



## LATE ITEM – AGENDA ITEM 3

### RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

#### CABINET

4<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 2016

#### IMPROVING PRIMARY EDUCATION PROVISION IN CWMAMAN, ABERDARE

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

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

#### 1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to outline proposals that seek to create an 'all through' Primary School for Cwmaman, investing approximately £7.9million in constructing a new, purpose built school on a new site in the village and to seek Members approval to begin the relevant, and required statutory consultation.

#### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Cabinet:

Note the information contained within this report and give formal approval to commence consultation on the following proposal; -

To create a new 3-11 primary school for Cwmaman, Aberdare investing approximately £7.9m in constructing a new, purpose built school on land in Council ownership (the former Fforchaman Colliery site). This proposal will require the closure of Cwmaman Infants' and Glynhafod Junior Schools, with the pupils transferring to the new Primary School building.

#### 3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To progress the proposal in accordance with the process outlined in Welsh Government legislative guidance (the School Organisation Code).

#### **4. BACKGROUND**

- 4.1 Rhondda Cynon Taf has 105 schools for pupils in the primary age range. Currently, there are 91 all age primary schools, 1 nursery school, 8 infant schools (ages 3 or 4-7) and 5 junior schools (ages 8-11).
- 4.2 Over the past 12 years, where appropriate, the Council has sought to minimise transitions between schools amalgamating separate infant and junior schools through a phased approach, and also closing small schools, incorporating them in to larger more educationally and financially viable primary schools. The schools amalgamated or closed most recently include primary, infant, junior and some nursery schools in Abercynon, Comin (Aberdare Park), Cwmbach, Cwmclydach, Maerdy, Penrhiwfer, Ynysboeth, Ynyshir, Glantaf, Glanffrwd Aberllechau, Rhiwgarn, Ynyswen and Pentre Primary School.
- 4.3 The Estyn Inspection of the Council in 2012, highlighted that the Council needs to:
- ***“Raise education standards in all schools; and***
  - ***Reduce surplus places.”***
- 4.4 The following proposal seeks to address these recommendations. In this case, it will mean the closure of two, Victorian school buildings and the construction of a new, purpose built, 21<sup>st</sup> Century Primary school to serve the catchment area currently served by Cwmaman Infants’ and Glynhafod Junior Schools.

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

- 5.1 Equality and Community Impact Assessments have been prepared in respect of this proposal and will be published on the Council’s website together with the consultation document that outlines the proposal in detail. Copies of both reports are attached as Appendix A to this report.

#### **6 CONSULTATION**

- 6.1 The consultation process in respect of this proposal will be undertaken under the arrangements outlined in the Welsh Government’s School Organisation Code (006/2013)., These arrangements stipulate that consultation must be undertaken when the proposal is at a formative stage and that a consultation document must be prepared and circulated to prescribed consultees, as well as being published on the Council website.

- 6.2 The consultation document for this process is attached as Appendix B to this report; the proposed consultation period, if it is agreed to progress this matter will run from 1<sup>st</sup> March to 29<sup>th</sup> April 2016. Details of meetings and consultation events that have been organised are contained within the document.

## **7. THE STATUTORY PROCESS**

- 7.1 The process for closing schools is set out in the Welsh Government statutory code document 006/2013 – the School Organisation Code. The Code sets out the policy context and general principles for reviewing the supply of school places and sets out the factors that need to be taken into account by those bringing forward proposals. It also outlines the format of the consultation process and identifies the key stakeholders that must be consulted.
- 7.2 The initial consultation of the amalgamation proposal for the Cwmaman schools will involve all key stakeholders as outlined in the Code. This consultation will take place over a 8 week period and the proposed timetable for the whole process is as follows:
- Consultation period 1<sup>st</sup> March 2016 to 29<sup>th</sup> April 2016
  - Report back to Cabinet on outcome of consultation – May 2016
  - Statutory Notices published (if approved by Cabinet) for a 28 day period – June 2016
  - Report back to Cabinet on outcome of statutory notice period and details of objections received, with an appropriate recommendation – July 2016.
- 7.3 The School Organisation Code now makes provision for local authorities to determine their own statutory proposals; under the former arrangements, if just one objection was received following publication of the statutory notice, the proposals had to be forwarded to the Welsh Ministers, who would make the final decision as to whether the proposal could be implemented or not. This only now occurs when specific circumstances exist, e.g. if the proposal involves the removal of 6<sup>th</sup> form provision from a school, which clearly does not apply in this case.
- 7.4 The proposal will be for Cwmaman Infants' and Glynhafod Junior Schools to close on 31<sup>st</sup> August 2018, with pupils transferring to the new Primary School on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2018.

