



**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**CABINET**

**20<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2018**

**21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY SCHOOLS PROGRAMME - PROPOSALS TO  
IMPROVE EDUCATION PROVISION IN CYNON VALLEY**

**REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE IN DISCUSSION WITH THE  
CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION, COUNCILLOR J ROSSER.**

**Authors:** Andrea Richards, Head of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools and Julie Hadley, School Organisation Manager.

**1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek Members approval to :

- Begin the required statutory consultations for the proposals to:
  - Improve education provision in Hirwaun by investing £10.4m in a new school for Hirwaun Primary School;
  - Improve Welsh medium education provision and increase the supply of places in the Upper Cynon Valley by making Penderyn Primary School, currently a dual language school, a Welsh medium Primary School;
- Develop 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Programme financial business cases with Welsh Government to:
  - Invest £3.3m to increase the capacity of Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Aberdar to meet the demand for Welsh medium school places;
  - Invest £10.2m to increase the capacity and improve the educational facilities at Ysgol Gyfun Rhydywaun to meet the demand for Welsh medium places.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that Members:

- 2.1 Agree to commence the public consultation on the proposal to invest £10.4m for a new school for Hirwaun Primary School, and change the category of Penderyn Primary School from a dual language school to a Welsh medium school. No new English medium admissions will be

approved after August 2019, and the catchment school for the English medium pupils will be Hirwaun Primary School.

- 2.2 Agree to develop and submit a financial business case to Welsh Government to seek 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Funding to invest £3.3m to increase the capacity of Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Aberdar to meet the demand for Welsh medium school places;
- 2.3 Agree to develop and submit a financial business case to Welsh Government to seek 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools funding to invest £10.2m to increase the capacity and improve the educational facilities at Ysgol Gyfun Rhydywaun to meet the demand for Welsh medium places.

All the proposals will be implemented by 2022.

### **3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 To improve and extend the range of education provision available in the Cynon Valley area of Rhondda Cynon Taf.

### **4. BACKGROUND**

#### **The school reorganisation proposal for Hirwaun and Penderyn**

- 4.1 Hirwaun Primary School is located on a large, open site at Glannant Street, Hirwaun, Aberdare. The school's buildings comprise of two single storey CLASP buildings, with concrete wall sections built around steel frames and flat felt roofs. They are in a poor condition overall, rated as grade C minus on a scale where A is graded as excellent and D as very poor. There is a backlog of maintenance works valued at over £1.9 million, which is the highest of any Primary school in RCT. The nature and type of construction makes the undertaking of major repairs or any kind, or remodeling/refurbishment work very difficult and costly to achieve.
- 4.2 For the reasons given above, the most cost effective solution to the building issues at Hirwaun Primary is considered to be a new build on the existing site, which as stated is large enough to achieve this; on completion of this work the current school buildings will be demolished and the sites reinstated for use as play areas and car parking. This project has therefore been given a high priority ranking in our submission to Welsh Government for funding for Band B of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Programme.
- 4.3 Penderyn Primary School is a dual language (offers education provision through either English or Welsh Medium, subject to parental preference) school located at Pontprenllwyd, Penderyn, Aberdare. The school building is in an excellent condition as it is relatively new,

constructed in 2006. The catchment area of the Welsh Medium department of the school is much larger than that of the English department and encompasses the villages of Hirwaun and Rhigos, as well as Penderyn.

- 4.4 In recent years, the number of pupils attending the Welsh department of the school has risen quite sharply, whilst the numbers attending the English department have declined. In January 2018 there were 179 children attending the Welsh department in total, compared with just 54 in the English department. Of these 54 pupils, just 22 reside within the designated catchment area of Penderyn village; 27, or 50% of the total number of English Medium pupils attending Penderyn actually live in Hirwaun.
- 4.5 Our future forecasts show the numbers of pupils expected to attend the English department continuing to decline; for example in January 2018 there were just 3 children attending the English medium nursery. Full information and data on this matter is contained within the consultation document attached as Appendix 1.
- 4.6 As part of the targets outlined in the Council's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP), the Council has indicated that it will review all of our dual language school provision. Converting Penderyn Primary School in to a full Welsh Medium School will assist in achieving the targets set to increase the number of children aged 7 years who are being taught through the medium of Welsh, it will provide additional Welsh Medium school places in an area of the County Borough that has clear evidence of demand for more Welsh Medium provision. Over the past four years the number of Welsh medium pupils at Penderyn Primary School has increased by 17.4%, whilst the demand for English medium places has fallen by 12.1%.
- 4.7 Those pupils educated through the medium of Welsh will continue their education at Penderyn Primary School. From 1<sup>st</sup> September 2019, no new pupils wishing to be educated through the medium of English will be admitted to Penderyn Primary School. The catchment school for pupils opting for English medium provision will be Hirwaun Primary School. The new school at Hirwaun will have additional capacity to ensure that sufficient places are available.
- 4.8 We are also proposing to undertake a minor catchment area change for the new Penderyn Welsh Medium School, to better match demand for places with supply and ensure that the additional places created through this reorganisation are filled. The communities of Trenant and Penywaun, which are currently in the catchment area of YGG Aberdar for Welsh Medium provision will transfer to the new Penderyn Welsh Medium School, with effect from September 2020. Further details of

this change are contained within the consultation document for this proposal, which is attached at Appendix 1.

- 4.9 Pupils living in the communities of Trenant and Penywaun whose home addresses will be within the extended Penderyn Community Primary School catchment area will receive free transport to Penderyn Primary School for Welsh medium education as they reside more than 1½ miles safe “walking distance” from their nearest suitable school.

In catchment pupils (resident in the village of Penderyn and Rhondda Cynon Taf) attending the English medium stream of Penderyn Community Primary School will receive free transport to the new Hirwaun Primary School building as the walking route is deemed to be ‘unavailable’. This provision will not be available to any English Medium pupils who currently attend Penderyn but do not reside in the designated catchment area, as they are attending this school as a result of parental preference.

**The £3.3m investment in YGG Aberdar to create more capacity**

- 4.9 YGG Aberdar relocated, with a new build, to Laburnum Drive, Cwmdare, Aberdare in September 2003. It was previously accommodated in a poor condition, Victorian building at Cardiff Road, Aberaman, Aberdare, some 2 miles away from its current site.
- 4.10 The new building at Cwmdare had approximately 90 additional places compared with the former building, but since the school relocated, pupil numbers have been steadily rising, as shown in the tables below. Numbers exclude the Nursery classes, which are shown separately:

2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
293	323	324	357	373	370	354	366	359	374

2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
370	370	366	368	359

Nursery numbers are as follows:

2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
63	41	64	57	47	52	53	56	55	51

2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
57	55	55	54	56

The capacity of the school is 372 pupils, plus 54 Nursery places. Since 2015, our published oversubscription criteria have been applied to Nursery admissions, meaning that only children resident within the

designated catchment area have been allocated places. Children resident out of catchment were offered places at their catchment Welsh Medium provision instead.

