



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

17TH JUNE 2021

**21ST CENTURY SCHOOLS PROGRAMME - PROPOSALS TO
REORGANISE PRIMARY SCHOOLS, SECONDARY SCHOOLS AND
SIXTH FORM PROVISION IN THE GREATER PONTYPRIDD AREA**

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND INCLUSION
SERVICES IN DISCUSSION WITH THE CABINET MEMBER FOR
EDUCATION (COUNCILLOR MRS J ROSSER)**

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1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide Members with an update on the proposals to reorganise schools in the Greater Pontypridd area. These proposals are:

- The alteration of the age range of pupils that may be admitted to Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School, from 11–19 years to 11–16 years, resulting in the removal of the sixth form provision;
- The closure of Pontypridd High School and Cilfynydd Primary School and the creation of a new 3–16 ‘all through’ School on the site of the current Pontypridd High School. There will be no sixth form provision at this school;
- The closure of Hawthorn High School and Hawthorn Primary School and the creation of a new 3–16 ‘all through’ School on the site of the current Hawthorn High and Hawthorn Primary Schools, with the Local Authority designated ALN specialist class located in Hawthorn High School, as well as the current pupils receiving education through the medium of English at Heol y Celyn Primary School transferring to the new school. There will be no sixth form provision at this school;
- The closure of Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Pont Sion Norton and Heol y Celyn Primary School and the opening of a new Welsh medium Primary School on the site of the current Heol y Celyn Primary School.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Cabinet:

- 2.1 Note the information contained within the Report.
- 2.2 Note the impact of the Judicial Review on programme and costs.
- 2.3 Agree to delay the implementation date of the proposals in all schools, with the exception of Cardinal Newman CS School, to September 2024.
- 2.4 Note that Outline Business Cases for each of the projects will be submitted to Welsh Government for consideration in July 2021 with a decision expected in August 2021.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To progress the proposals as approved by Cabinet in July 2019, in accordance with the process outlined in Welsh Government legislative guidance (the School Organisation Code) Code 011/2008).

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 Members will recall that, at the meeting of the Cabinet held on 31st July 2019, and following a statutory school organisation consultation, approval was given to progress with 3 out of the 4 proposals as consulted upon. The decision to remove the sixth form from Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School was deferred to Welsh Ministers in accordance with the Code.
- 4.2 Members will also be aware that since approval was granted the Council has been responding to a legal challenge relating to the proposals in the form of a Judicial Review. On 21st December 2020, the Court of Appeal found in the Council's favour some seventeen months following Cabinet approval.
- 4.3 Work to progress the proposals had to cease during the legal challenge, and as a result the original delivery programed for each of the projects has been severely affected. Since January of this year, work to progress the proposals has recommenced, and a re-programming exercise undertaken, the outcome of which is that the implementation date for the 3 proposals that gained Cabinet approval will be delayed until September 2024. To note, the Council has written separately to Welsh Ministers requesting approval to delay the implementation of the removal of the sixth form from Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School.

- 4.4 In addition to revisiting the delivery programme, a new high level cost exercise has also been undertaken. Costs have been impacted not only by the delay as a result of inflation, but by other external factors such as Brexit and Covid-19, both of which are having a tangible effect on our current projects in terms of negatively impacting cost and programme. Materials including steel and cement are in short supply so as the demand increases so do the costs, as well as making these items more difficult to source in a timely manner.
- 4.5 As well as the external factors, time has allowed us to revisit our original plans and make improvements to the project briefs, delivering improved facilities for the schools involved and supporting the Council as it strives to achieve its net zero carbon targets. As a result, indicative project costs for these proposals now total £56M. To note, this figure includes a substantial risk allowance, and it is wholly anticipated that this figure will reduce as the projects continue to progress. As designs are agreed and site investigations are undertaken, risks are mitigated. To confirm, costs will not exceed the current Capital funding envelope as agreed in principle by Welsh Government.

Individual Project Updates

- 4.6 New 3-16 school on the site of Pontypridd High School
Given that there is no new-build element to this project, it will continue to be designed and project managed in-house by the Corporate Design Team. The window of opportunity to undertake enabling packages of work are restricted to school holidays given that this will continue to be a live school site until handover.
- 4.7 Some complementary works will be carried out at Pontypridd High School this summer, and given the delay, some surveys need to be revisited. Large parts of the school will be refurbished during summer '22 and '23, which will then allow areas of the school to be handed over to reconfigure the new primary area.
- 4.8 As well as the extensive refurbishment and remodelling of the existing building, works will include extensive on-site traffic management improvements, plus a new 3G.
- 4.9 Indicative project costs currently stand at £7.5M.
- 4.10 New 3-16 school on the site of Hawthorn Primary and Hawthorn High
The external consultant team was re-engaged following the Court of Appeal's decision, and this project has significantly progressed.
- 4.11 A competitive tender process has been undertaken and a contractor will soon be appointed on a design and build contract basis to take the

scheme forward. Detailed design works will now progress, and we hope that this project will be submitted to Planning by the end of the calendar year.

4.12 Works will include a brand new teaching block, demolition of 2 poor quality teaching blocks, on-site traffic improvements including a new car park, pupil drop off and bus turning circle, and refurbishing and remodelling the existing primary school.

4.13 Indicative project costs currently stand at £21M.

4.14 New Welsh medium primary school in Rhydyfelin

The external consultant team was re-engaged following the Court of Appeal's decision, and this project has significantly progressed.

4.15 A competitive tender process has been undertaken and ISG have been appointed on a design and build contract basis to take the scheme forward. Detailed design works will now progress and we hope that this project will be submitted to Planning by the end of the calendar year.

4.16 Works will create a brand new 21st Century School, provide new external play areas and MUGAs, deliver traffic improvements including a new car park, and on-site bus drop-off and turning circle.

4.17 Indicative project costs currently stand at £13M.

4.18 New sixth form block at Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School

The external consultant team were re-engaged following the Court of Appeal's decision, and this project has since progressed.

4.19 A competitive tender process has been undertaken and a contractor will soon be appointed on a design and build contract basis to take the scheme forward. Detailed design works will progress, and we hope that this project will be submitted to Planning by the end of the calendar year.

