local authority would enhance provision for post 16 pupils at Treorchy Comprehensive school in order to accommodate additional pupils. However the Minister considers that this could be carried out to the extent required, depending on how many of the local authority's proposals were approved or determined. It does not appear to the Minister that the local authority is committed to increasing the size of the sixth form at Treorchy Comprehensive by a specific amount as there is no statutory change proposed for the school.
13. The Minister has noted that Ferndale currently co-operates with Treorchy, Porth and Tonyrefail to provide sixth form provision. The Minister believes that if he were to approve the proposal to make a regulated alteration to Ferndale, the sixth form provision would end and there would be no need to maintain the arrangement. On the other hand if he were to reject the proposal and Ferndale retained its sixth form, he envisages two possible scenarios depending on whether or not the proposals affecting Tonypany, Porth and Tonyrefail were also to proceed. If these proposals did not proceed, Ferndale would continue the collaborative sixth form arrangements. If the proposals were to proceed and Tonypany and Porth no longer had sixth forms, Ferndale would presumably still be able to co-operate with Treorchy and other schools with sixth forms. The Minister concludes that the joint working does not make the proposals related. Clearly, any sixth forms that remained following decisions affecting them would need to cooperate with others if the curriculum provided at the home base was not sufficiently broad.
14. The Minister has noted that there is an intention to move a primary school catchment area from Porth to Ferndale in due course. However he understands from the local authority that this change would be made regardless of the proposals affecting Ferndale and Porth. The Minister has been informed that there is a large proportion of surplus capacity at Ferndale even with the presence of sixth form pupils, and the school would not lend itself to re-modelling in order to achieve a substantial reduction. The allocation of a further neighbourhood to the catchment could help alleviate this, as capacity can be reduced at Porth, also regardless of the proposal affecting it, as the school site would lend itself more readily to remodelling.
15. The Minister understands that during consultation, the local authority informed consultees that the Minister would consider the proposals in due course and would decide whether or not they should proceed. Some objectors have objected to the proposals overall on the grounds that schools will lose sixth forms. There may be a perception locally that the Minister will make a decision in relation to all proposals that affect sixth formers. This is the first time that the local authority has brought forward secondary school proposals under the 2013 Act and it appears that they assumed that the effect of the proposals on 3 of the schools would automatically mean that Ministerial approval was necessary. The Minister takes the view that the local authority was not in a position to make public statements about whether the Welsh Ministers would determine the other proposals or not, as at that time, he had made no such decision.

The effect of the Minister's decision on local authority decision making

16. If the Minister does not consider the proposals relating to the Tonypany, Porth and Tonyrefail areas, they will require determination by the local authority. Therefore, before concluding whether the proposals were related, the Minister needed to also consider if the decision he needed to make in respect of Ferndale would affect the ability of the local authority to make an objective decision on the other proposals.
17. The Minister is satisfied that if he were to approve the proposal to make a regulated alteration to Ferndale, it would not affect the local authority's ability to make a decision on the other proposals. In this event, were the local authority then to approve the other proposals, these would proceed in due course together with the Ferndale proposal. If the local authority were to reject the other proposals, places in neighbouring schools would have to be found for pupils from Ferndale to continue their sixth form studies. However, the Minister would not anticipate that this would be a problem given the surplus capacity available and the co-operative arrangements already in place.
18. The Minister is also satisfied that if he were to reject the proposal to make a regulated alteration to Ferndale it will not affect or undermine the local authority's ability to make a decision on the other proposals. If the local authority were to reject the other proposals there would be no change to secondary provision in the Rhondda Valley and Tonyrefail areas. If the local authority were to approve the other proposals then they could proceed to close Tonypany, Porth and Tonyrefail, together with associated primary schools and establish new middle schools. However as Ferndale would retain its sixth form provision the local authority would probably wish to consider to what extent they would proceed with increasing the size of sixth form provision at Treorchy which is not the subject of a proposal. It would also still have the power to bring forward a further proposal to close the sixth form at Ferndale in due course if they considered this appropriate.

Conclusion

19. In conclusion, the Minister has decided that the additional proposals are not related to the Ferndale proposal to the extent that any decision he might make on the Ferndale proposal will undermine decisions that would need to be made in respect of the proposals affecting other schools. It will therefore be for the local authority to determine the remaining proposals.
20. I am sending a copy of this letter to the Chief Executive of Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council.

Yours sincerely



STEVE VINCENT
DEPUTY DIRECTOR: SCHOOLS MANAGEMENT AND EFFECTIVENESS DIVISION



Appendix C

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Directorate: Education & Lifelong Learning

Service Area: 21st Century Schools

Responsible officer: Julie Hadley

Date: 20th October 2014 (updated 23rd January 2015, further update 25th August 2015)

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

The Project is to:

- Create two sixth form centres of excellence, based at Treorchy and Tonyrefail;
- Create two new 3-16 schools, in Porth and Tonypany, and one 3-19 school, in Tonyrefail, which will take a radically different approach to education in the areas, by sharing both primary and secondary sector resources. It offers opportunities for cross-age learning, shared teaching practices and access to excellent facilities for all age groups;
- Increase the number of Welsh medium primary places in Porth and Tonyrefail;
- Improve the learning environment of primary aged pupils with additional learning needs.