- 4.11 The above figures show that, with the exception of some minor fluctuations, the school has been operating at almost full capacity for the last 10 years. To meet this demand for places, a double mobile classroom was placed on the school site in 2008, just 5 years after the new school opened. This additional temporary accommodation is also being fully utilised. It should also be noted that two new housing developments, at the former Aberdare High School site and the former College site, both of which are less than ½ mile from the school, are currently under construction.
- 4.12 To meet this recognised demand for Welsh Medium school places in the Upper Cynon Valley, we are proposing an extension to this school, as part of our proposals for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools and Education Programme, Band B. Our initial strategic outline programme for this grant bid, which for this particular project is funded equally by this Council and the Welsh Government, has received approval in principle, subject to the submission and acceptance of relevant business cases.
- 4.13 The specific proposal in respect of YGG Aberdar is to remove the double mobile classroom unit and replace it with a permanent build, 4 classroom extension block, plus improvements to parking and external play facilities. This will increase the pupil capacity of the school by 60 places overall and, coupled with the minor amendment to the catchment area outlined in paragraph 4.8 above, should ensure that the demand for places from within the catchment area of the school can be met for the foreseeable future.
- 4.14 The Council will undertake appropriate traffic impact assessments to improve the 'Safe Routes' in the Community which will involve additional on-site drop off areas for parents to improve traffic and road safety management in and around the school curtilage. The Council will also work with parents and the Community to promote and encourage sustainable travel such as promoting walking and cycling to reduce the impact of traffic around the school at key times of the day.

#### **The £10.2m investment in YG Rhydywaun to create more capacity**

- 4.15 Ysgol Gyfun Rhydywaun opened in 1995 in a new building at Lawrence Avenue, Penywaun, Aberdare, with only Year 7 pupils attending in the first year. The school 'grew' by one year group each year until it reached its full complement of pupils (years 7 to 13) in 2001. In this year, a planned extension to the school was completed providing a capacity of 1,050 pupils.

4.16 The pupil roll at this school, which also serves the Borough of Merthyr Tydfil, has also been steadily rising over the past 10 years, as illustrated in the table below:

2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
910	968	944	988	1007	986	998	980	957	971

4.17 As a result of minor changes to room usage within the school, the current published capacity of the school is 1,038 pupils; the published admissions limit for each year group is 168 pupils.

4.18 In the last 2 years, the school has been oversubscribed, i.e. it has received more applications for places than the number available. In September 2017, 188 pupils were admitted, the admission of 20 pupils over the admissions limit was only possible as a result of there being spare capacity overall in the school. In September 2018, 184 pupils will join the school at Year 7, again over the admissions limit. Oversubscription criteria has been applied for the past 2 years, with pupils not resident in catchment being refused admission (the majority of pupils refused resided in the neighbouring LA area of Neath Port Talbot).

4.19 Five year forecasts for the school are shown in the table below:

2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
1,005	1,037	1,065	1,104	1,123

This data shows us that the school will be operating at full capacity by 2020 and will be oversubscribed by 2021.

4.20 As outlined in paragraph 4.12 in relation to YGG Aberdar, we are also proposing an extension to Ysgol Gyfun Rhydywaun, utilising funding from our grant bid under the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools and Education Programme, Band B. This particular element of the bid is also subject to the acceptance of an appropriate business case by Welsh Government.

4.21 The proposal in respect of Ysgol Gyfun Rhydywaun is to construct a classroom extension block, and a separate sports hall containing classrooms for the PE curriculum. These works will increase the school's capacity to at least 1,200 places, adding an additional 162 places to the existing number. This should ensure that demand for places at this school can be met for the foreseeable future.

4.22 In addition to the above, the school will also require additional essential ancillary accommodation such as new toilets and curriculum specific teaching areas etc. to cater for the additional pupils. These facilities

were not provided when the school was extended in 2001 and the school does not, as a result, meet the recommended guidelines as outlined in various national school building bulletins. A survey of the school accommodation has revealed that the school has insufficient capacity in the following areas:

- General teaching classrooms and seminar rooms
- IT/Business Studies classrooms
- Science laboratories
- Design/Technology and Art rooms

The existing Physical Education facilities have also been deemed to be insufficient for the number of pupils who will attend the school in the future, which is why a new sports hall with PE classrooms is being proposed. Reference was also made in the Estyn report of 2016 to deficiencies in PE facilities, as follows: 'Boys and girls share the gymnasium and there is no other official indoor provision available at the school. As a result, the indoor sports resources are not suitable for the subject. Toilets and changing facilities are in adequate condition'.

## **5 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 Welsh Language, Equality and Community Impact Assessments are being prepared in respect of the Hirwaun/Penderyn proposal and will be published on the Council's website together with the consultation documents that outline the proposals in detail. Copies of these documents will be prepared in readiness for the commencement of the consultation process and will be published as outlined above.

## **6 CONSULTATION**

- 6.1 The consultation processes in respect of the Hirwaun/Penderyn proposals will be undertaken under the arrangements outlined in the Welsh Government's School Organisation Code. These arrangements stipulate that consultation must be undertaken when the proposals are at a formative stage and that consultation documents must be prepared and circulated to prescribed consultees, as well as being published on the Council website.
- 6.2 The consultation document for the proposal outlined in this report is attached as Appendix 1 to this report; the proposed consultation period, if it is agreed to progress this matter will run from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2018 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2018. Details of meetings that will be organised will be added to the draft consultation document once they have been confirmed with the respective schools.
- 6.3 Formal consultation on the proposals to extend YGG Aberdar and YG Rhydywaun is not required, as the increase in capacity at both schools

is below the threshold at which statutory consultation is necessary. We will, however, undertake local, informal consultation with both schools, including with pupils, staff and governors. In respect of YG Rhydywaun we will also discuss with Merthyr Tydfil CBC whether it will make a contribution to the cost of expanding the School and improving the facilities. Inevitably as housing development occurs in Merthyr Tydfil this will have a consequential impact on the demand for Welsh medium school places.

## **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 Welsh Government has recently conducted consultation on revisions to the above Code and it is expected that a new statutory document will be put in place by 1<sup>st</sup> November 2018. The attached consultation documents and the consultation processes will therefore be conducted in accordance with the provisions of this revised Code.
- 7.3 The initial consultation on all proposals outlined in this report will involve all key stakeholders as outlined in the revised Code. This consultation will take place over a 12-week period (not including school holidays) and the proposed timetable for the whole process is as follows:
- Consultation period 1<sup>st</sup> October 2018 – 31<sup>st</sup> December 2018
  - Report back to Cabinet on outcome of consultation – January 2019
  - Statutory Notices published (if approved by Cabinet) for a 28 day period – February 2019
  - Report back to Cabinet on outcome of statutory notice period and details of objections received, with appropriate recommendations – March 2019.
- 7.4 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. This specific



proposal will therefore be determined by the Council's Cabinet at the conclusion of the consultation process outlined in the timetable above.