4.20 Works will create a brand new sixth form block, deliver new sports facilities, demolish 2 poor teaching blocks, and provide traffic improvements including a new car park and access to the school.

4.21 Indicative project costs currently stand at £15M.

5. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS/SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY

5.1 Equality and Community Impact Assessments were prepared in respect of this proposal and were published on the Council's website together

with the Consultation Document at the time of consultation. These documents can be found at Appendices 1 and 2.

- 5.2 In summary, the outcome of Equality Impact Assessment identified positive and neutral impacts, and no negative impacts, upon the protected characteristics and so it was deemed that approval would be sought to continue to implement the proposal. It also confirmed that the Action Plan within the Equality Impact Assessment will continue to be reviewed throughout the duration of the project delivery period.

6. WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 In accordance with the School Organisation Code, a Welsh Language Impact Assessment was prepared in respect of the proposal to build a new Welsh medium school in Rhydyfelin and published on the Council's website together with the Consultation Document at the time of consultation. This document can be found at Appendix 3.
- 6.2 In summary, the outcome of the Welsh Language Impact Assessment was that the proposal would deliver the targets outlined in the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP), support the aim of Welsh Government's Cymraeg 2050, and it would positively promote Welsh medium education and provide more opportunities to study through the medium of Welsh.

7. CONSULTATION/INVOLVEMENT

- 7.1 The consultation process in respect of this proposal was undertaken under the arrangements outlined in the Welsh Government's School Organisation Code. These arrangements were scrutinised during the Judicial Review and found to have been fully compliant by the Court of Appeal.

8. THE STATUTORY PROCESS

- 8.1 In accordance with the School Organisation Code, Statutory Notices were published and subsequently approved by Cabinet on 31st July 2019.

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

- 9.1 These proposals will deliver circa £56M of investment in building new or refurbishing/remodelling existing school buildings to ensure the pupils have a high quality, viable and sustainable 21st Century learning environment. Subject to approval, this will be funded by the 21st Century Schools and Colleges Programme, which includes a 65% contribution from Welsh Government, with the Council's 35% share of the capital costs being met through prudential borrowing.

- 9.2 Any revenue and capital costs that accrue in completing the initial designs and preparing financial business cases for Welsh Government approval will be met from within existing budgets.

10. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

- 10.1 Part 1 of the Education Act 1996 (“the 1996 Act”) imposes a number of general duties on all local authorities in Wales. The general duty in section 13 of the 1996 Act is to contribute (so far as the Council’s powers enable them to do so) towards the spiritual, moral, mental and physical development of the community by ensuring that efficient primary education and secondary education is available to meet the needs of the population of their area.
- 10.2 Section 13A (3) of the 1996 Act states that a local authority in Wales must ensure that their relevant education and training functions are exercised by the authority with a view to promoting high standards, and the fulfilment of learning potential by every person to whom the subsection applies, including those who are of compulsory school age or are below school age and are registered as pupils at schools maintained by the authority.
- 10.3 Section 14 of the 1996 Act requires the Council to secure sufficient schools for providing primary and secondary education in the Council’s area. Schools available for an area shall not be regarded as sufficient unless they are sufficient in number, character and equipment to provide all pupils with an appropriate education.
- 10.4 Appropriate education means education which offers such variety of instruction and training as may be desirable in view of (a) the pupils’ different ages, abilities and aptitudes; and (b) the different periods for which they may be expected to remain at school, including practical instruction and training appropriate to their different needs.
- 10.5 Powers for Councils to develop school organisation proposals are governed by the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and the Code 011/2018. Local authorities must, when exercising functions under Part 3 of the 2013 Act, act in accordance with any relevant requirements contained in the Code and must have regard to any relevant guidelines contained in it. A copy of the most up to date Code is found here:
<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-10/schoolorganisation-code-second-edition.pdf>
- ## **11. LINKS TO THE CORPORATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT**

11.1 There are links to RCTCBC's Corporate Plan for the period between 2020 to 2024, specifically the priority:

Prosperity – Creating the opportunity for people and businesses to be innovative, entrepreneurial and fulfil their potential and prosper

- Ensuring we have good schools, so all children have access to a great education.

11.2 Due regard has been made to all seven well-being goals and the Five Ways of Working, as contained within the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, which requires the Council to think about the long-term impact of decisions, on communities to prevent consistent issues such as poverty, health inequalities and climate change.

This proposal would contribute to achieving the wellbeing goals by:

- Improving sustainability of school buildings in the Council portfolio through a commitment to achieving a zero carbon building and constructing to BREEAM excellent.
- Providing additional school places to meet WG targets and to promote the Welsh language in the Community.
- Opening new community facilities that would create opportunities for local people to utilise.

This proposal would achieve the five ways of working by:

- Creating a new school environment that can deliver the new Curriculum for Wales.
- Provide first class learning facilities for pupils and the wider community and contribute towards a healthier Wales by providing additional outdoor sport facilities for pupils.
- Contributing towards a prosperous Wales by committing to opportunities for local tradespeople and to use local resources, wherever possible to build the new school.
- Engaging with the community on a thorough consultation with opportunities for all stakeholders in the Community to engage throughout the process.

11.3 The Equality Impact Assessment includes further detail on the contribution of the proposal to the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act and this document formed an integral part of the consultation documentation.

12. **CONCLUSION**

12.1 The Council is responsible for delivering high educational standards and efficient primary, secondary and sixth form education provision that serves our local communities. This is achieved by ensuring that the

right schools, are the right size, are in the right location and are fit for the 21st Century learner.