To achieve these changes, the Council, in partnership with Welsh Government, will invest £85m in building new or refurbishing/remodelling existing buildings to ensure the pupils have a high quality, viable and sustainable 21st Century learning environment.

This investment will include:

- A new teaching block and improved sixth form facilities at Treorchy Comprehensive School;
- A new 3-19 school for Tonyrefail;
- New and refurbished buildings at the Porth and Tonypany secondary school sites to create two 3-16 schools;

- Extending, remodelling and refurbishing YGG Llwynceilyn;
- Relocating YGG Tonyrefail to a refurbished and modern primary school site;
- 21st Century improvements to a number of other schools in the area.

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

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

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

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

In addition Estyn made the following recommendations for the Council:

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

Over the past two years the Council has focused its attention on these six recommendations, and in particular recommendations 1, 2 & 5, which will have the greatest impact on pupil achievement in our schools. As a result, schools that, when compared with similar schools across Wales based on free school meals are in the third and fourth quartiles are being subject to significant challenge, scrutiny and support. Where there is little evidence of significant progress, the Council is intervening using a range of its

powers. One of the powers is to close schools that over an extended period continue to under-perform providing an education to children that is not good enough.

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

The Elected Members have accepted Estyn's recommendations and have undertaken a review of our school provision. The criteria we have used for selecting schools for review is one or more of the following:

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

The 9 primary schools and 5 secondary schools included within this proposal have been assessed against the aforementioned criteria:

- 4 primary schools and 4 secondary schools have surplus places in excess of 25%;
- 2 schools are "small" schools with less than 90 mainstream pupils;
- The combined maintenance backlog of the 14 schools is £18.8m , which equates to £2,914 per pupil;
- 8 primary schools have mixed classes with more than two age groups;
- The educational performance and pupil attendance of 4 of the 5 secondary schools is consistently in the third and fourth quartiles when compared to similar schools in Wales;

- 3 of the secondary schools and 3 of the primary schools have been graded amber or red in the Welsh Government new school categorisation system;

In addition 4 of the 5 secondary schools have small sixth forms of less than 200 pupils, and with mixed educational performance.

The opportunity exists to reconfigure the primary and secondary schools to create educationally and financially viable schools that serve the local communities. This proposal seeks to achieve this.

Educational Considerations –

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

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

- **Improve educational outcomes;**
 - Create larger Foundation Phase, KS2 and sixth form departments that will promote the sharing of skills and expertise across more viable teams;
 - Provide teaching and support staff with more opportunity to develop professionally;
 - Enable greater opportunities for staff to move between key stages and further develop expertise;
 - Provide a more appropriate curriculum and wider extra-curricular opportunities which will improve attendance and educational outcomes;
- **Improve educational provision;**
 - Provide the conditions that will enable a broader and more diverse curriculum to be developed to better meet the needs of the school's young people and in ways that will be viable and sustainable over the longer term;
 - Improve the range and quality of facilities and learning resources available to the benefit of all pupils;
 - Enable greater continuity of support for vulnerable groups of pupils;

- Allow for the potential for financial savings in terms of staffing structures and purchase of services, which accrue to a larger school;
- Broaden the range of extra-curricular and out-of-school activities and develop them in ways that are sustainable over the longer term;
- Deliver the future capital investment benefits that would arise from the modernisation of a small number of institutions rather than many;
- Create schools of a sustainable size for their catchment area by removing surplus capacity, providing greater educational and financial stability;
- Release significant resources that will be reinvested in improving the buildings and in improving standards of teaching and learning, which otherwise would not have been available;

- **Improve leadership and management;**

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

These benefits apply equally to the mainstream and the Special Educational Needs (SEN) pupils in the schools. This argument is supported by Estyn in its recent report “School Size and Educational Effectiveness” (Dec 2013), which stated:

- *“Pupils’ standards are good or better in a higher proportion of large primary schools than small and medium-sized primary schools. This may be because large schools tend to have more expertise and capacity to address the needs of more vulnerable pupils and the more able and talented pupils.”*

- *“Examination results for large secondary schools are better than those for small and medium-sized secondary schools for nearly all measures”;*
- *“In general, curriculum provision is broader and better balanced in large secondary schools. Nearly all large secondary schools provide good or better learning experiences for their pupils. Large secondary schools are able to offer a wider range of options due to economies of scale”.*

Furthermore, in Estyn’s report “Tackling child poverty and disadvantage in schools” (2010), the inspectors identified Neath Port Talbot as a local authority where disadvantaged learners achieved well, 60% better than the Welsh average. Estyn stated that:

“One structural factor that has helped to raise the performance of disadvantaged pupils in Neath Port Talbot has been the existence of mainly 11-16 schools. The heads in most of these schools feel that this has made sure that their full attention is given to the 11 to 16 age range and that resources are not deflected towards the sixth form”.

What is the educational case for creating larger sixth forms?