## **8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 These proposals require a significant capital investment of £23.9m, of which it is proposed that 50% will be funded by the Council and 50% by the Welsh Government's 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Programme. Welsh Government has approved the Council's 21<sup>st</sup> Century School's Strategic Outline Programme which sets out an indicative level of capital funding available over the period 2019-2026. The next steps are to undertake the statutory consultation on the Hirwaun/Penderyn proposal set out in this report and to submit financial business cases to Welsh Government for all proposals contained within this report. This is the process required before Welsh Government makes any financial funding commitment to specific projects.
- 8.2 During the course of the consultation period any revenue and capital costs that accrue in completing the consultation and preparing financial business cases for Welsh Government approval will be met from within existing budgets.

## **9 LINKS TO THE COUNCIL'S CORPORATE PLAN / OTHER CORPORATE PRIORITIES AND THE WELL BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT**

- 9.1 The Council's Corporate Plan commits to "Continue to invest in improving school buildings, to ensure the County Borough's pupils have the learning environment fit for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century." The proposals considered in the report have taken into account the seven well-being goals and the five ways of working.

## **10 CONCLUSION**

- 10.1 This is another proposal that seeks to improve education provision in the Cynon Valley, offering more Welsh medium provision with an investment of £23.9m in new and improved facilities. Education standards in the area are improving but significant resources that should be released to improve educational opportunities for children are tied up in school sites that need to be significantly upgraded for 21<sup>st</sup> Century learning.
- 10.2 This proposal seeks to provide learning environments and learning experiences that are as good, if not better than those experienced across the best schools in the UK.
- 10.3 Members may have already seen the results of the Council's investment in new and improved schools across the Cynon and

Rhondda Valleys, and in Taf Ely in Pontyclun, and Tonyrefail. These investments have been well received with parents and the local community. This proposed investment in the Cynon Valley provides the opportunity for over 1,500 children to benefit from improved educational facilities.

- 10.4 It is recommended, therefore, that Members give approval to officers to commence the processes necessary to achieve the proposals outlined in this report.

***Other Information:-***

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

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

**AS AMENDED BY**

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

**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**CABINET**

**20<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2018**

**REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE IN DISCUSSION WITH THE  
CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION & LIFELONG LEARNING,  
COUNCILLOR J ROSSER.**

**Item: 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY SCHOOLS PROGRAMME - PROPOSALS TO  
IMPROVE EDUCATION PROVISION IN CYNON VALLEY**

***Background Papers***

**The background papers included as appendices to the report are:**

- **Consultation Document  
(various Impact Assessments are being prepared and will be  
finalised prior to commencement of consultation)**

***Contact Officer***

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



**RHONDDA CYNON TAF**

**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**CONSULTATION ON A PROPOSAL TO CONSTRUCT A  
NEW SCHOOL BUILDING FOR HIRWAUN PRIMARY  
SCHOOL AND THE PROPOSED CHANGE OF LANGUAGE  
MEDIUM STATUS OF PENDERYN COMMUNITY  
PRIMARY SCHOOL, FROM 1<sup>ST</sup> SEPTEMBER 2020**

## Table of Contents

### Introduction to the Proposal

Who will we consult with?	3
What will the consultation process entail?	4
What do you have to consider?	4
How do you make your views known?	5

### Background to the Proposal

Information on the schools – Penderyn Community Primary School	6
Information on the schools – Hirwaun Primary School	9
What is the basis for this proposal?	11
The Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP)	11
What is the educational case for changing the language medium of Penderyn Community Primary School and increasing pupil capacity at Hirwaun Primary School?	12
What will this proposal mean for the schools' pupils?	13
Catchment changes	14
Transport policy	15
What is the likely impact of the proposal on the staff of the schools?	16
What is the likely impact of the proposal on the communities of Penderyn and Hirwaun?	17
What are the financial implications of the proposal?	17
What are the disadvantages of this proposal?	17
What alternative options have been considered?	17
Governance	19
The new proposed school building	19
What is the statutory process?	19
Catchment maps	21
Consultation Response pro-forma	23

## Introduction to the Proposal

---

Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council wishes to seek the views of a wide range of stakeholders on the proposal to change the language medium of Penderyn Community Primary School and extend the capacity of Hirwaun Primary School. The change will be achieved by the construction of a new school building on the site of the current Hirwaun Primary School, to replace the current building, with Penderyn Community Primary School becoming a completely Welsh medium community primary school. As part of the proposal to change the language medium of Penderyn Community Primary School to completely Welsh medium, it is also proposed to extend the catchment area of Penderyn Community Primary School to include the communities of Trenant and Penywaun (currently in the Welsh medium catchment for Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Aberdar). It is proposed that pupils attending the English medium stream of Penderyn Community Primary School would (subject to parental preference), transfer to the new Hirwaun Primary School building on 1 September 2020.

### Who will we consult with?

We are seeking the views of the following stakeholders:

- The governing bodies of Hirwaun Primary School, Penderyn Community Primary School and Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Aberdar
- Pupils of Hirwaun Primary School, Penderyn Community Primary School and Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Aberdar
- Parents, carers and staff members of Hirwaun Primary School, Penderyn Community Primary School and Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Aberdar
- Other governing bodies of neighbouring 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 Consortium – Joint Education Service
- South East Wales Transport Association
- South Wales Police and Crime Commissioner
- Communities for Work Plus Employment Support Programme
- Cwm Taf Local Health Board
- The Early Years and Childcare Partnership
- Hirwaun and Penderyn Community Council
- The Welsh Language Commissioner
- Menter Iaith
- Mudiad Meithrin
- Neighbouring local authorities

## **What will the consultation process entail?**

The consultation will start on the 1<sup>st</sup> October 2018 and will be completed at 5pm on 31<sup>st</sup> December 2018. The feedback from the consultation will be collated and summarised, and a report presented to the Council's Cabinet in January 2019. This consultation report will 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.

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

If 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 and Inclusion Services will publish an objection report providing a summary of the objections and their response to them within 7 days of the day of the determination of the proposal. This report will also be available for all persons to view on the Council's internet site and copies can be obtained on request from the addresses detailed on page 6 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 2020.

## **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 Hirwaun and Penderyn. 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 change the language medium of Penderyn Community Primary School and its extended catchment area proposal, and extend the capacity of Hirwaun Primary School. The change will be achieved by the construction of a new school building on the site of the current Hirwaun Primary School, to replace the building, with Penderyn Community Primary School becoming a completely Welsh medium community primary school with a larger catchment area encompassing the communities of Trenant and Penywaun. It is proposed that pupils attending the English medium stream of Penderyn

Community Primary School would (subject to parental preference), transfer to the new Hirwaun Primary School building on 1 September 2020.