- 12.2 Following a robust and comprehensive school reorganisation consultation process in respect of the proposals in the Greater Pontypridd area, Members agreed to progress the proposals in July 2019. Since this time, the legal challenge in the form of a Judicial Review has had an impact upon programme and costs.
- 12.3 Members are asked to consider the changes that have taken place since approval was granted; note the progress made to date; and formally approve a delay to the implementation date which would deliver the proposals by September 2024.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

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17 JUNE 2021

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Item:

Background Papers

The background papers included as appendices to the report are:

Appendix 1 - Equality Impact Assessment

Appendix 2 - Community Impact Assessment

Appendix 3 - Welsh Language Impact Assessment

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RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

QUESTIONNAIRE

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Directorate: Education

Service Area: 21st Century Schools

Responsible officer: Lisa Howell

Date: Updated July 1st 2019

This Equality Impact Assessment is written in association with the Community Impact Assessments, the Welsh Language Impact Assessment and also in conjunction with the information as detailed within the associated Consultation Document published in October 2018, the Consultation Report published in March 2019, and the Objection Report which will be published within 7 days of a decision on the proposals being taken.

1. Name of project: Reorganisation of School Provision in the Pontypridd and Hawthorn areas

The Project is to:

- Develop post 16 centres of excellence based at Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School, Beddau and Coleg y Cymoedd, Nantgarw.
- Create two new 3-16 schools, in Pontypridd and Hawthorn, which will take a radically different approach to education in the areas, by sharing both primary and secondary sector resources;
- Improve and increase Welsh Medium primary provision by closing Heol y Celyn Primary School, which is a dual language school, and YGG Pont Sion Norton; Welsh Medium pupils attending both schools will transfer a new, Welsh Medium school, that will be constructed on the former site of Heol y Celyn;
- Amend the catchment areas of Pontypridd High and Hawthorn High to better meet and match the demand for school places;

- Improve the learning environments for pupils with additional learning needs (ALN).

To achieve these changes, the Council, in partnership with Welsh Government, will invest £37.4m in building new or refurbishing/remodelling existing buildings to ensure the pupils have a high quality, viable and sustainable 21st Century learning environment.

To achieve this, the proposal is to:

- Close the sixth forms of Hawthorn High School, Pontypridd High School and Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School and transfer the post-16 provision to Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School or Coleg y Cymoedd, Nantgarw. For those students who opt for a Roman Catholic education, sixth form provision will be available at St David's College, Cardiff;
- Close Pontypridd High School and Cilfynydd Primary School and create a new 3-16 'all through' school on the site of the current Pontypridd High School;
- Close Hawthorn High School, Hawthorn Primary School and Heol-Y-Celyn Primary School and create a new 3-16 'all through' school on the site of the current Hawthorn High and Hawthorn Primary Schools. The local authority designated ALN specialist class located Hawthorn High School will also transfer to the new school.
- Close Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Pont Sion Norton and open a new Welsh Medium Primary School to be constructed on the site of the current Heol-Y-Celyn Primary School. The pupils educated through the Welsh Medium at Heol-Y-Celyn will transfer to the new school and the Heol-Y-Celyn pupils educated through the English Medium will transfer to the new 3 – 16 school at Hawthorn (see above);
- Amend the catchment areas for pupils aged 11-16 of two of the LA maintained Secondary schools by:
 - Transferring the Graig area of Pontypridd (that is part of the catchment area of Maesycoed Primary School) to the new 3-16 school for Pontypridd (currently part of the Hawthorn High School catchment)
 - Transferring the catchment area of Coedpenmaen Primary School to the new 3-16 school for Pontypridd (currently part of the Hawthorn High School catchment)

2. Proposal Aims. Consider why is the proposal needed? What does the Council hope to achieve by it?
How will the Council ensure it works as intended?

Detailed information of the aims of the proposal is included within the Consultation Document to reorganise primary schools, secondary schools and sixth form provision in the greater Pontypridd area, which was published in October 2018. This has been widely circulated to all consultees and is still available to view online on the Council's website.

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, financial management, attendance levels, surplus places and safeguarding.

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

The Elected Members accepted Estyn's recommendations and have been continually reviewing school provision in Rhondda Cynon Taf ever since. The criteria that has been used for selecting schools for review is one or more of the following:

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

Consideration for these proposals has been aligned with the 21st Century Schools and Education Programme's long term strategic investment in the education estate throughout Wales. The priorities for this investment are:

- Addressing growth in demand for Welsh medium education;

- Reducing surplus capacity and inefficiency in the system;
- Expansion of schools in areas of increased demand for educational services;
- Addressing condition of educational assets;
- Making assets available for community use where demand exists, to optimise the infrastructure and resources for public services;
- Addressing specific demand for places in Faith Based provision.

The primary schools and secondary schools included within these proposals have been assessed against the aforementioned criteria:

- 3 of the 5 schools have surplus places in excess of 25%;
- The combined maintenance backlog of the 5 schools is over £4M;
- Key Stage 4 outcomes:
 - The educational performance of Pontypridd High for L2+ from 2016-18 has been below the all Wales average for 2 out of the last 3 years and above the RCT average for all 3 years.
 - The educational performance of Hawthorn High Level 2+ from 2016-18 has been below the all Wales and RCT average for 2 out of the last 3 years.
 - The educational performance at both Bryncelynnog and Cardinal Newman for L2+ outcomes have been above both the local and national averages for the last 3 years 2016-18.
- Key Stage 5 outcomes:
 - The percentage of learners achieving 3A* - C grades in Hawthorn High School was below both local and national averages for 3 out of the 4 years from 2015-18, with significant improvement made in 2018.
 - In Pontypridd High School the percentage of learners achieving 3A* - C grades was below both local and national averages for 3 out of the 4 years from 2015-18.
 - Outcomes for the same measures were more variable in Cardinal Newman RC School over the same 4 year period.
 - In Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School the outcomes for the same measures were above the local and national averages for the same 4 year period for 3 out of the 4 years.

The sixth form pupil retention rates at the 4 secondary schools that are included within the proposals are low, as are the post-16 pupil projections. However, cumulatively they will provide the numbers needed to deliver a sustainable and viable sixth form. This

reduction in pupil numbers and consequent reduction in post 16 funding from the Welsh Government has meant that Cardinal Newman School, Pontypridd and Hawthorn High have cumulative deficit budgets of circa £1.5M.

The opportunity exists to reconfigure the primary and secondary schools, including post 16 provision, to create educationally and financially viable schools that serve the local communities. These proposals seek to achieve this.