## **8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 If the proposal to create one primary school for Cwmaman proceeds, it will realise annual revenue savings of £162,000. In creating one school, sometimes redundancy costs may arise, as the number of staff required in the new school will be less than for the separate schools. The Council seeks to minimise this cost by redeploying displaced members of staff wherever possible. Therefore, it is not possible at this point in the consultation process to identify any possible redundancy costs.
- 8.2 A new school building is being proposed to be built to accommodate the new school, on the site of the former Fforchaman Colliery at Glanaman Road, Cwmaman. It is estimated that the cost of new build will be approximately £7.9million and will be funded by the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Programme, which includes a 50% contribution from Welsh Government. The Council's 50% share of the capital costs will be met through Prudential borrowing, funded by the revenue savings generated from closing the two schools.

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

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

## **10 CONCLUSION**

- 10.1 Members are asked to consider the attached consultation documents, to agree to their publication and to give officers approval to commence the required statutory consultation process to progress this proposal.



**Other Information:-**

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

***Appendices***

**The three appendices to the report are:**

- **Equality Impact Assessment**
- **Community Impact Assessment**
- **Consultation Document**

***Contact Officer***

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



**LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

**AS AMENDED BY**

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

**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**CABINET**

**4th FEBRUARY 2016**

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

**Item: IMPROVING PRIMARY EDUCATION PROVISION IN CWMAMAN,  
ABERDARE**

**Background Papers**

None.

Officer to contact:

Julie Hadley, School Organisation Manager  
01443 744227

APPENDIX A

**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL**  
**EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT QUESTIONNAIRE**

**EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT QUESTIONNAIRE**

**Directorate:** Education & Lifelong Learning

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

**Responsible officer:** Julie Hadley

**Date:** 1<sup>st</sup> March 2016

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

The Project is to:

Close both Cwmaman Infants and Glynhafod Junior Schools and replace them with a new purpose built Primary School, on land in Council ownership at the former Fforchaman Colliery site in Cwmaman.

**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.

Rhondda Cynon Taf's education services were inspected by Estyn in March 2012, at which time the following recommendations were made:

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

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

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

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

- The schools are 'paired' with each other, i.e. the children usually progress from the one to the other;
- The schools are located on sites that are just one mile apart from each other;
- Cwmaman Infants School has a surplus capacity figure of 24.8%, just under the Wales Audit Office recommended 'benchmark' for review of 25%
- Both schools have mixed aged classes.

The opportunity exists to bring the two schools together to create a larger, more educationally viable Primary school in a new, purpose built, state of the art building.

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

It is the Council's view that creating a Primary school for the community of Cwmaman, in a new, purpose built school will improve educational outcomes and provision for the following reasons;

- A single school vision and ethos, with a governing body and management team on a single site providing leadership across the full primary age range, using consistent policies and practices;
- Improved transition from the Foundation Phase to Key Stage 2 (Yr 2 to Yr 3) and overall progression;
- Greater consistency of teaching and learning for pupils across the key stages including:
  - Seamless curriculum planning and co-ordination;
  - Shared schemes of work, assessment and tracking of pupil progress;
  - Greater continuity in terms of expectations, behaviour, partnerships with parents and
  - Day to day organisation;
- Less change for parents and pupils;

- Greater continuity of support for vulnerable groups of pupils;
- Opportunities for staff to move between key stages and further develop expertise;
- Potential for financial savings in terms of staffing structures and purchase of services, which accrue to the single school; and
- The future capital investment benefits that would arise from the construction of a modern, state of the art purpose built school that meets all the required standards of a 21<sup>st</sup> Century learning environment.

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

- A larger school with a bigger role;
- A more flexible organisation;
- Improved career prospects;
- Improved curriculum co-ordination;
- The opportunity to teach across a wider age range;
- An increased range of expertise;
- Improved opportunities for staff interaction /co-ordination

A new, purpose built Primary School for Cwmaman will be able to provide greater flexibility and opportunity for pupils due to an extended, more enhanced and secure financial situation. Overall, the single, larger Primary School will be more financially viable than the Infants' and Junior schools in their current form.

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

- Being in classes with predominantly their own age group, the teacher will be better able to offer the pupils a wider and more varied curriculum to support all learners, including the least and most able;

- The teachers and teaching assistants may be different, however, providing that pupil numbers remain stable at their current levels, the large majority of the staff currently employed in Cwmaman Infants' and Glynhafod Junior Schools will simply 'slot' in to similar posts in the new Primary School, if they wish to do so;
- There will be more competition for pupils in and outside the classroom which is what children require if they are to achieve good educational outcomes;
- Being part of a larger school creates opportunity to engage in a wider range of curricular and extra-curricular activities.
- Build on the achievement gained at both schools by bringing together a larger team of staff to share expertise and experience.
- Being taught in a new, state of the art, purpose built school building, with sports facilities adjacent to it, which will be fit for the purpose of providing education in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

The principal change will be an improvement in the quality of the educational provision, and this should have a significant impact on educational performance of the pupils.