The proposal is to replace the current Hirwaun Primary School buildings with a newly constructed 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools standard building, on the existing site of the current school with a capacity of 390 pupils (plus nursery) all of which will be English medium, and to amend the language category of Penderyn Community Primary School from its current dual language status to a 3-11 Welsh medium community primary school with a capacity of 231 pupils (plus nursery) all of which will be Welsh medium.

### 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
Penderyn Community Primary School	Governing Body and Staff Meeting		Penderyn Community Primary School
Hirwaun Primary School	Governing Body and Staff Meeting		Hirwaun Primary School
Penderyn Community Primary School	School Council		Penderyn Community Primary School
Hirwaun Primary School	School Council		Hirwaun Primary School
Both Schools and members of the local community	Parents and public drop in session and exhibition		Hirwaun Primary 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

<http://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/EN/GetInvolved/Consultations/Schoolconsultations.aspx>

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, comments and any questions you may have in writing to:

Director of Education and Inclusion Services  
 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Team  
 Ty Trevithick  
 Abercynon CF45 4UQ Telephone (01443) 744227 Fax (01443) 744224

E-mail [schoolplanning@rctcbc.gov.uk](mailto:schoolplanning@rctcbc.gov.uk)

All correspondence should be received **no later than 5pm Monday, 31<sup>st</sup> December 2018.**



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.

## **Background to the proposal**

### **Information on the schools – Penderyn Community Primary School**

Penderyn Community Primary School is a dual language community primary school situated at Pontprenllwyd, Penderyn, which is a few miles from the town of Aberdare. The school site consists of a new building which was opened in 2006 and the school benefits from a Multi-Use Games Area and woodland area. Based on the results of the Welsh Government commissioned building survey of all schools Penderyn Community Primary School is graded a B for condition and A 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 £165,995.

The school is organised into two language streams. Parents choose for their children to study most of their lessons either through the medium of Welsh or through the medium of English. In recent years the number of pupils (including nursery) in the Welsh language stream has increased to 179, whilst numbers have fallen to just 54 in the English stream. Of the 54 pupils attending the English medium stream of Penderyn Community Primary School, only 22 pupils actually live within the Penderyn catchment area. The majority of pupils (27 pupils) live within the Hirwaun catchment area. There are 9 classes in the school, 6 of which are taught in Welsh and 3 which are taught in English.

The pupil numbers in Penderyn Community Primary School over the past four years are shown below and are obtained from the statutory pupil level annual school census (PLASC) which is 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. All data is split between the respective Welsh (W) and English (E) streams of the school:

<b>School</b>	<b>Age Range of whole school</b>	<b>Jan 2014</b>	<b>Jan 2015</b>	<b>Jan 2016</b>	<b>Jan 2017</b>	<b>Jan 2018</b>
Penderyn Primary (W)	3 - 11	138	146	150	159	162
Penderyn Primary (E)	3 - 11	58	59	57	56	51

Note: The pupil capacity of the school is 231 (excluding nursery) – this capacity covers the Welsh and English streams.

Nursery numbers (total numbers of pupils attending):

<b>School</b>	<b>Jan 2014</b>	<b>Jan 2015</b>	<b>Jan 2016</b>	<b>Jan 2017</b>	<b>Jan 2018</b>
Penderyn Primary (W)	28	23	24	23	17

Penderyn Primary (E)	12	2	4	4	3
----------------------	----	---	---	---	---

Over the next five years the pupil forecasts for Penderyn Community Primary School, which are calculated in accordance with guidance issued by Welsh Government, are as follows:

School	Jan 2019	Jan 2020	Jan 2021	Jan 2022	Jan 2023
Penderyn Primary (W)	167	160	162	152	150
Penderyn Primary (E)	46	47	41	36	38

### Primary School Standards

The following tables set out the performance of the Welsh (W) and English (E) streams of Penderyn Community Primary School for the key measures of educational performance over the past three years and compare the school to similar schools across Wales based on the numbers of pupils in receipt of free school meals.

Foundation Phase Outcomes						
Subjects	2015 %		2016 %		2017 %	
	Penderyn Primary (W)	Penderyn Primary (E)	Penderyn Primary (W)	Penderyn Primary (E)	Penderyn Primary (W)	Penderyn Primary (E)
Foundation Phase Indicator	92 (2)	100 (1)	95.2 (1)	90 (3)	96.4 (1)	100 (1)
Personal and social development wellbeing and cultural diversity	100 (1)	100 (1)	100 (1)	90 (4)	100 (1)	100 (1)
Language literacy and communication skills English/Welsh	96 (2)	100 (1)	95.2 (2)	90 (3)	96.4 (2)	100 (1)
Mathematical development	96 (1)	100 (1)	100 (1)	90 (3)	100 (1)	100 (1)

*The figures in brackets in the table above, compare the schools to similar schools across Wales based on free school meals. The performance is compared using benchmarked quartiles, with 1 being the highest and 4 the lowest.*

Key Stage Two Outcomes						
Subjects	2015 %		2016 %		2017 %	
	Penderyn Primary (W)	Penderyn Primary (E)	Penderyn Primary (W)	Penderyn Primary (E)	Penderyn Primary (W)	Penderyn Primary (E)
English	88.2 (3)	100 (1)	94.4 (2)	100 (1)	96.8 (2)	88.9 (4)
Welsh 1st	88.2 (3)	N/A	94.2 (2)	N/A	95.5 (2)	N/A
Maths	88.2 (3)	100 (1)	100 (1)	100 (1)	96.8 (2)	88.9 (4)
Science	88.2 (3)	100 (1)	100 (1)	100 (1)	96.8 (3)	88.9 (4)
Core Subject Indicator (CSI)	88.2 (3)	100 (1)	94.2 (2)	100 (1)	96.8 (2)	88.9 (4)

The figures in brackets in the table overleaf, compare the schools to similar schools across Wales based on free school meals. The performance is compared using benchmarked quartiles, with 1 being the highest and 4 the lowest.

The attendance of the pupils of the school over the past three years is set out below:

Percentage of half-day sessions attended by pupils of statutory school age during the academic year						
School	2015	2015 Benchmark Quartile	2016	2016 Benchmark Quartile	2017	2017 Benchmark Quartile
Penderyn Primary (whole school)	94.2	4	94.6	3	94.6	4
Penderyn Primary (W)	94.7	3	94.8	3	94.8	4
Penderyn Primary (E)	93	4	94	4	94.5	4

Penderyn Community Primary School was inspected by Estyn in April 2018 and the outcomes were as follows:-

<u>Inspection area</u>	<u>Judgement</u>
Standards	Good
Wellbeing and attitudes to learning	Good
Teaching and learning experiences	Adequate and needs improvement
Care, support and guidance	Good
Leadership and management	Good

Estyn also set out that, in order to build upon the current work, the school should:

- R1** Refine monitoring and self-evaluation procedures and ensure that reports identify the school's qualities and areas for development clearly
- R2** Make sure that planning procedures ensure appropriate achievement of the curriculum over time, and that they are useful to teachers in sessions on the classroom floor
- R3** Ensure that the school implements all of the principles of the foundation phase consistently

The Council's School Improvement Services are 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 categorised as either Green, Yellow, Amber or Red in respect of their standards. The categorisation colour shows the level of support a school needs (with the schools in the green category needing the least support and those in the red category needing the most intensive support). Each school will receive a tailored programme of support, challenge and intervention based on this category. The Consortium categorises the performance of each school in the region and Penderyn Community Primary School has recently been categorised as a 'Yellow' school.