Educational Considerations

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

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

- **Improve educational outcomes;**
 - Create larger school departments or faculties that will promote the sharing of skills and expertise across more viable teams;
 - Provide teaching and support staff with more opportunity to develop professionally;
 - Enable greater opportunities for staff to move between key stages and further develop expertise;
 - Provide a more appropriate skills-based curriculum and wider extra-curricular opportunities which should improve attendance and educational outcomes;
 - Reduce the anxiety caused by transition.

- **Improve educational provision;**
 - Provide the conditions that will enable a broader and more diverse curriculum to be developed to better meet the needs of the school's young people and in ways that will be viable and sustainable over the longer term;
 - Improve the range and quality of facilities and learning resources available to the benefit of all pupils;
 - Enable greater continuity of support for vulnerable groups of pupils;

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

- **Improve leadership and management;**

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

These benefits apply equally to the mainstream and the pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) in the schools. This argument is supported by Estyn in its report “School Size and Educational Effectiveness” (Dec 2013), which stated:

- *“Pupils’ standards are good or better in a higher proportion of large primary schools than small and medium-sized primary schools. This may be because large schools tend to have more expertise and capacity to address the needs of more vulnerable pupils and the more able and talented pupils.”*
- *“Examination results for large secondary schools are better than those for small and medium-sized secondary schools for nearly all measures”;*
- *“In general, curriculum provision is broader and better balanced in large secondary schools. Nearly all large secondary schools provide good or better learning experiences for their pupils. Large secondary schools are able to offer a wider range of options due to economies of scale”.*

What is the educational case for creating larger sixth forms?

Over the past few years secondary schools have sought to collaborate to meet the requirements of the Learning and Skills Measure 2009 and to offer a good quality post 16 learning experience to their pupils. Despite the best efforts of the headteachers, schools and the Council:

- There are too many small sixth forms and a rationalisation would better meet the educational needs of the students by strengthening management arrangements, improving the effective and efficient use of resources, and better ensuring a quality educational experience. A viable sixth form, both educationally and financially should, ideally, have at least 250 students. In January 2019 (source: PLASC return), Hawthorn High had 83 sixth form students attending, Pontypridd High 101, and 71 attending Cardinal Newman, totalling 255 between the three schools. Bryncelynog Comprehensive had 144 sixth form students at the same point in time.
- The delivery of post-16 education is inefficient and for many the educational experience could be considerably better. There is still unnecessary post 16 duplication of provision between schools and colleges, choice for many learners is restricted, class sizes are too small, and secondary school surplus places in the County Borough are projected to be almost 3,500 by 2022 and over 785 in the greater Pontypridd area alone. This leads to valuable education funds being directed at additional staff costs and infrastructure when they would be better directed at the learners and the learner experience. Currently, across Rhondda Cynon Taf, funds amounting to over £600 per pupil that were originally provided to educate 11-16 pupils are redirected at sixth form learners, to subsidise loss making courses due to small class sizes. This amount increases to an average of £700 per pupil across both Hawthorn and Pontypridd High Schools; at Cardinal Newman this figure is almost £800.

- Small class sizes found in many sixth forms leads to limited student interactions, which diminishes the effectiveness of learning. Poor collaborative learning experiences for learners and the restricted choice of subjects available in schools with poor retention rates is adversely impacting on the quality of post 16 education. The percentage of students opting, to stay on in their respective school, for a sixth form education in September 2018, was very low, being 36% in Cardinal Newman, 32% in Pontypridd HS, 36% in Hawthorn and 44% in Bryncelynnog. Where providers have made the greatest progress in collaborating to reduce inefficiencies and improve effectiveness, learner opportunities and interactions increase. However, travel between providers is seen by some learners as a barrier to access a wider choice of courses and does not provide continuity in teaching in learning.
- Choice is often dependent upon learner postal code, however budget deficits suggest that consortia arrangements are not having the desired impact. There are no equitable post 16 options entitlement for the County Borough and the proposals offer an opportunity to improve the quality of learner experience and engagement.

Creating a larger sixth form at Bryncelynnog, together with the existing comprehensive post 16 provision at Coleg y Cymoedd creates the capacity and economies of scale to be able to improve:

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

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

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

In 2012, the Council established a new 3-19 school at Ysgol Llanhari and to date the school is making good progress. The cross phase learning and communication with staff is having a positive effect on pupils.

The all through school eases the transition process between the key stages and staff and teachers know the children well as they progress through the year groups and this enables them to assist pupils where additional support is required.

The School has strong leadership, which creates a vision that resonates with all phases, all staff are fully engaged and the school benefits from ‘coherence and continuity’ which assists pupils learning progression. In September 2018, a further 3 all-through schools were established in the Rhondda, two 3-16 schools and a 3-19 school, and in September 2019 a further 3-19 school will be established.

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

- Enhanced opportunities for specialist teaching and roles across school phases/stages;
- Access for primary phase pupils to the facilities of secondary phase;
- Providing scope for acceleration programmes for more able and talented pupils;
- Enhanced opportunities for providing a robust, graduated response for learners with additional learning needs;
- Joint professional development opportunities and learning;
- Directing resources at early intervention and prevention;
- Planning a seamless curriculum and opportunities for ensuring continuity in teaching and learning;
- Sharing equipment, hardware and accommodation;
- Increasing the range and capacity for extra-curricular/after school learning;

- Creating common administrative appointments.

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

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

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

In making the proposed changes, many things will be different for the pupils from the Pontypridd area, depending on parents exercising their right of choice, but some things will remain the same:

- Some may have a longer or a different route to school, and some may be transported to school by bus. Some children may lose their entitlement to free transport, but others could gain entitlement;
- Being in classes with predominantly their own age group, the teacher will be better able to offer the primary pupils a wider and more varied curriculum to support the needs of a range of learners, including the most vulnerable;
- The teachers and teaching assistants may be different, however, the majority of teachers and teaching assistants should be able to transfer between the schools, if they wish to do so;
- For sixth form students there will be less travelling during the school day to access the curriculum and therefore there will be greater opportunities for more unstructured/informal interaction between students and teachers during the school day. The time saved from not travelling to other schools during the school day to access post 16 consortia arrangements can also be used to focus on independent study or completing course work;
- There will be more collaborative learning opportunities and access to good peer mentoring models to enhance learning and increase opportunities for establishing extracurricular activities;
- Being part of a larger school creates opportunity to run school sports teams, debating team etc.