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

- There are too many small sixth forms and a rationalisation would better meet the educational needs of the students by strengthening management arrangements, improving the effective and efficient use of resources, and better ensuring a quality educational experience. Only one sixth form in the Rhondda and Tonyrefail area, Treorchy Comprehensive School, had more than 200 pupils in January 2015;
- The delivery of post-16 education is inefficient and for many the educational experience could be considerably better. There is still unnecessary post 16 duplication of provision between schools and colleges, choice for many learners is restricted, class sizes are too small, and secondary school surplus places in the County Borough are projected to be over 4,000 by 2018 and over 1,400 in the Rhondda and Tonyrefail area (English medium schools) by 2018. This leads to valuable education funds being directed at additional staff costs and infrastructure when they would be better directed at the learners and the learner experience. Currently, across Rhondda Cynon Taf funds amounting to approximately £300 per pupil that were originally provided to educate 11-16 pupils are redirected at sixth form learners, to subsidise loss making courses due to small class

sizes. This amount increases to an average of £698 per pupil across the 5 English medium secondary schools in the Rhondda and Tonyrefail area;

- Small class sizes found in many sixth forms leads to limited student interactions, which diminishes the effectiveness of learning. Where providers have made the greatest progress in collaborating to reduce inefficiencies and improve effectiveness, learner opportunities and student interactions increase. However, travel between providers is seen by some students as a barrier to access a wider choice of courses.
- Choice is often dependent upon learner postal code. There is no equitable post 16 options entitlement for the County Borough;
- The educational achievement and success at Key Stage 4 (in relation to the Average Capped Wider Points Score) and Key Stage 5 (in relation to the Average Wider Points Score) in the County Borough are below Welsh averages and are amongst the lowest in Wales. A step change is still required to raise the number of young people participating in education post 16 and improve the quality of learning outcomes by raising attainment, retention and progression.
- In 2014, only 2 of the 5 secondary schools included in this proposal entered more than 60 pupils for 2 or more A Levels or equivalent. In 2015 this had fallen with 3 of the 5 schools entering less than 55 pupils. Providing an educationally and financially viable curriculum in a number of the schools is difficult.

Creating two sixth forms of approximately 500 students creates the capacity and economies of scale to be able to improve:

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

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

In bringing schools together whether that is through amalgamation, federation or informal clustering, the purpose has to be to improve teaching and learning and pupil outcomes. The benefits of 3-16 schools can be summarised as follows:

- A common ethos means pupils do not have to adapt to a new culture on moving schools;
- Coherent and consistent styles of teaching and learning progressing through the years gives stability to pupils' learning experiences;
- A comprehensive and common system for assessing, recording and tracking pupil progress throughout his/her schooling;
- Flexibility to provide the appropriate curriculum for individuals regardless of age;
- Increased access for pupils to a range of specialist accommodation, facilities and learning resources;
- Pupils with additional needs can maintain relationships with supporting agencies throughout their school career if required;
- A common attendance and behaviour policy means that routines are established and values understood from an early age;
- Parents may remain more involved in their children's education as they do not have to establish new relationships with staff.

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

A study of the pilot 3-19 school in Lampeter has highlighted the scope provided by an all-through school for establishing a single unified team of specialist support staff and learning support assistants working closely with professionals from health, social care, and family services. This has the potential to further enhance the already high standards of care provided for pupils with a wide range of additional learning difficulties, social and emotional needs. For many children with specific needs, the continuum of care and support provided by the school is more important than the particular age of the pupil concerned and there are obvious advantages in prolonging the relationships between teachers and other adults with support roles and individual pupils across the period of transition.

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

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

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

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

The primary aged pupils will receive the majority of their lessons in a specialist primary school building. Nevertheless, the pupils will have the opportunity to be taught in the secondary school to develop their curricular skills through the use of specialised facilities e.g. science and technology. Secondary phase pupils will also be able to have learning opportunities in the primary phase especially around any care related vocational activities and meeting some of the requirements of the Welsh Baccalaureate. These learning opportunities will also provide support to the primary phase staff through such activities, for example year 12 and 13 pupils assisting primary school pupils with their reading. This is the case in Ysgol Llanhari, the first 3-19 school in Rhondda Cynon Taf.

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

Other partner/associated primary schools in each community will also benefit from the proposal and be able to enjoy use of facilities at the ‘through schools’ for educational and social/sporting purposes.

In Lampeter, where there is a similar arrangement, the pilot evaluation has highlighted that these primary schools have sought to further strengthen their relationship and transition arrangements with the primary and secondary phase of the 3-19 school, in order that their pupils might benefit fully from the future all-through developments and to ensure that they will not be disadvantaged when they join the new school in Year 7. Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council recognises the importance of transition, and measures will be planned and implemented to ensure, that those pupils that transfer to secondary education at age 11 are able to achieve, at the same level, as those pupils for whom the transition from Primary to Secondary education occurs without changing school.