The catchment area of the new Primary School will not change, i.e. it will continue to be the same as the current catchment area of Cwmaman Infants' and Glynhafod Junior Schools. The Council's policy regarding free school transport will continue to apply.

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

	<b>Capacity</b>	<b>Number On Roll 2015</b>	<b>Total Surplus Places 2015</b>	<b>Estimated NOR 2020</b>	<b>Total Surplus Places 2020</b>	<b>Surplus Places 2020 %</b>
Cwmaman Infants	129	97	32	90	39	30%
Glynhafod Junior	109	102	7	109	0	0%
	<b>238</b>	<b>199</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>199</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>16%</b>

The new Primary school will be constructed to have a pupil capacity of 210 places plus nursery provision, which is sufficient to ensure that all children resident in this catchment area will be able to access a place in the new school when it opens and in future years.

### **The Current School Buildings –**

Cwmaman Infants' School is an English Medium Community School located at Fforchaman Road, Cwmaman, Aberdare. The school site consists of a traditional stone Victorian building, constructed in 1880. Based on the results of the Welsh Government commissioned building survey of all schools Cwmaman Infants is graded a B for condition and a C for suitability, where A is the highest and D is the lowest performing building respectively. The current figure for the maintenance work that would be desirable to undertake at this school is £289,000.

Glynhafod Junior School is a Community School located at Glynhafod Street, Cwmaman and the school site consists of a traditional Victorian style stone and brick building, constructed in 1912 with a double mobile classroom unit on the front yard. Based on the results of the Welsh Government commissioned building survey of all schools Glynhafod Junior is graded a B for condition and a B for suitability, where A is the highest and D is the lowest performing building respectively. The current figure for the maintenance work that would be desirable to undertake at this school is £405,000; this includes the cost of a replacement roof and the removal of the mobile classrooms.

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

Members of the public   Staff   Both   Other   Please state: children aged 3-11 years resident in the community of Cwmaman, Aberdare, the parents and carers of these children.

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

New   Review   Cessation

All 3.

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

People / issues to consider	Impact policy / practice will have			If a positive or negative impact is identified, explain why:
	Positive	Negative	Neutral (No impact)	
Age (young and old)	Young – High		Old – low	<p>Better learning facilities for all.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ensure that all the children in the new Primary school feel safe and secure,</li> <li>• make the learning environments, comfortable and attractive for all children who access them.</li> <li>• access services to improve the lives of children and their families.</li> <li>• Improved facilities will enable the pupils to access learning and cultural activities which can help develop relationships within communities.</li> <li>• The changing curriculum, life long learning opportunities and use of ICT will provide the opportunity to enable all learners to reach their potential.</li> <li>• Facilities at Primary schools, in particular the Infant teaching areas are geared towards the needs of young children and are, as such not suitable for use by older persons.</li> </ul>
Disability (remember to consider the different types of disability)	High			The new school building will be fully accessible to all persons and will comply with all current legislation in this regard.

People / issues to consider	Impact policy / practice will have			If a positive or negative impact is identified, explain why:
	Positive	Negative	Neutral (No impact)	
Gender			Low	
Gender Reassignment			Low	
Race			Low	
Religion or Belief			Low	
Sexual Orientation			Low	
Welsh Language			Low	
Carers			Low	

## EVIDENCE

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

Reports of the Director of Education to Cabinet - January 2016.  
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.**

With the provision of a brand new, state of the art school building that is centrally located within the catchment area, which will have facilities suitable for the provision of education in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, it is difficult to envisage any negative impacts.

#### **INVOLVEMENT & CONSULTATION**

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

The following consultation meetings/ open events are to be held

School Affected	Group	Time/Date	Venue
Cwmaman Infants' and Glynhafod Junior Schools	Federated Governing Body and Staff Meeting	Tuesday 15 <sup>th</sup> March 2016, 4 – 6pm	Cwmaman Infants' School
Cwmaman Infants' School	School Council	Tuesday 15 <sup>th</sup> March 2016, 2.30 – 3.00 pm	Cwmaman Infants' School
Glynhafod Junior School	School Council	Tuesday 15 <sup>th</sup> March 2016, 1.45 – 2.15 pm	Glynhafod Junior School
Both Schools and members of the local community	Parents and public drop in session and exhibition	Wednesday 27 <sup>th</sup> April 2016, 4 – 6pm	Glynhafod Junior School

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

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

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

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

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

## **MONITORING AND REVIEW**

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

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

## **ADDRESSING THE IMPACT**

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

- Continue the Policy

**Please indicate and provide reasons for your decision.**

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

**12. ACTION PLAN**

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

**EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT ACTION PLAN**

Action	Responsible Officer	Timescale for Actions	Timescale and actions for Review	Measures to be taken to evaluate effects of actions
To finalise the plans for the construction of the new school	David Powell Service Director, Corporate Maintenance and Design	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](mailto:equality@rhondda-cynon-taf.gov.uk)