The principal change will be an improvement in the quality of the educational provision, and this should have a significant impact on educational performance of the pupils. This will bring about improvements for **all** pupils, irrespective of gender, ethnicity or

disability. It should be noted that of the pupils attending the schools directly affected by these proposals, **none** are indicated as being Gypsy or Traveller children; to reiterate, these proposals are not seen as being detrimental to any particular group of pupils, they are intended to improve educational provision for all as learners will access stimulating and accessible 21st Century learning environments. The requirements of the ALN and Educational Tribunal (2018) Act will be met and existing SEN legislation will ensure that appropriate provision will be put in place to meet a wide range of learner needs.

Pupils who currently attend Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive Sixth Form will be able to continue their post – 16 education through the Catholic faith, if they choose to do so, at St David's College, Cardiff. Any pupils resident in Rhondda Cynon Taf who choose this College on faith grounds will receive free transportation to this establishment. Pupils resident outside of RCT will need to check their entitlement with their home local authority.

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.

With regard to the proposed alternative sixth form centres for Hawthorn and Pontypridd High School, pupils at Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School and Coleg y Cymoedd under consideration for post - 16 provision, learners will receive free transport, providing they meet the qualifying criteria (2 miles walking distance from home to school/college), to the nearest post-16 establishment that offers the choice of courses that they require. If they choose a centre that is not the closest to their home address, they may of course attend but will not receive any assistance towards the cost of transportation from the Council.

Pupils resident in Rhondda Cynon Taf attending Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School, will be able to select the most appropriate sixth form provision that offers the choice of courses that they require or if they choose a Roman Catholic post 16 provision this will be made available at St David's College, Cardiff. In doing so they will receive free transportation, providing they meet the distance criteria to the nearest provision that meets their subject choices. Learners resident in Caerphilly County Borough will need to seek clarification from their local authority.

All of the Primary schools under consideration as part of these proposals have breakfast club provisions, which are not only considered to be of benefit to the pupils but can greatly assist working parents as well. These clubs will continue if the new 'all through' 3 - 16 schools are created. Many schools also offer some after school provision which has the same benefits as the breakfast clubs; it is hoped that transferring primary aged pupils to school sites that have improved facilities will allow for the expansion of this provision. Governing bodies will be encouraged to establish provisions as these are not a statutory requirement.

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

1. have a flying start in life;
2. have a comprehensive range of education and learning opportunities;
3. enjoy the best possible health and are free from abuse, victimisation and exploitation;
4. have access to play, leisure, sporting and cultural activities;
5. are listened to, treated with respect, and have their race and cultural identity recognised;
6. have a safe home and a community which supports physical and emotional wellbeing;

7. are not disadvantaged by poverty.

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

In addition, we consider that these proposals, contribute positively to Rhondda Cynon Taf’s well-being agenda as well as each of the 7 goals of the Well-being of Future Generation Act Wales 2015:

1. A prosperous Wales
2. A resilient Wales
3. A healthier Wales
4. A more equal Wales
5. A Wales of cohesive communities
6. A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language
7. A globally responsible Wales

In addition, an assessment of the proposals on The Well-being of Future Generations Act’s five ways of working is below:

<p><u>Long Term</u> (The importance of balancing short term needs with the need to safeguard the ability to also meet long term needs)</p>	<p>How does your project / activity balance short-term need with the long-term and planning for the future?</p> <p>Maintaining the existing educational premises within Rhondda Cynon Taf places enormous strain on the Council resources. It is recognised that there is an opportunity through the 21st Century Schools funding to manage these pressures more efficiently in future years.</p> <p>The long term vision for RCT is to provide all learners with the best opportunity possible to achieve their full potential through the means of education by providing access to the very best learning opportunities with modern, flexible facilities appropriate for delivering the new curriculum.</p> <p>Improved learning environments will act as a stimulus to creating a better future through delivering brand new 21st Century Schools facilities for our young pupils through all phases of their educational journeys from foundation phase through to delivering a more efficient and effective post-16 provision.</p>
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<p><u>Prevention</u> (How acting to prevent problems occurring or getting worse may help public bodies meet their objectives)</p>	<p>How does your project / activity put resources into preventing problems occurring or getting worse?</p> <p>The Council recognises the challenges of providing everyone with the facilities and opportunities to receive an excellent education in 21st Century facilities. These proposals aim to enhance and improve the educational environment for all 3-19 year olds affected, and create enhanced opportunities for the development of more specialist roles and strengthen graduated responses for learners with additional learning needs.</p>
<p><u>Integration</u> (Considering how the public body's well-being objectives may impact upon each of the wellbeing goals, on their objectives, or on the objectives of other public bodies)</p>	<p>How does your project / activity deliver economic, social, environmental and cultural outcomes together?</p> <p>The Council recognises the importance of the Welsh language as a vital element to achieve and reinforce social and cultural benefits. These proposals will deliver more Welsh medium places in the Pontypridd area, opportunities for wider community collaboration and participation, more sustainable educational buildings meeting BREEAM targets all providing a more integrated and improved learning experience.</p>
<p><u>Collaboration</u> (Acting in collaboration with any other person (or different parts of the body itself) that could help the body meet its well-being objectives)</p>	<p>How does your project / activity involve working together with partners (internal and external) to deliver well-being objectives?</p> <p>As a part of this school organisation programme the Council has already consulted with thousands of learners, staff, parents and carers, throughout the Pontypridd area. If these proposals are to go ahead then this collaboration will continue when further consultation will be undertaken to ensure that all stakeholders have an opportunity to shape the 21st Century Schools provision to ensure benefits and well-being opportunities are maximised.</p>
<p><u>Involvement</u> (The importance of involving people with an interest in achieving the well-being goals, and ensuring that those people reflect the diversity of the area which the body serves)</p>	<p>How does your project / facility involve stakeholders with an interest in achieving the well-being goals? How do those stakeholders reflect the diversity of the area?</p> <p>Consultation meetings were held with the student councils of all of the schools directly affected by the proposals, as well as with staff and governors, and open evenings were held in various locations throughout the area which were open to the public. All comments that were submitted during the consultation process were considered by Cabinet.</p> <p>Moving forward, engagement with learners, staff and RCT residents will continue and input and information gleaned from these sessions will shape the new school facilities. In addition, information gathered will influence and inform our future projects so all consultation undertaken shapes the legacy of the 21st Century Schools Programme.</p>