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

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

- Some may have a longer or a different route to school, and some may be transported to school by bus;
- For the primary aged children, the pupils in their classroom are more likely to be in the same year group and there will be more opportunities to make friends with children of a similar age;
- Being in classes with predominantly their own age group, the teacher will be better able to offer the primary pupils a wider and more varied curriculum to support all learners, including the least and most able;
- The teachers and teaching assistants may be different, however, the majority of teachers and teaching assistants should be able to transfer between the schools, if they wish to do so;
- For sixth form students there could be less travelling during the school day to access the curriculum and therefore there will be greater opportunities for more unstructured/informal interaction between students and teachers during the school day. The time saved from not travelling can also be used to focus on studying or completing course work;
- There will be more competition for pupils in and outside the classroom which is what children require if they are to achieve good educational outcomes;
- Being part of a larger school creates opportunity to run school sports teams, debating team etc. The children attending the SEN Classes will also have the opportunity to engage in a wider range of curricular and extra-curricular activities.

The principal change will be an improvement in the quality of the educational provision, and this should have a significant impact on educational performance of the pupils. This will bring about improvements for **all** pupils, irrespective of gender, ethnicity or disability. It should be noted that of the approx 12,600 pupils attending schools in the area under consideration (Rhondda and Tonyrefail), only 2 are indicated as being Gypsy or Traveller children; to reiterate, these proposals are not seen as being detrimental to any particular group of pupils, they are intended to improve educational provision for all.

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

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

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

The Council has undertaken (between 2nd June and 28th July 2015) a comprehensive review and consultation process in respect of its learner travel policy. Following this extensive consultation, a decision has been taken by the Council's Cabinet that a charge be introduced for the discretionary elements of mainstream school transport, i.e. the provision made by Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC that exceeds the statutory provision outlined in the Welsh Government's Learner Travel Measure:

- Primary aged pupils residing between 1 ½ and 2 miles from their catchment or nearest suitable school
- Secondary aged pupils residing between 2 and 3 miles from their catchment or nearest suitable school
- All pupils attending faith schools
- All post-16 learners.

The proposed charge will be £1.75 per day, reducing to £1 per day for pupils in receipt of free school meals. It is also proposed that for families with more than 2 children who would be subject to paying the proposed charge, then they would pay for a maximum of 2 children only.

The revised Learner Travel Policy will be implemented in September 2016.

For all the proposed school changes the Council's policy regarding free school transport will continue to apply. The Council has already taken steps to assess the safety of a number of the change in routes to school, for example the primary changes and the increased distances to sixth forms that are within the qualifying distance to access free home to school transport. For the vast majority of the routes, the Council consider the routes to be a safe route to school. Nevertheless, the Council will seek to further improve the safety of a few routes through additional crossing points, wider pavements, and measures to reduce the speed of the traffic. Pupils that attend SEN Classes will continue to be transported from their home to the classes relocated to the new proposed Porth 3-16 School.

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

1. have a flying start in life;
2. have a comprehensive range of education and learning opportunities;
3. enjoy the best possible health and are free from abuse, victimisation and exploitation;
4. have access to play, leisure, sporting and cultural activities;

5. are listened to, treated with respect, and have their race and cultural identity recognised;
6. have a safe home and a community which supports physical and emotional wellbeing;
7. are not disadvantaged by poverty.

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

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

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

For the school changes in Treorchy Comprehensive School, YGG Llwynceilyn, YGG Tonyrefail, and the Tai Centre the governing bodies and staffing arrangements will remain the same, except that the staffing structure for Treorchy would have to reflect an increase in the sixth form students.

For the school change in Ferndale Community School, the staffing structure will need to be developed for the 11-16 school taking into account a curriculum for a secondary school without a sixth form provision.

For the school changes in Porth, Tonypandy and Tonyrefail, all the schools involved in the proposal will close and new schools will be opened with a new governing body. Should the proposal proceed, the proposed new schools for Porth, Tonypandy and Tonyrefail will need to appoint temporary governing bodies for the interim period until the new schools open.

The temporary governing bodies will need to appoint new headteachers, who will then formulate and propose the leadership, management and staffing structures for the new schools. The staffing structure for Porth and Tonypandy 3-16 schools will need to be developed for the 3-16 school taking into account a number of factors, including delivering a curriculum for a secondary school without sixth form provision. Whilst, the staffing structure for Tonyrefail will need to be developed for the 3-19 school taking into account a number of factors, including delivering a curriculum for a secondary school with an enhanced sixth form provision

The Council recommends that if the proposal is accepted that the temporary governing bodies of new schools and the governing bodies of those schools increasing in size through pupil transfers “ring fence” all teaching and associated staff posts to staff within the existing schools in the first instance.

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

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

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

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

New Review Cessation

All 3.

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

People / issues to consider	Impact policy / practice will have			If a positive or negative impact is identified, explain why:
	Positive	Negative	Neutral (No impact)	
Age (young and old)	High	Low		<p>The creation of improved learning facilities and environments will have a positive impact for pupils by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating modern, flexible learning environments to meet the requirements of changing curriculums, new technologies and lifelong learning opportunities; enabling all learners to reach their potential. • Promoting more independent learning for post-16 pupils to better prepare them for higher education and employment, and reducing the number of young people who become NEET. • Creating larger sixth forms, reducing the need for consortia arrangements and travelling between sites; time can be better spent learning than travelling. • Increasing the choice of learning pathways at post-16, more subject options which will improve the higher education and employment prospects of all learners. • Enabling primary pupils to access specialist facilities at their own school site (e.g. science labs) and secondary pupils being able to access work experience and assist the learning of their younger counterparts. • Improving transition between the Primary and Secondary school sectors. • Providing learning environments that are accessible, comfortable and attractive for all children and young people.