Tel: 01443 424075

Signed: Chris Bradshaw                      Date: 1/3/16

Job Title: Director of Education & Lifelong Learning

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## **Proposal to amalgamate Cwmaman Infants' and Glynhafod Junior Schools**

### **Community Impact Assessment**

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

This proposal is to be consulted on between 1<sup>st</sup> March and 29<sup>th</sup> April 2016. A detailed consultation document has been circulated to all prescribed consultees. Copies have already been forwarded to the WG in compliance with consultation and publication guidelines. This document clearly focuses on the education argument and case for change, this Impact Assessment is not included in the consultation document as we are mindful that the document needs to be as concise and informative as possible, whilst at the same time being readable and 'user-friendly'. The free availability of this document is however stressed; in addition, it is available for any person to view or download from the Council website.

It has to be stressed at this point that the community impact of these proposals is negligible; if anything, community access to the new school that is being proposed to be built will be improved. The two schools are, in essence, closing in name only as they are being replaced by a new, state of the art purpose built Primary school for the village of Cwmaman that will be constructed on the site of the former Fforchaman Colliery site; we are not removing any school provision from this area. The new school will have playing field facilities immediately adjacent to it that will be for the exclusive use of the pupils during the school day. It is therefore considered that the overall impact of these proposals will be neutral on the local community, there will be no change to the level of services and provision that are offered at present in the two separate schools.

At the current time, the percentage of pupils attending Cwmaman Infants and Glynhafod Junior Schools that reside within the catchment area is 84%. Of the total number of pupils on roll in January 2015 (date of the PLASC return), including non-statutory Nursery and pre-Nursery pupils (236 between the two schools), just 37 do not live in catchment (the majority of these reside in the neighbouring catchment of Oaklands Primary).

Both Cwmaman Infants and Glynhafod Junior offer breakfast clubs to all pupils; this provision will continue in the Primary school should this proposal be agreed. Both schools also offer some after school clubs; again the construction of a new Primary school will allow for expansion of such facilities.

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

This proposal seeks to enhance the accommodation and facilities available to the pupils who will attend this new Primary school in the future from its catchment area (which will also remain unchanged). This is not a rural area, and the existence of so many other schools and other community facilities within a short distance means that it is not deemed necessary to consider the enhancement of other community facilities that may exist in the local area.

It must also be noted that the two school sites are located a mile apart at present, and that the new proposed site will be located in a relatively central part of the catchment area. No additional transportation will be required as a result. This is also considered to be a benefit to parents with children of both Infant and Junior age in future, as their children's school provision will be located in the same school, as opposed to two separate ones at present.

As children are going to attend a single school that is relatively centrally located in a reasonably small catchment area, it is not considered that there will be any major changes to their mode or method of transportation to school and there will be no considerable extra distance involved in respect of this journey; some journeys to school may even be shorter.



**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**CONSULTATION ON THE PROPOSED  
AMALGAMATION OF CWMAMAN INFANTS' AND  
GLYNHAFOD JUNIOR SCHOOLS, TO CREATE A NEW  
COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL, FROM 1<sup>ST</sup>  
SEPTEMBER 2018.**

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## Introduction

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Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council wishes to seek the views of a wide range of stakeholders on the proposal to amalgamate Cwmaman Infants' and Glynhafod Junior Schools. The amalgamation will be achieved by closing the two existing schools and opening a new Primary School to replace them. A new school building to accommodate all children from the village who require a place at the Primary school is proposed to be built on the site of the former Fforchaman Colliery, on land in the ownership of the Council located between the Cwrt Alun Lewis sheltered housing complex and the football field at Glanaman Road. It is proposed that the two schools would close on 31<sup>st</sup> August 2018 with the pupils transferring to the new Primary school on 1 September 2018.

### Who will we consult with?

We are seeking the views of the following stakeholders:

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

### What will the consultation process entail?

The consultation will start on the 1<sup>st</sup> March 2016 and will be completed at 5pm on 29<sup>th</sup> April 2016. The feedback from the consultation will be collated and summarised, and a report presented to the Council's Cabinet in May, 2016. This consultation report will be available for all persons to view on the Council internet site and copies can be obtained on request from the addresses detailed on Page 5 of this document.

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

If the Cabinet decides to proceed with the proposal a Statutory Notice is published providing a 28 day notice period for objections. The School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 requires that anyone wishing to make objections to a school organisation proposal has the opportunity to do so. To be considered as statutory objections, objections **must** be made in writing or by email, and sent to the Council within 28 days of the date on which the proposal was published.

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

If there are objections, the Council's Director of Education & Lifelong Learning will publish an objection report providing a summary of the objections and his response to them within 7 days of the day of the determination of the proposal, or within 28 days of the end of the objection period (as appropriate). This report will also be available for all persons to view on the Council's internet site and copies can be obtained on request from the addresses detailed on Page 5 of this document.