## Information on the schools – Hirwaun Primary School

Hirwaun Primary School is an English medium Community School located at Glannant Street, Hirwaun, Aberdare and the school site consists of two separate single storey prefabricated buildings, consisting of concrete sections built around a steel frame with flat felt roof, constructed in 1969. Based on the results of the Welsh Government commissioned building survey of all schools Hirwaun Primary School is graded a C minus 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 £1,931,226.00.

The pupil numbers in Hirwaun Primary School over the past four years are shown below and are obtained from the statutory pupil level annual school census (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:

School	Age Range of whole school	Jan 2014	Jan 2015	Jan 2016	Jan 2017	Jan 2018
Hirwaun Primary	3 - 11	195	201	201	211	208

Note: The pupil capacity of the school is 265 (excluding nursery).

Nursery numbers (total numbers of pupils attending):

School	Jan 2014	Jan 2015	Jan 2016	Jan 2017	Jan 2018
Hirwaun Primary	38	33	32	36	41

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

School	Jan 2019	Jan 2020	Jan 2021	Jan 2022	Jan 2023
Hirwaun Primary	214	218	220	222	228

It should also be noted that there are currently 102 ‘in catchment’ children resident in Hirwaun attending schools outside of the Hirwaun Primary catchment area (excluding those attending faith schools). If demand from in catchment children should rise due to the provision of a new school building, the growth in pupil numbers would be able to be accommodated within the new building.

## Primary School Standards

The following tables set out the performance of Hirwaun Primary School for the key measures of educational performance over the past three years and compare the school to similar schools across Wales based on the numbers of pupils in receipt of free school meals.

Foundation Phase Outcomes			
	2015 %	2016 %	2017 %
Subjects	Hirwaun Primary	Hirwaun Primary	Hirwaun Primary
Foundation Phase Indicator	86.2 (2)	86.2 (2)	89.3 (1)
Personal and social development wellbeing and cultural diversity	93.1 (3)	100 (1)	96.4 (2)
Language literacy and communication skills English/welsh	86.2 (2)	86.2 (2)	92.9 (1)
Mathematical development	89.7 (2)	93.1 (1)	92.9 (1)

The figures in brackets in the table above, compare the schools to similar schools across Wales based on free school meals. The performance is compared using benchmarked quartiles, with 1 being the highest and 4 the lowest.

Key Stage Two Outcomes			
Subjects	2015 %	2016 %	2017 %
English	83.3 (3)	90.9 (1)	94.6 (1)
Maths	91.7 (1)	95.5 (1)	97.3 (1)
Science	91.7 (2)	95.5 (1)	94.6 (1)
Core Subject Indicator (CSI)	83.31 (2)	90.9 (1)	91.9 (1)

The figures in brackets in the table above, compare the schools to similar schools across Wales based on free school meals. The performance is compared using benchmarked quartiles, with 1 being the highest and 4 the lowest.

The attendance of the pupils of the school over the past three years is set out below:

Percentage of half-day sessions attended by pupils of statutory school age during the academic year						
School	2015	2015 Benchmark Quartile	2016	2016 Benchmark Quartile	2017	2017 Benchmark Quartile
Hirwaun Primary	94.2	2	93	4	93.6	3

Hirwaun Primary School was last inspected by Estyn in February 2018 and the outcomes were as follows:-

<u>Inspection area</u>	<u>Judgement</u>
Standards	Adequate and needs improvement
Wellbeing and attitudes to learning	Adequate and needs improvement
Teaching and learning experiences	Unsatisfactory and needs urgent improvement
Care, support and guidance	Good
Leadership and management	Adequate and needs improvement

Estyn also set out several recommendations for the school to implement, namely, that the school should:

- R1** Improve the quality of teaching and feedback to pupils
- R2** Improve standards of pupils' reading, writing and presentation of work
- R3** Improve pupils' standards in information and communication technology (ICT)
- R4** Ensure that the curriculum meets requirements and develops pupils' skills progressively
- R5** Improve pupils' independent learning skills
- R6** Correctly identify and address important areas of teaching and learning that need to improve and hold all members of staff to account robustly

Following this inspection, a detailed action plan was drawn up to address the recommendations. The school will be fully supported to implement the improvements needed by officers from the local authority's School Improvement Service and the Central South Consortium. Estyn will visit to re-inspect the school in the next academic year, to determine whether the necessary measures to effect the required improvements have been put in place.

As indicated previously, the Council's School Improvement Services are provided by the Central South Consortium. Schools are rated as either Green, Yellow, Amber or Red in respect of their standards. Hirwaun Primary School has recently been categorised as a 'Red' school, as a consequence of the outcome of its Estyn inspection, as outlined above.

The Council has commissioned its school improvement service (the Central South Consortium Joint Education Service) to ensure that strong progress is made against each recommendation in the Estyn inspection report and regular feedback is provided to the Director of Education and Inclusion Services, the Senior Challenge Adviser, the Headteacher and the chair of the governing body.

### **What is the basis for this proposal?**

The change in language medium status to totally Welsh medium and the growth of Welsh medium places at Penderyn Community Primary School supports the Welsh Government Cymraeg 2050: Welsh Language Strategy of one million Welsh speakers by 2050 and

Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council's (RCT's) Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) 2017-2020.

### **The Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP)**

All local authorities in Wales now have to produce a Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP). This document indicates how the local authority intends to promote the teaching of the Welsh Language, how it intends working towards increasing the number of children taught through the medium of Welsh and how it can assist achieving the Welsh Government's target of having one million people in Wales speaking Welsh by 2050. The WESP for RCT can be viewed and downloaded from the Council website via <https://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/EN/Council/WelshServices/Relateddocs/WelshinEducationStrategicPlan201720.pdf>.

Included among the list of actions and outcomes that the Council will undertake to help achieve the targets set out in the WESP by increasing the number of seven year-old children being taught through the medium of Welsh are the following:

- New and improved school buildings with appropriate capacity levels to fully meet forecasted demand for Welsh medium provision in their catchment areas;
- Consideration of making dual language Primary schools into full Welsh medium schools

This proposal, to change Penderyn Community Primary School from a dual language school to a totally Welsh medium school and in doing so to also increase the number of Welsh medium primary school places will work towards the achievement of these targets in this area of the County Borough.