People / issues to consider	Impact policy / practice will have			If a positive or negative impact is identified, explain why:
	Positive	Negative	Neutral (No impact)	
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improving facilities and opportunities for pupils to access learning and cultural activities which can help develop relationships within communities. Providing access to services to improve the lives of children and their families. Creating self contained larger primary provision enabling pupils to be taught in classes with pupils of a similar age while ensuring that all the children feel safe and secure on the larger 'all-through' site. <p>Some primary school pupils and some sixth form pupils will have increased travel distance and/or the potential introduction of charges for some discretionary elements of transport.</p>
Disability (remember to consider the different types of disability)	High			<p>New build school facilities will be fully compliant with all disability legislation and will be accessible to all users; refurbished and remodelled premises will have reasonable adjustments undertaken to make them as compliant as it is possible to do. The proposed 'all through' provision for pupils with ALN (for children from the Foundation Phase right through to Key Stage 4) at the new Porth Middle school is seen as a distinct advantage to pupils placed in this provision, creating what will be a 'centre of excellence' for this provision, with the need for transition, which can be disruptive</p>

People / issues to consider	Impact policy / practice will have			If a positive or negative impact is identified, explain why:
	Positive	Negative	Neutral (No impact)	
				for pupils with ALN, completely removed.
Gender			Yes	
Gender Reassignment			Yes	
Race			Yes	
Religion or Belief			Yes	
Sexual Orientation			Yes	
Welsh Language	Medium			Improved school environments at two Welsh Medium Primary schools with additional capacity provided to allow more choice for parents as to which language medium they can choose for their children.
Carers			Yes	

EVIDENCE

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

Reports of the Director of Education to Cabinet - October 2014.
Public Consultation Document on the Proposal

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

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

No sixth form pupil should have to undertake any journey, whether by public or private transportation that will take longer than 30 minutes to undertake, which is within the Council's target of ensuring that secondary aged learners do not have journey times exceeding 60 minutes. This would help to mitigate any concerns expressed in respect of the potential impact on young carers who would have to undertake longer journeys to access post-16 provision.

Full assessments of all available walking routes will be undertaken to ensure that they meet all safety criteria and standards laid down in the Learner Travel Measure 2014. Appropriate improvements will be made where identified.

The introduction of charges for the discretionary element of the transport provision could also be considered to be a negative effect. To reduce the potential impact, the proposal currently under consideration includes limiting the costs for all parents to paying for a maximum of two children and a reduction for all parents of pupils eligible for free school meals.

INVOLVEMENT & CONSULTATION

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

The following consultation meetings/ open events are being held.

School Affected	Group	Time/Date	Venue
Ferndale Community School	Governors and Staff Meeting	4 th November 2014, 4–6pm	Ferndale Community School
Porth County Community School	Governors and Staff Meeting	5 th November 2014; 4–6 pm	Porth County Community School
Tonypandy Community College	Governors and Staff Meeting	6 th November 2014; 4–6 pm	Tonypandy Community College
Tonyrefail Comprehensive	Governors and Staff Meeting	11 th November 2014; 4–6 pm	Tonyrefail Comprehensive
Treorchy Comprehensive	Governors and Staff Meeting	13 th November 2014; 4–6 pm	Treorchy Comprehensive
Llwyncelyn Infants'	Governors and Staff Meeting	18 th November 2014; 4–6 pm	Llwyncelyn Infants'
Porth Infants'			
Porth Junior			
Penygraig Infants'	Governors and Staff Meeting	19 th November 2014; 4–6 pm	Penygraig Junior
Penygraig Junior			
Tonypandy Primary			
Ysgol yr Eos			
Tonyrefail Primary	Governors and Staff Meeting	25 th November 2014; 4–6 pm	Tonyrefail Primary
YGG Tonyrefail	Governors and Staff Meeting	27 th November 2014; 4–6 pm	YGG Tonyrefail
Ferndale Community School	School Council	4th November 2014, 2–3pm	Ferndale Community School