If the Council's Cabinet approve the proposal, the proposal will be implemented in accordance with the date given in the statutory notice or any subsequently modified date. In the case of this proposal the implementation date is 1<sup>st</sup> September 2018.

### **What do you have to consider?**

The remainder of the consultation document sets out the rationale for the proposed change to primary education provision in Cwmaman, Aberdare. We would like you to consider the information contained within this document and to hear your views as to whether or not you support the proposal to amalgamate Cwmaman Infants' and Glynhafod Junior Schools. A new school building to accommodate all children from the village who require a place at the Primary school is proposed to be built on the site of the former Fforchaman Colliery, on land in the ownership of the Council located between the Cwrt Alun Lewis sheltered housing complex and the football field at Glanaman Road.

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

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

School Affected	Group	Time/Date	Venue
Cwmaman Infants' and Glynhafod Junior Schools	Federated Governing Body and Staff Meeting	Tuesday, 15 <sup>th</sup> March 2016, 4 – 6pm	Cwmaman Infants' School
Cwmaman Infants' School	School Council	Tuesday, 15 <sup>th</sup> March 2016, 2.30 – 3.00 pm	Cwmaman Infants' School
Glynhafod Junior School	School Council	Tuesday, 15 <sup>th</sup> March, 2016, 1.45 – 2.15 pm	Glynhafod Junior School
Both Schools and members of the local community	Parents and public drop in session and exhibition	Wednesday, 27 <sup>th</sup> April 2016, 4 – 6pm	Glynhafod Junior School

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

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

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

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

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

All correspondence should be received **no later than 5pm Friday, 29<sup>th</sup> April 2016.**

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

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

## Background to the proposal

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

Cwmaman Infants' School (Cwmaman Infants') is an English Medium Community School located at Fforchaman Road, Cwmaman, Aberdare. The school site consists of a traditional stone Victorian building, constructed in 1880. Based on the results of the Welsh Government commissioned building survey of all schools Cwmaman Infants is graded a B for condition and a C for suitability, where A is the highest and D is the lowest performing building respectively. The current figure for the maintenance work that would be desirable to undertake at this school is £289,000.

The pupil numbers in Cwmaman Infants' over the past four years are shown below and are obtained from the statutory annual pupil count (PLASC) which must be undertaken in January each year. The numbers shown exclude nursery age pupils, as we are required to exclude these from the table by the Welsh Government's statutory School Organisation Code, however we have shown the nursery numbers separately.

Cwmaman Infants' School					
No on roll in January	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015*
Total statutory aged pupils	85	90	95	96	97
Pre-nursery and Nursery pupils	41	41	39	46	37

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

Cwmaman Infants' School									
Projected No on roll in January	Capacity of the School	2015 (Actual)	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	% surplus places in 2020	
Statutory aged pupils	129	97	93	87	83	83	90	30.2%	
Pre-nursery and Nursery pupils	(43 places)	37	32	38	40	40	40		

Cwmaman Infants' School was inspected by Estyn in June 2015 and the school's current performance was deemed good, with its prospects for improvement also good.

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

- R1** Ensure consistency in teaching and developing pupils' numeracy skills and understanding in all classes; and increase opportunities for pupils to use their numeracy skills in all areas of learning
- R2** Share good practice in Welsh language development to improve teacher confidence and ensure consistently good provision in all classes
- R3** Enable governors to challenge leaders more robustly in relation to the school's performance
- R4** Further develop the role of middle leaders in writing reports that focus more sharply on pupils' standards, and the ability of all leaders to write more evaluatively and consider the impact of initiatives more effectively

Since September 2012, the Council's School Improvement Services have been provided by the Central South Consortium, a regional school improvement services for the five local authorities of Bridgend, Cardiff, Merthyr Tydfil, Rhondda Cynon Taf and the Vale of Glamorgan. Schools are rated as either Green, Yellow, Amber or Red in respect of their standards. The Consortium categorises the performance of each school in the region and considers that:

*Cwmaman Infants School has recently been categorised as a 'Green' school, the highest level it can achieve. This rating means that the school has a track record of sustaining a high level of learner outcomes, it demonstrates resilience at all levels and is challenged to move forward towards, or sustaining excellence.*

The tables below set out the performance of Cwmaman Infants' for the key measures of educational performance over the past three years and compare the school to similar schools across Wales based on free school meals. The three year average of the percentage of pupils in receipt of free school meals (all pupils) is 52.94%.