### **What is the educational case for changing the language medium of Penderyn Community Primary School and increasing pupil capacity at Hirwaun 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 changing the language medium of Penderyn Community Primary School from dual language to Welsh medium and constructing a new school building with a larger pupil capacity for the communities of Hirwaun and Penderyn to replace the current Hirwaun Primary School will improve educational outcomes and provision.

A larger, new, purpose built English medium primary school at Hirwaun could offer:

- Greater flexibility and opportunity for pupils due to an extended, more enhanced educational environment in which to learn and grow;
- Potential for financial savings in terms of services, which accrue to a larger school which can be reinvested for the benefit of all pupils;

- 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;
- More opportunities for the teaching and support staff which are provided by a larger school;
- Pupils being taught, in the main, with their year group. All classes in the Penderyn English medium stream are currently mixed year groups.

A completely Welsh medium primary school at Penderyn could:

- Provide total immersion in the Welsh language for all pupils at the school;
- Enable total immersion in the Welsh language to be offered to a larger number of pupils from the youngest possible age;
- Offer more opportunities for the teaching and support staff which could be provided by a larger wholly Welsh medium school;
- Create a critical mass of Welsh-medium learners;
- Enable the development of increased Welsh-medium provision at secondary level;
- Provide more opportunity for pupils to take part in extra-curricular activities through the medium of Welsh;
- Improve recruitment and retention of staff

### **What will this proposal mean for the schools' pupils?**

In making the proposed changes, in addition to the points above, there are several further perceived benefits that can be realised:

- There will be more competition for pupils in and outside the classroom in a larger school at Hirwaun 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;
- A larger team of staff at Hirwaun Primary School to share expertise and experience;
- More pupils being taught in a new, state of the art, purpose built school buildings, which will be fit for the purpose of providing education in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

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 these communities in accordance with the seven core aims set out above.

## Catchment changes

### **Penderyn Community Primary School**

Pupils living in Hirwaun who require Welsh medium education will still attend Penderyn Community Primary School (subject to parental preference).

The Welsh medium catchment area of Penderyn Community Primary School will also be extended to encompass the communities of Trenant and Penywaun (which are currently in the catchment area of Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Aberdar).

These adjustments are being made to the catchment area to match the demand for Welsh medium places with the available supply across the Welsh medium primary school sector in this part of the County Borough. Additional demand for places is also being driven by housing development in this part of the County Borough.

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

- Category 1 – 'Looked after' children (children in public care) and previously 'looked after' children.
- Category 2 – Children whose home is inside the school's catchment area and have an older sibling attending the school from the same address, who will continue to attend that school on the expected date of admission of the younger child.
- Category 3 – Children whose home is inside the school's catchment area who do not have an older sibling attending the school.
- Category 4 – Children whose home is outside the school's catchment area and have an older sibling attending the school from the same address, who will continue to attend that school on the expected date of admission of the younger child.
- Category 5 – Children whose home is outside the school's catchment area who do not have an older sibling attending the school.

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

Children will be admitted up to the published Admission Number in the order of priority as outlined above. If within any one of the priority categories listed all of the applicants cannot be offered a place, preference will be given to children living nearest to the school. Distance will be measured using the shortest, safe walking route between the home address and the nearest open school gate. In areas where no safe walking route has been identified, the shortest driving route between the home address and the nearest open school gate will be used. This distance will be measured using the Mapinfo System only, measurements

calculated by any other system will not be considered. The home address in instances where parents have shared responsibility for children, will be the address to which Child Benefit is paid.

For the purpose of applying admissions criteria, any child **living in the areas to be transferred from the Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Aberdar (YGG Aberdar) catchment area**, as detailed on the map enclosed in this document and who has an older sibling still attending YGG Aberdar **in September 2020** will have their application considered as if they still resided in the YGG Aberdar catchment area, i.e. their application will fall in to Category 2 of the aforementioned criteria and not Category 4. This protection will continue until all older siblings have left the school. This will only cover siblings attending Reception to Year 6 in September 2020, any attending the Nursery class will not be eligible (as this is non-statutory education).

### **Hirwaun Primary School**

The catchment area of the new Hirwaun Primary School will extend to incorporate the current catchment area of the English medium stream of Penderyn Community Primary School. Any pupils attending the English medium stream of Penderyn Community Primary School will simply transfer to the new school building in Hirwaun when it opens in September 2020 (subject to parental preference). They will not need to complete admission applications unless they are applying for Nursery or Reception places.

### **Transport policy**

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 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.

Pupils living in the communities of Trenant and Penywaun whose home addresses will be within the extended Penderyn Community Primary School catchment area will receive free transport to Penderyn Primary School for Welsh medium education as they reside more than 1½ miles safe "walking distance" from their nearest suitable school.

In catchment pupils (resident in the village of Penderyn and Rhondda Cynon Taf) attending the English medium stream of Penderyn Community Primary School will receive free transport to the new Hirwaun Primary School building as the walking route is deemed to be 'unavailable'. This provision will not be available to any English Medium pupils who currently attend Penderyn but do not reside in the designated catchment area, as they are attending this school as a result of parental preference.

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

It is our intention to recommend to the governing body of Hirwaun Primary School that they ringfence any additional positions they need to appoint as a result of increased pupil numbers, below senior leadership level, to the existing staff currently employed in the English medium stream of Penderyn Community Primary School in the first instance. This process means that the Penderyn Community Primary School staff will be given the first opportunity to apply for additional posts in the extended Hirwaun Primary School prior to any being advertised externally. If they are successful, they will then simply transfer to the new school when it opens. The Council has well established Human Resource policies and procedures that give reassurance to staff and employers about the management of organisational change.

The creation of a larger primary school at Hirwaun and the provision of additional Welsh medium pupil places at Penderyn Community Primary School would provide staff with the opportunity to specialise in specific areas of the curriculum. Larger schools 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 communities of Penderyn and Hirwaun?**

Part of the Hirwaun electoral ward is within a Communities for Work area and is also a Flying Start Area.

A community impact assessment, equality impact assessment and Welsh-medium 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, equality impact assessment and Welsh-medium impact assessment are available from the contact details at the start of this document and are also available on the Council website, using the web link provided on page 5. It is considered that the overall impact on the local communities of these proposals, with improved and extended school facilities will be a positive, beneficial one.

## **What are the financial implications of the proposal?**

As this proposal involves the change of language medium status of Penderyn Community Primary School to Welsh medium and the construction of a new, larger English medium building at Hirwaun, there will only be minor financial savings – these are associated with the change of Penderyn Community Primary School from dual language to solely Welsh medium school; plus there is potential for future financial savings largely relating to economies of scale achievable by the provision of services in a larger school.