School Affected	Group	Time/Date	Venue
Porth County Community School	School Council	5 th November 2014; 2–3 pm	Porth County Community School
Tonypandy Community College	School Council	6 th November 2014; 2–3 pm	Tonypandy Community College
Tonyrefail Comprehensive	School Council	11th November 2014; 2–3 pm	Tonyrefail Comprehensive
Treorchy Comprehensive	School Council	13th November 2014; 2–3 pm	Treorchy Comprehensive
Llwyncelyn Infants'	School Council	18 th November 2014	Llwyncelyn Infants'
Porth Infants'	School Council	18 th November 2014	Porth Infants'
Porth Junior	School Council	18 th November 2014	Porth Junior
Penygraig Infants'	School Council	19 th November 2014	Penygraig Infants'
Penygraig Junior	School Council	19 th November 2014	Penygraig Junior
Tonypandy Primary	School Council	20 th November 2014	Tonypandy Primary
Ysgol yr Eos	School Council	20 th November 2014	Ysgol yr Eos
Tonyrefail Primary	School Council	25 th November 2014	Tonyrefail Primary
YGG Tonyrefail	School Council	27 th November 2014	YGG Tonyrefail
Sixth Form Changes All Schools and members of the local community	Parents and public drop in session and exhibition	12 th January 2015, 2–6pm	Treorchy Comprehensive School
		13 th January 2015, 2–6pm	Tonyrefail Comprehensive School
Porth County and Porth Primary Schools – all Porth schools and members of the local community	Parents and public drop in session and exhibition	20 th January 2015, 2–6pm	Porth County Community School
Tonyrefail Comprehensive and Tonyrefail Primary Schools – all Tonyrefail schools and members of the local community	Parents and public drop in session and exhibition	21 st January 2015, 2–6pm	Tonyrefail Comprehensive School
Tonypandy Community	Parents and public drop in	22 nd January 2015, 2–6pm	Tonypandy Community College

School Affected	Group	Time/Date	Venue
College and Tonypandy Primary Schools – all Tonypandy schools and members of the local community	session and exhibition		
All schools, staff, parents, pupils, governors and members of the community	Parents and public drop in session and exhibition	18 th February 2015, 9am – 6pm	Ystrad Sports Centre (Lesser Hall)

In addition to the meetings with the school councils, all pupils in the affected schools are being given the opportunity to complete a questionnaire online, with tablet computers being provided by the Council to assist them with this, to tell us what they think about the particular proposal involving their school and whether they think it is a good, or bad idea.

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

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

E-mail schoolplanning@rctednet.net

MONITORING AND REVIEW

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

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

ADDRESSING THE IMPACT

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

- Continue the Policy

Please indicate and provide reasons for your decision.

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

12. ACTION PLAN

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

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT ACTION PLAN

Action	Responsible Officer	Timescale for Actions	Timescale and actions for Review	Measures to be taken to evaluate effects of actions
To finalise the plans for school building construction and repair/refurbishment of existing buildings	Director of Corporate Estates	By September 2018		
To undertake any highways works that are identified as required to improve walking routes and to make arrangements for any transport provision that may be identified.	Director of Highways and Transportation	By September 2018		

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

None.

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

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

Email: equality@rhondda-cynon- Taf.gov.uk

Tel: 01443 424075

Signed: Chris Bradshaw
Job Title: Director of Education & Lifelong Learning

Date: 20/10/14 (updated 23/01/15 further update 25/8/15)

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Appendix D

Proposals to Reorganise School Provision in the Rhondda and Tonyrefail Areas

Welsh Language Impact Assessment

As part of our proposals in respect of the above, we are planning to undertake improvements at two Welsh Medium Primary schools in this area of Rhondda Cynon Taf, which will not only improve and enhance the learning environment but also increase the pupil capacity of the two schools in question, namely YGG Llwynceilyn and YGG Tonyrefail.

It is important to note that these proposals will not involve new school provision or alternative school provision; neither will they involve any fundamental or significant change to the provision currently being made to the communities both schools currently serve. As such, many of the issues suggested for inclusion in a Welsh Language Impact Assessment, as outlined in Annex D of the Welsh Government's School Organisation Code, document 006/2013 do not apply to these proposals.

The proposal in respect of YGG Llwynceilyn involves this school incorporating the site and buildings of Llwynceilyn Infants School, which is located immediately adjacent. The two sites can easily be combined in to one by simply removing the boundary wall and fence that separates the two schools. Refurbishment and repair works will also be undertaken on both school buildings to improve the facilities for all pupils and staff and some redundant, poor quality mobile classroom accommodation will be removed.

This proposal will also increase the pupil capacity at the school by approximately 100 places and increase its published admission limit per year group, enabling more pupils to be admitted each year.

The proposal in respect of YGG Tonyrefail involves this school relocating to the site of the current Tonyrefail Primary School. This school was extended and refurbished just 5 years ago, with additional outside play areas and car parking added to the site, including an all weather multi games pitch. Further refurbishment works, including upgrading of pupil toilet facilities will be undertaken prior to the school transfer. The new school site is located immediately to the rear of the existing school so there will be no travel implications if this is implemented.

The transfer to a new site will increase pupil capacity to at least 377, which includes increased Nursery capacity also. The admission number per year group will also increase. This is in addition to the considerable educational benefits that will be realised by moving to a building which is of far higher quality than the current school site.

These proposals will enable both schools to enhance and extend their extra-curricular provision, as they will have far more space and building capacity to allow them to offer such provision. This could also include making facilities available for use by the wider community.

The proposal to increase capacity at two of our Welsh Medium schools (adding almost 200 pupil places in total) will also assist the Council in achieving the target outlined in our Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP), which is to increase the percentage of seven year olds taught through the medium of Welsh in the future.