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

	2012	2012 Benchmark Quartile*	2013	2013 Benchmark Quartile*	2014	2014 Benchmark Quartile*
<b>Foundation Phase Indicator</b>	93.8%	<b>1st</b>	92.9%	<b>1st</b>	88.2%	<b>2nd</b>
<b>Personal and social development wellbeing and cultural diversity</b>	100%	<b>1st</b>	100%	<b>1st</b>	100%	<b>1st</b>
<b>Language literacy and communication skills English</b>	93.8%	<b>1st</b>	92.9%	<b>1st</b>	91.1%	<b>1<sup>st</sup></b>
<b>Mathematical</b>	96.9%	<b>1st</b>	92.9%	<b>1st</b>	88.2%	<b>2nd</b>

<b>development</b>						
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\* - benchmark quartiles – 1 being the highest, 4 the lowest.

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

	2012 %	2012 Benchmark Quartile	2013 %	2013 Benchmark Quartile	2014 %	2014 Benchmark Quartile	2015 %	2015 Benchmark Quartile
<b>% attendance</b>	93%	<b>2nd</b>	92.6%	<b>2nd</b>	92.7%	<b>4th</b>	94.9%	<b>1<sup>st</sup></b>

### **Information on the Schools – Glynhafod Junior School**

Glynhafod Junior School (Glynhafod Junior) is a Community School located at Glynhafod Street, Cwmaman and the school site consists of a traditional Victorian style stone and brick building, constructed in 1912 with a double mobile classroom unit on the front yard. Based on the results of the Welsh Government commissioned building survey of all schools Glynhafod Junior is graded a B for condition and a B for suitability, where A is the highest and D is the lowest performing building respectively. The current figure for the maintenance work that would be desirable to undertake at this school is £405,000; this includes the cost of a replacement roof and the removal of the mobile classrooms.

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

<b>Glynhafod Junior School</b>					
No on roll in January	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>
Total statutory aged pupils	82	82	80	90	102

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

<b>Glynhafod Junior School</b>							
Capacity of the School	<b>2015 (Actual)</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>% surplus places in 2020</b>
<b>109</b>	102	110	113	113	112	109	<b>0%</b>

Glynhafod Junior School was last inspected by Estyn in December 2010. The school's current performance was deemed to be good, and its prospects for improvement also good.

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

- R1** continue to address the gap between boys' and girls' attainment;
- R2** improve standards of Welsh language skills, especially in upper key stage 2;
- R3** strengthen the partnership with parents;
- R4** continue to improve attendance; and
- R5** further develop the role of the school council

Since September 2012, the Council's School Improvement Services have been provided by the Central South Consortium, a regional school improvement services for the five local authorities of Bridgend, Cardiff, Merthyr Tydfil, Rhondda Cynon Taf and the Vale of Glamorgan. Schools are rated as either Green, Yellow, Amber or Red in respect of their standards. The Consortium categorises the performance of each school in the region and considers that:

*Glynhafod Junior School like Cwmaman Infants School has recently been categorised as a 'Green' school, the highest level it can achieve. This rating means that the school has a track record of sustaining a high level of learner outcomes, it demonstrates resilience at all levels and is challenged to move forward towards, or sustaining excellence.*

This is the same outcome as for Cwmaman Infants School. Since September 2012, the two schools have shared a federated governing body; they also share a Headteacher, as the Headteacher of Cwmaman Infants has, since the above date also undertaken the role as Acting Headteacher at Glynhafod Junior School.

The tables overleaf set out the performance of Glynhafod Junior for the key measures of educational performance over the past three years and compare the school to similar schools across Wales based on free school meals. The three year average of the percentage of pupils with free school meals is 44.12%

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

	2012 %	2012 Benchmark Quartile	2013 %	2013 Benchmark Quartile	2014 %	2014 Benchmark Quartile	2015 %	2015 Benchmark Quartile
<b>Core Subject Indicator</b>	73.9	<b>3rd</b>	81.3	<b>2nd</b>	87.5	<b>1st</b>	90.9	<b>1st</b>
<b>English</b>	73.9	<b>3rd</b>	87.5	<b>1st</b>	87.5	<b>2nd</b>	90.9	<b>1st</b>
<b>Maths</b>	78.3	<b>3rd</b>	87.5	<b>2nd</b>	93.8	<b>1st</b>	90.9	<b>2nd</b>
<b>Science</b>	82.6	<b>3rd</b>	93.8	<b>1st</b>	100	<b>1st</b>	95.4	<b>1st</b>

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

	2012 %	2012 Benchmark Quartile	2013 %	2013 Benchmark Quartile	2014 %	2014 Benchmark Quartile	2015 %	2015 Benchmark Quartile
<b>% attendance</b>	94.4	<b>1st</b>	92.2	<b>3rd</b>	94.2	<b>2nd</b>	95.4	<b>1st</b>

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

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

Rhondda Cynon Taf's education services were inspected by Estyn in March 2012, at which time the following recommendations were made:

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

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

- Surplus places in excess of 25% of published capacity;
- Buildings that are beyond economic repair/not fit for purpose;
- Financially unviable (usually due to a sharp fall in pupil numbers);
- Schools considered to be 'small' schools, i.e. schools with 90 or fewer pupils of statutory school age;
- Separate infant and junior schools in close proximity;

- 'Paired' schools, i.e. where children progress from one of the schools to the other;
- Mixed aged classes where there are more than two age groups in one class;
- Schools considered to be at risk, based on their academic Key Stage data and the quality of the leadership, of meeting Estyn's criteria as a school in need of significant improvement or special measures.