Benefits of a new school building for YGG, Pont Sion Norton

To comply with Welsh Government guidance and its initiative to create a million Welsh speakers by 2050, which includes an expectation on local authorities to promote Welsh Medium education, the Council is reviewing its Welsh Medium school provision, to ensure that evidenced demand for places is met and that wherever possible, provision is expanded and improved to encourage parents to select a Welsh Medium education for their children. The proposal to close YGG Pont Sion Norton and construct a brand new, purpose built school, with additional pupil capacity is one of the schemes being planned to assist in achieving this aim.

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 this link <https://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/EN/Council/WelshServices/Relateddocs/WelshinEducationStrategicPlan201720.pdf>.

Included among the list of actions and outcomes 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 WM provision in their catchment areas
- Consideration of making dual language Primary schools in to full WM schools

This part of the overall proposal, which is to close YGG Pont Sion Norton and build a brand new school, constructed to 21st Century Schools standards and with an increased capacity of 480 pupils plus Nursery provision, will work towards achieving these targets in this area of the County Borough.

Following the recent consultation on the Welsh Government's draft Welsh in Education Strategic Plans Regulations (Wales) 2019 guidance which advocates an increase in Welsh medium education provision for all learners including those with Additional

Learning Needs (ALN), and in accordance with the ALN and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018, RCT will consult on establishing a Welsh medium Foundation Phase and Key Stage 2 ALN provision in the new school.

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

As previously stated, all schools involved in the proposal in the Pontypridd and Hawthorn area will close and new schools will be opened with a new governing body, these include the new Welsh medium primary school, and both 3-16 schools. Should the proposal proceed, all the proposed new schools will need to appoint temporary governing bodies for the interim period until the new schools open. These temporary governing bodies will be responsible for establishing the school, agreeing new staff structures and undertaking the appointment process for all of the staffing posts.

The temporary governing bodies will firstly need to appoint new headteachers, who will then formulate and propose the leadership, management and staffing structures for the new schools. The staffing structures for the Hawthorn and Pontypridd 3-16 schools will need to be developed for the schools taking into account a number of factors, including delivering a curriculum without sixth form provision.

The Council recommends that if the proposal is accepted that the temporary governing bodies of new schools “ring fence” the appointment process for all teaching and associated staff posts to staff within the existing schools in the first instance.

No changes will be required to the governing body of Cardinal Newman, but a revision to their staffing structure will be required due to the loss of the sixth form provision.

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

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

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

4. Indicate whether this is a new proposal, a review or a proposed cessation: All 3

5. Identifying Impacts – Please choose whether the proposals will have a positive, negative or neutral effect on **each** issue below:

People / issues to consider	Impact policy / practice will have			If a positive or negative impact is identified, explain why: P – Positive Ne – Negative Neu- Neutral
	Positive	Negative	Neutral (No impact)	
Age (young and old)				<p>Improved learning facilities and environments for all.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • P - ensure that all the children in the larger Primary education provisions are safe and secure. • P - make the learning environments comfortable and attractive for all children and young people who access them. • Ne – some children may not cope well with the transition. • P- Primary pupils being able to access specialist facilities at their own school site, Secondary pupils potentially being able to access work experience and assist the learning of their younger counterparts through buddy schemes. • P - access services to improve the lives of children and their families. • P - improved facilities will enable the pupils to access learning and cultural activities which can help develop relationships within communities. • P - improved transition between the Primary and Secondary school sectors • P - promotion of more independent learning for post-16 pupils to better prepare them for higher education and employment, reduction in number of young people who become NEET. • P - Larger sixth forms will reduce the need for consortia arrangements and travelling between sites; time can be better spent learning than travelling during the school day.

People / issues to consider	Impact policy / practice will have			If a positive or negative impact is identified, explain why:
	Positive	Negative	Neutral (No impact)	
				<p>P – Positive Ne – Negative Neu- Neutral</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • P - The changing curriculum, life long learning opportunities and use of ICT will provide the opportunity to enable all learners to reach their potential. • P - More choice of learning pathways at post-16, more subject options which will improve the higher education and employment prospects of all learners. • P – More opportunities for community learning, participation and engagement supporting the health and well-being agenda. Further information can be found on page 37, 63 and 64 of the Objection Report. • Ne - Increased travel distances for some primary school pupils and some sixth form pupils • Ne - Increased travel distances for some parents and carers, pedestrian and vehicular. • Neu - Environmental issues in relation to pollution levels around the A470. Further information can be found on pages 18-19 of the Consultation Report.
Disability (remember to consider the different types of disability)	Yes			New build and refurbished school facilities will be fully compliant with all equalities legislation and will be accessible to all users; refurbished and remodelled premises will have adjustments undertaken to make them as compliant as it is possible to do.
Gender			Yes	
Gender Reassignment			Yes	

People / issues to consider	Impact policy / practice will have			If a positive or negative impact is identified, explain why: P – Positive Ne – Negative Neu- Neutral
	Positive	Negative	Neutral (No impact)	
Race			Yes	
Religion or Belief		Yes		Pupils attending the sixth form provision at Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive school will have to travel to St David's College, Cardiff, if they wish to receive post 16 education through the Catholic faith. To mitigate this potentially negative impact, free transportation will be provided for pupils resident in RCT; pupils who reside in other County Boroughs will need to check their entitlement with their home local authority. Further information on this can be found in the Consultation Document pages 8-11 and in the Objection Report pages 14-25.
Sexual Orientation			Yes	
Welsh Language	Yes			A new Welsh Medium school, built to 21 st Century Schools standards, with additional capacity provided to allow more choice for parents as to which language medium they can choose for their children. Consideration will also be given to consult on proposals to establish a foundation phase and KS2 learning support class provision. Increase the opportunities for childcare facilities to support working families – including early years, breakfast and after school clubs. Further information on this can be found in the Consultation Document pages 20-22 and in the Objection Report pages 37-64.
Carers		Yes		Ne - Increased travel distances for some parents and carers.