Appendix E

Proposal to create two Sixth Form 'Centres of Excellence' at Treorchy and Tonyrefail and to remove sixth form provision at Porth, Tonypany and Ferndale

Community Impact Assessment

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

This proposal is being consulted on between 20th October 2014 and 27th February 2015, as part of a wider consultation regarding the reorganisation of school provision in the Rhondda and Tonyrefail areas of Rhondda Cynon Taf. A detailed consultation document has been circulated to all prescribed consultees. Copies have been forwarded to the WG in compliance with consultation and publication guidelines. The document advises of the availability of all required Impact Assessments and informs all consultees as to how they can obtain copies if they require them.

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

It must be noted that we are not removing or closing any schools as a consequence of this particular proposal. All schools that may lose 6th form provision will remain in situ, albeit with changes made to the age range of pupils they wish to admit (amended from 11 – 19 years to 3 – 16/19 years). Treorchy and Tonyrefail schools will have additional accommodation and facilities provided, also Tonyrefail will have the age range of pupils it is able to admit extended, from 11 – 19 years to 3 – 19 years. Separate Community Impact Assessments have been prepared in respect of all other proposals being consulted upon at the current time.

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

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

Transportation for pupils will be provided in accordance with the Council's Learner Travel Policy in force at the time of the transfer of the 6th forms to their new locations. Assessments will be undertaken in accordance with legislation in force and will involve the application of both distance and dangerous route criteria, if applicable.



Appendix F

Proposal to close Llwynceilyn Infants, Porth Infants, Porth Junior and Porth Community Secondary School and to create a new 3 – 16 school on the site of the current Porth Community School

Community Impact Assessment

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

This proposal is being consulted on between 20th October 2014 and 27th February 2015, as part of a wider consultation regarding the reorganisation of school provision in the Rhondda and Tonyrefail areas of Rhondda Cynon Taf. A detailed consultation document has been circulated to all prescribed consultees. Copies have been forwarded to the WG in compliance with consultation and publication guidelines. The document advises of the availability of all required Impact Assessments and informs all consultees as to how they can obtain copies if they require them.

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

- Llwynceilyn Infants – 61%
- Porth Infants – 47%
- Porth Junior – 76%
- Porth Community – 88%

For the two Infants Schools, the largest percentage of pupils attending Llwynceilyn from out of catchment reside in the Porth Infants catchment (12%); the same scenario applies for Porth Infants, where the largest percentage of pupils residing out of catchment come from the Llwynceilyn catchment area (23%). The catchment area of Porth Junior encompasses that of the two Infants Schools. The proposed catchment area of the new Primary department of the Middle school will be that of Porth Junior School, therefore all of the pupils referred to above will be resident within the catchment area of the new school.

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

There are no after school clubs at Porth Infants; Llwynceilyn Infants has one club on one evening per week (run by an outside provider), Porth Junior runs clubs on four evenings each week. The Secondary school runs a full programme of extra-curricular activities after school each day. The full facilities of the current Secondary school will be available for the younger children to use, under supervision, so the programme of after school activities available to them can in fact be enhanced and extended.

The only outside organisation that regularly uses any of the current Primary schools are the Brownies, who use Porth Junior School on one evening per week. Communities First also hold activities in the Junior School on one morning each week, plus a mother and toddler group meets in Porth Infants on two mornings each week. There is no reason why these organisations cannot utilise the facilities at the new proposed Primary department of the Middle School; this is something we would actively encourage.

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

The distance between Llwynceilyn Infants School (the school furthest from the Secondary school) and Porth Community School is 1.3 miles, which takes less than 10 minutes by car or bus. The address within the Llwynceilyn Infants catchment that is furthest away from the Secondary school (at Nythbran Terrace) is 1.7 miles by road, but only 1.49 miles on foot. It is not considered that this distance will be a barrier to any child who wishes to participate in the pre, and after school provision that will be offered at the new Middle School in the future; all pupils will be given equal access and encouragement to participate in as many activities as they wish. Having all Primary aged pupils in the Porth area in one school, along with their elder siblings who may attend the Secondary department is considered to be of benefit to parents in future, as their children's school provision will be located on one site, as opposed to being up to 1.3 miles away as it is at present. Having a single Primary age phase will also remove the transition between Foundation Phase and Key Stage 2 in separate schools which all pupils must undertake at present.

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



Appendix G

Proposal to close Penygraig Junior and Infants, Tonypandy Primary, Ysgol yr Eos and Tonypandy Community College and to create a new 3 – 16 school on the site of the current Tonypandy Community College

Community Impact Assessment

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

This proposal is being consulted on between 20th October 2014 and 27th February 2015, as part of a wider consultation regarding the reorganisation of school provision in the Rhondda and Tonyrefail areas of Rhondda Cynon Taf. A detailed consultation document has been circulated to all prescribed consultees. Copies have been forwarded to the WG in compliance with consultation and publication guidelines. The document advises of the availability of all required Impact Assessments and informs all consultees as to how they can obtain copies if they require them.