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

- The schools are 'paired' with each other, i.e. the children usually progress from the one to the other;
- The schools are located on sites that are one mile apart from each other;
- Cwmaman Infants School has a current surplus capacity figure of 24.8%, just under the Wales Audit Office recommended 'benchmark' for review of 25%
- Both schools have mixed aged classes;

As advised, the two schools already share a federated Governing Body and a Headteacher.

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

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

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

It is the Council's view that creating a Primary school for the community of Cwmaman, in a new, purpose built school will improve educational outcomes and provision for the following reasons;

- A single school vision and ethos, with a governing body and management team on a single site providing leadership across the full primary age range, using consistent policies and practices;
- Improved transition from the Foundation Phase to Key Stage 2 (Yr 2 to Yr 3) and overall progression;
- Greater consistency of teaching and learning for pupils across the key stages including:
  - Seamless curriculum planning and co-ordination;
  - Shared schemes of work, assessment and tracking of pupil progress;
  - Greater continuity in terms of expectations, behaviour, partnerships with parents and
  - Day to day organisation;
- Less change for parents and pupils;

- Greater continuity of support for vulnerable groups of pupils;
- Opportunities for staff to move between key stages and further develop expertise;
- Potential for financial savings in terms of staffing structures and purchase of services, which accrue to the single school; and
- The future capital investment benefits that would arise from the construction of a modern, state of the art purpose built school that meets all the required standards of a 21<sup>st</sup> Century learning environment.

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

- A larger school with a bigger role;
- A more flexible organisation;
- Improved career prospects;
- Improved curriculum co-ordination;
- The opportunity to teach across a wider age range;
- An increased range of expertise;
- Improved opportunities for staff interaction /co-ordination

A new, purpose built Primary School for Cwmaman will be able to provide greater flexibility and opportunity for pupils due to an extended, more enhanced and secure financial situation. Overall, the single, larger Primary School will be more financially viable than the Infants' and Junior schools in their current form.

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

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

- Being in classes with predominantly their own age group, the teacher will be better able to offer the pupils a wider and more varied curriculum to support all learners, including the least and most able;
- The teachers and teaching assistants may be different, however, providing that pupil numbers remain stable at their current levels, the large majority of the staff currently employed in Cwmaman Infants' and Glynhafod Junior Schools will simply 'slot' in to similar posts in the new Primary School, if they wish to do so;
- There will be more competition for pupils in and outside the classroom which is what children require if they are to achieve good educational outcomes;
- Being part of a larger school creates opportunity to engage in a wider range of curricular and extra-curricular activities.
- Build on the achievement gained at both schools by bringing together a larger team of staff to share expertise and experience.
- Being taught in a new, state of the art, purpose built school building, with sports facilities adjacent to it, which will be fit for the purpose of providing education in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

The principal change will be an improvement in the quality of the educational provision, and this should have a significant impact on educational performance of the pupils.

The catchment area of the new Primary School will not change, i.e. it will continue to be the same as the current catchment area of Cwmaman Infants' and Glynhafod Junior Schools. The Council's policy regarding home to school transport provision will continue to apply.

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

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 community of Cwmaman in accordance with the seven core aims set out above.

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

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

The Headteacher of Cwmaman Infants School also became the Acting Headteacher of Glynhafod Junior School in September 2015 and has continued to undertake both roles since this date. If the proposal is agreed, the temporary governing body will determine how the post of Headteacher of the new Primary School is to be appointed.

A new permanent governing body will be appointed for the new Primary School when it opens in September 2018; the temporary governing body will remain in place until all governor appointments are made. The existing federated governing body of the two schools will also remain in office until the new school opens.

There would also be benefits for teaching staff, which should improve teaching standards within the School. Currently, pupils are taught in mixed age groups. If the proposal proceeds, the new Primary School will have approx 200 pupils of statutory school age which will equate to 7 teachers for 7 age groups. Therefore, the majority of pupils will be taught in their own age group, which makes it considerably easier for the class teacher to provide an appropriate curriculum and support for all pupils. This should result in higher standards of teaching and learning and better educational outcomes. The pupils and staff will also enjoy the benefits of enhanced and superior educational facilities that a new school build will bring.

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

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

### **What will be the likely impact of the Proposal on the community of Cwmaman?**

The Aberaman South electoral ward is a Communities First Area and is also a Flying Start Area.

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

As this is a consultation process at this point in time, no decisions have yet been taken as to the potential future use of any school sites that may become surplus to requirements should these proposals be implemented. Such matters will be determined at the appropriate time.