EVIDENCE

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

Reports of the Director of Education to Cabinet - October 2018.
Public Consultation Document on the Proposal – October 2018
Public Consultation Report on the Proposal – March 2019

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.

Some Primary Schools pupils will have to travel longer distances to schools, likewise sixth form pupils may have longer journeys to the new post-16 provisions. In the case of the Primary pupils it is highly unlikely that any child will have further than 1.5 miles to travel to their new school and not qualify for home to school transport; this is the distance at which RCTCBC currently provides home to school transport, which is more generous than that provided for by legislation, i.e. 2 miles. It is the full responsibility of parents to transport their children to school where they do not qualify for free provision, they also have to determine and provide appropriate supervision for children and decide the mode of transport to be used. Free provision will be made available where pupils meet the qualifying criteria.

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

Further information on the impact on travel and transport can be found in the Consultation Report on pages 9 and 20-21 and in the Objection Report on pages 14, 16 and 41-50, and further information on the environmental impact can be found on pages 18-19 in the Consultation Report.

Some learners transitioning to new school environments may require additional support and bespoke learner centred plans to mitigate this. For those learners who may not cope well with the change in their educational environment, strengthened transitional

approaches will be adopted in line with person centred planning. Further information on this can be found in the Objection Report on pages 14, 26, 29 and 33.

INVOLVEMENT & CONSULTATION

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

In accordance with the School Organisation Code there is no requirement to hold consultation meetings, however in order to fully engage with consultees and to enable Elected Members to make a decision based on the concerns of the wider community to understand the issues raised.

In addition, the prescribed consultation period within the Code is 42 days but Council gave the public 108 days in which to respond, which is more than double the statutory timescales allotted within the Code.

This extended statutory period was undertaken to provide additional opportunities for all consultees to make their views known and the following consultation meetings/ open events were held.

School Affected	Group	Time/Date	Venue
Hawthorn High School	Governors and Staff Meeting	Monday, 12 th November 2018, 3.30 pm	Hawthorn High School
Pontypridd High School	Governors and Staff Meeting	Monday 12 th November 2018, 3.30 pm	Pontypridd High School
Heol-Y-Celyn Primary School	Governors and Staff Meeting	Wednesday 14 th November 2018, 4 pm	Heol-Y-Celyn Primary School
Hawthorn Primary School	Governors and Staff Meeting	Wednesday 14 th November 2018, 4 pm	Hawthorn Primary School
Cilfynydd Primary School	Governors and Staff Meeting	Monday, 19 th November 2018, 4pm	Cilfynydd Primary School
YGG, Pont Sion Norton	Governors and Staff Meeting	Tuesday, 20 th November 2018, 4pm	YGG, Pont Sion Norton

School Affected	Group	Time/Date	Venue
Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School	Governors and Staff Meeting	Thursday, 22 nd November 2018, 3.30pm	Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School
Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School	Governors and Staff Meeting	Thursday, 22 nd November 2018, 3.30pm	Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School
Hawthorn High School	School Council	Monday, 12 th November 2018, 2 pm	Hawthorn High School
Pontypridd High School	School Council	Monday, 12 th November 2018, 2 pm	Pontypridd High School
Heol-Y-Celyn Primary School	School Council	Wednesday 14 th November 2018, 2.30pm	Heol-Y-Celyn Primary School
Hawthorn Primary School	School Council	Wednesday 14 th November 2018, 2.30pm	Hawthorn Primary School
Cilfynydd Primary School	School Council	Monday, 19 th November 2018, 2.30 pm	Cilfynydd Primary School
YGG, Pont Sion Norton	School Council	Tuesday, 20 th November 2018, 2.30 pm	YGG, Pont Sion Norton
Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School	School Council	Thursday, 22 nd November 2018, 2 pm	Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School
Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School	School Council	Thursday, 22 nd November 2018, 2 pm	Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School
Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School	Parents and public drop in session	Tuesday, 15 th January 2019, 3 – 6 pm	Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School
Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School	Parents and public drop in session	Wednesday, 16 th January 2019, 3 – 6pm	Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School
YGG Pont Sion Norton and Heol-Y-Celyn Primary Welsh Department – both schools and members of the local community	Parents and public drop in session and exhibition	Thursday, 17 th January 2019, 4 – 6pm	Rhydyfelin Children’s Centre

School Affected	Group	Time/Date	Venue
Hawthorn High, Hawthorn Primary and Heol-Y-Celyn Primary– all three schools and members of the local community	Parents and public drop in session and exhibition	Tuesday, 22 nd January 2019, 3 – 6 pm	Hawthorn High School
Pontypridd High and Cilfynydd Primary – both schools and members of the local community	Parents and public drop in session and exhibition	Thursday, 24 th January 2019, 3 – 6 pm	Pontypridd High School

Interested parties were welcomed to put their views in writing to:

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

e-mail schoolplanning@rctcbc.gov.uk

A Consultation Report was published in March 2019 following the Consultation period. This report contained a summary of the issues raised by consultees, a response to the issues raised, and Estyn’s view on the merits of the proposal. This document is available to view online on the Council’s website. However all comment and issues raised during this period were provided to Cabinet to review all concerns and issues raised prior to a decision being made.

Since publishing the Consultation Report, Cabinet agreed to move on with the school organisation process and Statutory Notices on the proposals were published triggering an Objection Period which was held from April 30th until May 31st 2019.

The objections received during this period have been collated and all have been provided to Cabinet Members to review prior to a decision on the implementation of the proposals being made. The Objection Report will be published within 7 days of a decision being reached.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

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

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

ADDRESSING THE IMPACT

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

Following a robust and comprehensive consultation process, the evidence suggests that the rationale for implementing the proposals for change as outlined in the Consultation Document and summarised in this and previous reports remains entirely appropriate and valid.