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

- Penygraig Infants – 65%
- Penygraig Junior – 51%
- Tonypandy Primary – 64%
- Ysgol yr Eos – 76%
- Tonypandy Community College – 89%

For the Primary Schools, the majority of pupils attending from out of catchment reside in the catchment areas of one of the other schools included in this consultation (eg, the majority of out-catchment pupils attending Penygraig Infants reside in the Ysgol yr Eos catchment area). The proposed catchment area of the new Primary department of the Middle school will be that of the four Primary schools listed above combined, therefore most of the pupils referred to above will be resident within the Primary catchment area of the new proposed Middle school.

All four Primary schools offer breakfast clubs to all pupils at present; we will recommend that this provision should continue in the new Middle school if these proposals are agreed.

All the Primary schools provide after school clubs for their pupils, encompassing a range of activities on varying evenings each week. The Secondary school runs a full programme of extra-curricular activities after school each day. The full facilities of the current Secondary school will be available for the younger children to use, under supervision, so the programme of after school activities available to them can in fact be enhanced and extended.

The Girl Guides utilise Tonypany Primary on one evening per week; a playgroup is also based at this school on 2 mornings each week. There is a Flying Start provision based at Ysgol yr Eos, which could remain at this site. Penygraig Junior and Infants do not have any regular external usage. There is no reason why these organisations cannot utilise the facilities at the new proposed Primary department of the Middle School; this is something we would actively encourage. Alternatively, accommodation can be provided at other schools in the area, especially for the Flying Start provision if required.

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

The distance between Tonypany Primary School and Tonypany Community College is 0.9 miles; the distance between Ysgol yr Eos and Tonypany Community College is 0.7 miles (the two Penygraig schools are even closer), journeys from either school are less than 5 minutes by car or bus. The address within the Tonypany Primary catchment that is the furthest away from the Secondary school (at Gilfach Road) is 1 mile by road; the address within the Ysgol yr Eos catchment that is the furthest away from the Secondary school (at Appletree Road) is 1.7 miles by road and 1.58 miles on foot. It is not considered that these distances will be a barrier to any child who wishes to participate in the pre, and after school provision that will be offered at the new Middle School in the future; all pupils will be given equal access and encouragement to participate in as many activities as they wish. Having all Primary aged pupils in the Tonypany area in one school, along with their elder siblings who may attend the Secondary department is considered to be of benefit to parents in future, as their children's school provision will be located on one site, as opposed to being up to 0.9 miles away as it is at present.

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



Appendix H

Proposal to close Tonyrefail Primary and Tonyrefail Comprehensive Schools and to create a new 3 – 19 school on the site of the current Tonyrefail Comprehensive School

Community Impact Assessment

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

This proposal is being consulted on between 20th October 2014 and 27th February 2015, as part of a wider consultation regarding the reorganisation of school provision in the Rhondda and Tonyrefail areas of Rhondda Cynon Taf. A detailed consultation document has been circulated to all prescribed consultees. Copies have been forwarded to the WG in compliance with consultation and publication guidelines. The document advises of the availability of all required Impact Assessments and informs all consultees as to how they can obtain copies if they require them.

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

- Tonyrefail Primary - 57%
- Tonyrefail Comprehensive – 92%

For the Primary School, the majority of pupils attending from out of catchment reside in the catchment areas of one of the other primary schools in the Tonyrefail Comprehensive catchment area that are associated to this school, i.e. the large majority of pupils transfer there at Year 7. These schools are Tref y Rhyg, Hendreforgan and Cwmlai Primary Schools. The catchment area of Tonyrefail Primary School will remain unchanged by this proposal.

The Primary school offers a breakfast club to all pupils at present; we will recommend that this provision should continue in the new Middle school if these proposals are agreed.

The Primary School does not offer any after school clubs to its pupils at present. The Secondary school runs a full programme of extra-curricular activities after school each day. The full facilities of the current Secondary school will be available for the younger children to use, under supervision, so the programme of after school activities available to them can in fact be enhanced and extended.

There is a Flying Start provision based at Tonyrefail Primary School, which can remain at this site. There is no other regular external usage. Alternatively, accommodation could be provided at one of the other schools in the area for the Flying Start provision if required.

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

The distance between Tonyrefail Primary School and Tonyrefail Comprehensive School is 0.8 miles. The journeys between the two schools are less than 5 minutes by car or bus. The address within the Tonyrefail Primary catchment that is the furthest away from the Secondary school (at Collenna Road) is 1 mile by road. It is not considered that these distances will be a barrier to any child who wishes to participate in the pre, and after school provision that will be offered at the new Middle School in the future; all pupils will be given equal access and encouragement to participate in as many activities as they wish. Having all Primary aged pupils in the Tonyrefail area in one school, along with their elder siblings who may attend the Secondary department is considered to be of benefit to parents in future, as their children's school provision will be located on one site, as opposed to being up to 0.8 miles away as it is at present.

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

If this proposal is agreed, YGG Tonyrefail will relocate from its existing site to that of the current Tonyrefail Primary School. The two school sites are immediately adjacent to each other. This will have a neutral community impact as all services currently offered by YGG Tonyrefail will simply relocate to the building next door. As indicated overleaf, the intention is for the Flying Start provision located at Tonyrefail Primary School to remain on this site, even if the Welsh Medium school takes it over, so the impact on this facility will also be neutral.