## What are the financial implications of the Proposal?

The purpose of creating all through primary schools, as the principal model of school organisation is not driven by financial considerations. Savings that do arise initially benefit the remaining school, as they enable school improvements to be made, and then schools as a whole through redistribution of the savings across the County Borough.

A move from a position with, ‘two schools-two budgets’, to a single school with a single budget does result in a number of budgets being removed, or reduced, for example, there will only be one budget for a head teacher not two, but conversely the new single school is able to make significant savings from which it benefits. Although it is not possible to be precise about figures related to savings, as much would depend on future decisions of the new Primary School’s Governing Body, a summary of the known budgetary impacts is set out overleaf.

	Glynhafod Junior (Current)	Cwmaman Infants’ (Current)	Cwmaman Primary (Future)	Revenue Savings
	£’000	£’000	£’000	£’000
Annual Revenue Budget based on 2015/16 budget	379	481	698	162

A new school will be constructed to accommodate the Primary School at an estimated cost of £7.9 million and will be funded from the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Programme, 50% of which will be funded by the Welsh Government and 50% from the Council.

## What are the disadvantages of this proposal?

Some parents may feel that two smaller schools are better for pupils rather than one larger school – in other words there could be a view that smaller schools may be more personal and less daunting, particularly for new entrants. The new Primary School after the amalgamation will still only be the size of an average Rhondda Cynon Taf primary school, with approx 200 statutory age pupils in attendance and there are many much larger, very successful primary schools in the County Borough.

There will be staffing implications in that, for example, there will be need for only one Headteacher, but the two schools already have a shared post holder. Staff will be concerned about the security of their jobs which is why the temporary governing body will, as soon as possible, once the statutory processes are complete, address the staffing issues. In practice, governing bodies seek to keep as much continuity in the staffing as is possible in these situations.

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

## What alternative options have been considered other than the amalgamation of Cwmaman Infants' and Glynhafod Junior Schools?

The current position is that we have two relatively small 'paired' schools, located just one mile away from each other with approximately 40 surplus places between the two schools. If the option were to 'do nothing', this would not change the current position of the two schools at all and there would not be any opportunities to utilise this spare capacity in a more effective and efficient way.

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

- Close both schools and create a new build Primary school on a new site in Cwmaman, located on a plot of land in Council ownership that is located between the two schools at the current time, equidistant from both and which is within in the catchment area of the combined schools – the current proposal;
- Continue with the current federation, maintaining the two school buildings, with two separate school budgets but with one governing body and Headteacher. This, in effect is the 'do nothing' option that would make no change and thus no improvement to the current way in which the two schools are organised and managed.

In respect of the federation of the governing bodies, this has already created in essence a two -site school under one Headteacher and one governing body. They remain as two separate legal entities and employ two sets of staff. This option would not enable the educational benefits that accrue from deploying the teachers across both schools and improving the standards of teaching and learning that arise from creating a single school as the school buildings are located a mile apart, making joint working relatively difficult. Both schools would still be subjected to separate inspections by Estyn also.

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

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

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

1. The Council's Cabinet considers the Code and authorises a consultation on the changes to the schools;
2. At the start of the consultation period the Council **must** provide consultees with a consultation document and give them at least 42 days in which to respond, with at least 20 of these days being school days. If the Council considers it appropriate meetings are held with stakeholders during the consultation period;

3. Consultation comments are collated and summarised by the Council. This summary together with the Council's officers own responses is published in a consultation report within 13 weeks of the end of the consultation period and presented to the Council's Cabinet for consideration;
4. The Council's Cabinet decide whether to proceed with the changes within 6 months of the end of the consultation period. If the decision is to proceed, Step 5 is taken. If a new option emerges during the consultation which the Council's Cabinet wish to consider, then Steps 1-3 are repeated;
5. Statutory notice is published providing a 28 day notice period for objections. The notice **must** be published on a school day and with 15 school days (not including the day of publication) in the notice period;
6. If objections are received, the Council **must** publish an objection report providing a summary of the objections and their responses to them within 28 days of the end of the objection period;
7. The Council's Cabinet must decide to issue its decision on the proposal within 16 weeks of the end of the objection period;
8. If the proposals receive approval they should be implemented in accordance with the date given in the statutory notice, or any subsequent modified date.

## Consultation Response Pro-forma

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

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

### The Proposal

The proposal is to close Cwmaman Infants and Glynhafod Junior Schools and transfer all the pupils to a new Primary School for Cwmaman. It is proposed that the current two schools would close on 31 August 2018 with the pupils transferring to the new Primary School on 1 September 2018.

1. Do you agree with the proposal? Yes  No  Not sure

Please let us know the reasons for your choice

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

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

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4. Name (optional)

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**Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire**

*Please forward completed questionnaires to the above address no later than 29<sup>th</sup> April 2016.*