The capital costs of the new Hirwaun Primary School building will be funded as part of Rhondda Cynon Taf Council and Welsh Government's 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Programme. The estimated cost of the new building is £10.4m which will be funded from the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools and Education 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 and pupils may feel that a smaller English medium stream is 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. Hirwaun Primary School will be larger, but will be able to offer many advantages over the smaller English medium stream in the dual language school, for example, fewer mixed year groups; and more opportunities to engage in a wider range of curricular and extra-curricular activities as afforded by a larger school.

Some pupils may have further to travel to school, however, as set out at pages 15 and 16, the Council's policy regarding home to school transport provision will apply to both schools whereby pupils of compulsory school age attending primary school who live 1½ miles or further safe "walking distance" from their nearest suitable school will be provided with free home to school transport.

Pupils living in the communities of Trenant and Penywaun whose home addresses will be within the amended Penderyn Community Primary School catchment area will receive free transport to Penderyn Primary School for Welsh medium education as they reside more than 1½ miles safe “walking distance” from their nearest suitable school.

In catchment pupils attending the English medium stream of Penderyn Community Primary School will receive free transport to the new Hirwaun Primary School building as the walking route is deemed to be ‘unavailable’.

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?**

The current position is that we have a relatively new dual language school at Penderyn with a continually decreasing English medium stream which is becoming unviable, with difficulties in recruiting and retaining high quality staff, and an English medium primary school at Hirwaun which is in a very poor condition. There is demand for Welsh medium education in the wider Aberdare area, further driven by additional housing developments - planning consent has recently been granted for 93 properties immediately adjacent to Ysgol Gyfun Rhydywaun (Pentwyn Cynon Farm). The opportunity exists to create a purely Welsh medium primary school which, along with associated catchment changes would cater for this demand. There would also be other associated benefits for some pupils, including total immersion in the Welsh language. The construction of a new, larger replacement school building for Hirwaun could comfortably accommodate demand for English medium places and would provide pupils with 21<sup>st</sup> century schools education facilities. This is therefore the preferred option.

Further, Hirwaun village has been identified as one of the key settlements in the Council’s Local Development Plan 2011-2021 and land to the south of Hirwaun (former Tower Colliery site) has been identified as a strategic site for development, thus, the demand for school places (English and Welsh medium) in this immediate area is likely to grow further in the future.

The only other feasible option considered by the Council was for Penderyn Community Primary School to remain as a dual language school and poor condition accommodation at Hirwaun Primary School to be demolished and simply replaced ‘like for like’, i.e. maintain the status quo in respect of education provision. This option would not address the Welsh medium demand in the area, or provide the benefits associated with a purely Welsh medium school and the issues associated with a continually decreasing English medium stream. In addition, this option would not change the current position of the two schools at all and projections are that the pupil numbers in the English medium stream at Penderyn Community Primary School will continue to fall. It would also not deliver one of the key aims outlined in our WESP to increase the number of places available to learners wishing to be educated in Welsh by making our dual language schools in to full Welsh Medium provision.

## Governance

As this proposal does not involve the creation of any new school provisions, the current governing bodies of the schools will remain in place and their membership will not change. There will be opportunities in the future for other parents and community members to apply for positions on the governing bodies as and when posts become vacant.

## The new proposed school building

It is being proposed that a new school building for Hirwaun Primary School will be constructed on the site of the current Hirwaun Primary School. The school will be a replacement for the existing school building and will cater for children aged between 3 and 11 years of age requiring English-medium education. It will have a proposed admissions number of 55 pupils per year group, and an overall pupil capacity of 390 (plus nursery). In addition it will have 60 nursery places available; there will however be flexibility to increase the number of nursery places, if there is evidenced demand, by utilising spare capacity that will exist within the building. The accommodation will consist of a nursery, 13 general teaching areas and ancillary accommodation that will be appropriate for the numbers of pupils, including a multi-purpose hall, kitchen, offices, resource areas, rooms for use by the local community and of course toilet provision. The new building will be accessible and fully compliant with the Equality Act 2010. Admissions to the school will be administered by the local authority and all pupils currently attending the English medium stream at Penderyn Community Primary School will automatically transfer to the new Hirwaun Primary School building school when it is completed (subject to parental preference).

Any risks that may be associated with these proposals, such as construction delays will be mitigated by the detailed and thorough project management arrangements that will be put in place.

Penderyn Community Primary School will be able to offer Welsh medium provision to 231 pupils (plus nursery), with an admission number of 33 pupils per year group. Admissions to the school will be administered by the local authority.

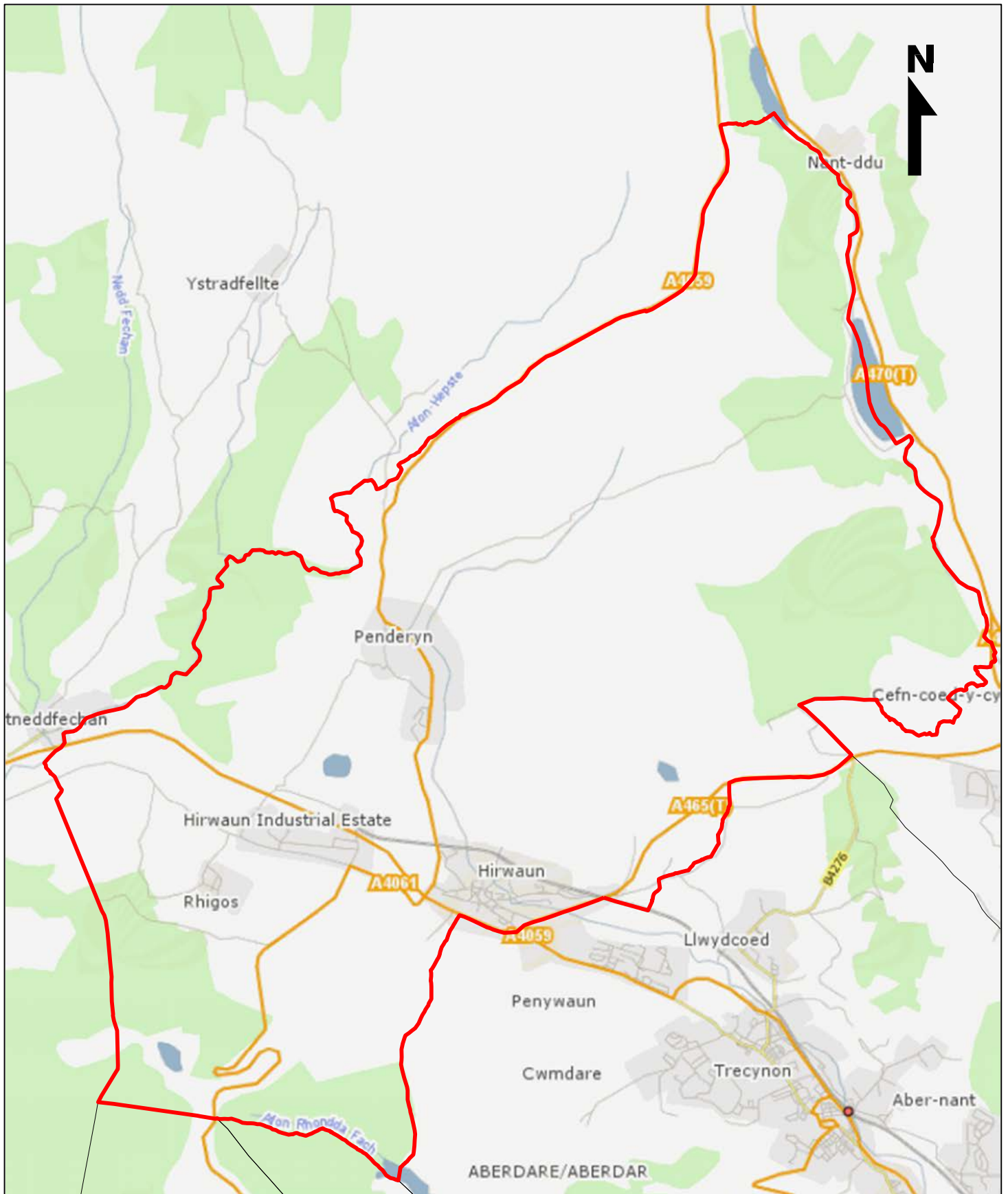
## What is the statutory process?

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. The current Code is due to be revised on 1<sup>st</sup> November 2018 and the process we will undertake will follow the guidance contained within this updated document. Proposals to make any regulated alterations to schools 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;

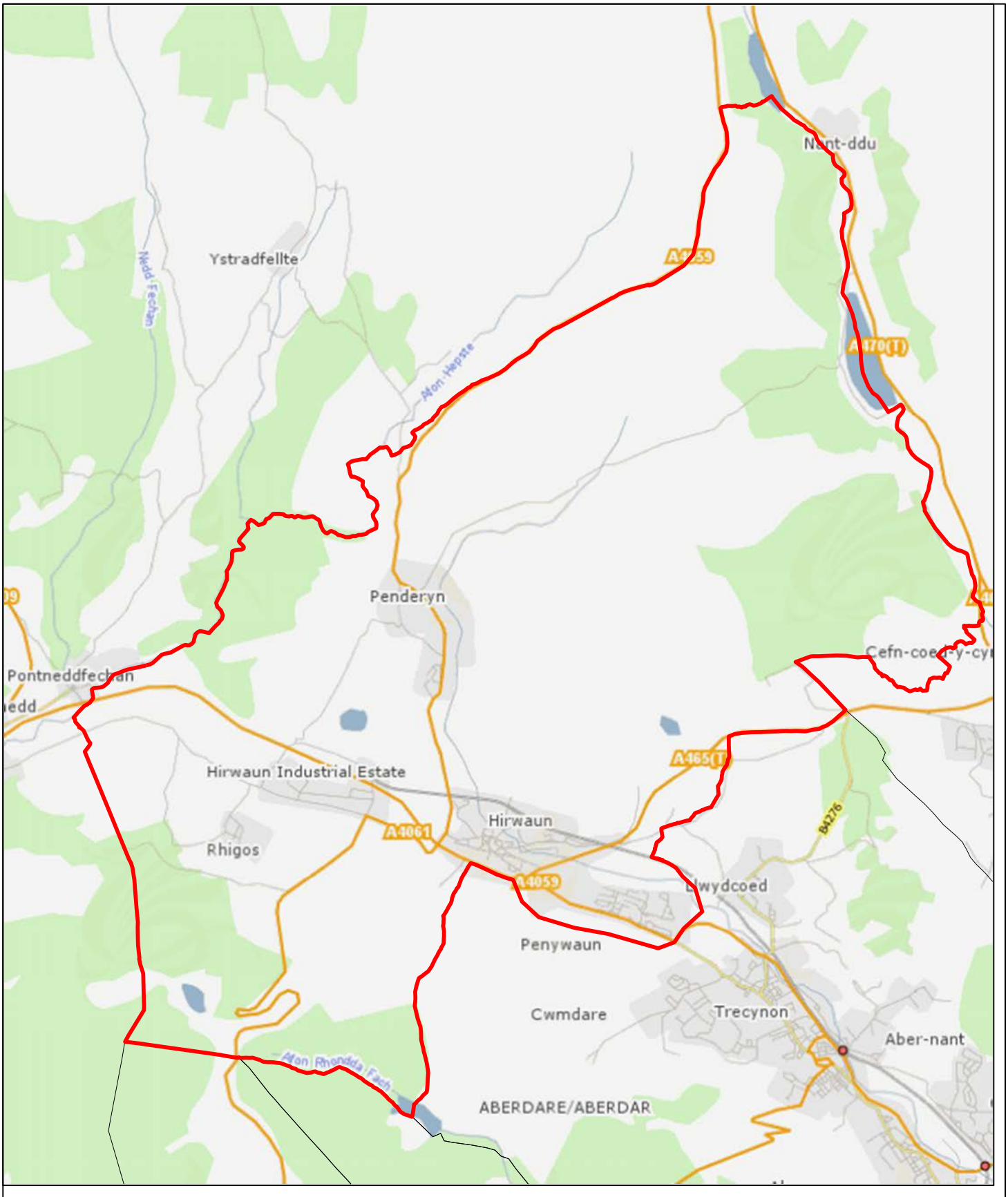
3. Consultation comments are collated and summarised by the Council. This summary together with the Council's officers own responses is published in a consultation report within 13 weeks of the end of the consultation period and presented to the Council's Cabinet for consideration;
4. The Council's Cabinet decide whether to proceed with the changes within 26 weeks 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 before the end of 7 days beginning with the day of the local authority's determination as to whether to proceed with the proposals;
7. The Council's Cabinet must decide to issue its decision on the proposals 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.

The existing Penderyn Primary Welsh Medium catchment area





The proposed Penderyn Welsh Medium catchment area



## Consultation Response Pro-forma

---

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

*Director of Education and Inclusion Services  
21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Team  
Ty Trevithick  
Abercynon  
CF45 4UQ  
or by fax to 01443 744224, or e-mail [schoolplanning@rctcbc.gov.uk](mailto:schoolplanning@rctcbc.gov.uk)*

### The proposal

The proposal is to change the language medium status of Penderyn Community Primary School from dual language to Welsh medium and extend its catchment area; and to increase the pupil capacity of Hirwaun Primary School, in a new, purpose built school building. It is proposed that the changes will take effect from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2020.

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

Please let us know the reasons for your choice

---

---

---

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

---

---

---

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

---

---

4. Name (optional)

---

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

---

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

*Please forward completed questionnaires to the above address no later than 31<sup>st</sup> December 2018.*

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

[www.rctcbc.gov.uk/serviceprivacynotice](http://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/serviceprivacynotice)

and the Council's **data protection** pages here:

[www.rctcbc.gov.uk/dataprotection](http://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/dataprotection).

DRAFT