Please indicate and provide reasons for your decision.

The evidence outlined in our consultation document and subsequent consultation report demonstrates that this is the right approach. The proposals will be submitted to Elected Members for consideration.

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
Publish Objection Report with objection summary	Director of Education and Inclusion Services	Before the end of 7 days beginning with the day of its determination		
To finalise the plans for school building construction and repair/refurbishment of existing buildings	Director of Corporate Estates	By September 2020		
To undertake any highways works that are identified as required to improve walking routes and to make arrangements for any transport provision that may be identified.	Director of Highways and Transportation	By September 2022		
To provide free transport to eligible pupils and support parents/carers during the application process	Director of Highways and Transportation	By September 2022		Free transport to mitigate increased travel distances for pupils affected.
Work with Governing Bodies to establish childcare facilities to support working families – including breakfast and after school clubs	Director of Education and Inclusion Services	By September 2022		Consultation with relevant governing bodies

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@rctcbc.gov.uk

Tel: 01443 424075

Signed: Gaynor Davies Revision Date: 01/07/2019
Job Title: Director of Education and Inclusion Services

Proposal to create a Sixth Form 'Centre of Excellence' at Bryncelynnog, utilise post 16 provision at Coleg y Cymoedd and St David's College, Cardiff, and to remove sixth form provision at Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive, Hawthorn and Pontypridd High Schools

Community Impact Assessment

This assessment is prepared in accordance with guidance contained within Annex C of the new statutory guidance circular 011/2018, the School Organisation Code, which was implemented with effect from 1st November 2018. For this purpose, circular 011/2018 incorporates all statutory obligations contained within statutory guidance circular 006/2013.

This proposal was consulted on between 15th October 2018 and 31st January 2019, as part of a wider consultation regarding the reorganisation of school provision in the Pontypridd and Hawthorn areas of Rhondda Cynon Taf. A detailed consultation document was circulated to all prescribed consultees. Copies were forwarded to the WG in compliance with consultation and publication guidelines. The document advised of the availability of all required Impact Assessments and informed all consultees as to how they could obtain copies if they required them.

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

It must be noted that we are not closing any secondary school provision as a consequence of this particular proposal. The three schools that may lose 6th form provision will remain in situ, albeit with changes made to the age range of pupils they wish to admit (amended from 11 – 19 years to 3 – 16 years or 11 – 16 in the case of Cardinal Newman). Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School will have additional accommodation and facilities provided. Separate Community Impact Assessments have been prepared in respect of all other proposals being consulted upon at the current time.

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

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

Transportation for pupils will be provided in accordance with the Council's Learner Travel Policy in force at the time of the transfer of the post-16 provision to their new locations. Assessments will be undertaken in accordance with legislation in force and will involve the application of both distance and dangerous route criteria, if applicable.

Proposal to close Hawthorn Primary, Heol y Celyn Primary and Hawthorn High Schools and to create a new 3 – 16 school on the adjacent sites of the current Hawthorn Primary and Hawthorn High Schools

Community Impact Assessment

This assessment is prepared in accordance with guidance contained within Annex C of the new statutory guidance circular 011/2018, the School Organisation Code, which was implemented with effect from 1st November 2018. For this purpose, circular 011/2018 incorporates all statutory obligations contained within statutory guidance circular 006/2013.

This proposal is being consulted on between 15th October 2018 and 31st January 2019, as part of a wider consultation regarding the reorganisation of school provision in the Pontypridd and Hawthorn areas of Rhondda Cynon Taf. A detailed consultation document has been circulated to all prescribed consultees. Copies have been forwarded to the WG in compliance with consultation and publication guidelines. The document advises of the availability of all required Impact Assessments and informs all consultees as to how they can obtain copies if they require them.

At the time of the consultation, the percentage of pupils attending the respective schools who resided within the catchment areas of those schools was as follows:

- Hawthorn Primary – 46%
- Heol y Celyn Primary – 75%
- Hawthorn High – 85%

A significant percentage (40%) of the children attending Hawthorn Primary School, or 97 children in total actually resided in the adjacent catchment area of Heol y Celyn Primary; some actually live in the same street that Heol y Celyn is situated in. We do not consider therefore that transferring the English Medium stream of Heol y Celyn to the new 3 -16 provision at Hawthorn will have an adverse effect on either the children or the local community, as many parents are already exercising their right to choose this school for their children.

The two Primary schools offer breakfast clubs to all pupils at present; we will recommend that this provision should continue in the new 3 - 16 school if these proposals are agreed.

Neither of the two Primary schools are used outside of school hours by community organisations; any usage made is by school based groups such as the PTA. Both offer after school clubs to their pupils, Heol y Celyn has football, netball and gymnastics clubs on three evenings a week and Hawthorn has various clubs running on three evenings a week.

The Secondary school runs a full programme of extra-curricular activities after school each day. The full facilities of the current Secondary school will be available for the younger children to use, under supervision, so the programme of after school activities available to them can in fact be enhanced and extended.

There is a swimming pool on the High school site that is also open to the public; the organisation and running of this facility will not change as a result of these proposals.

This proposal seeks to enhance the school accommodation and facilities available to both Primary and Secondary aged pupils resident in the Hawthorn area , to cater for all children who may attend the school in the future from its catchment area (which will differ for the Primary and Secondary departments of the new proposed 3 – 16 School). This is not a rural area, and the existence of so many other schools and other community facilities within a short distance means that it is not deemed necessary to consider the enhancement of other community facilities that may exist in the local area.

The catchment area for Primary aged pupils who may attend the new 3 – 16 school will be that of the current Hawthorn Primary and the English medium stream of Heol y Celyn, combined. The distance between the Heol y Celyn site and the site of the new school is just 1 mile; this is the driving distance, the walking distance is shorter. Hawthorn Primary School is located immediately adjacent to the Hawthorn High School site and the distance between them is just a few metres.

No address within the extended Primary age catchment area will qualify for free home to school transport on the grounds of distance, as the furthest addresses from the new school site are all within the qualifying distance, which is 1.5 miles for Primary aged pupils in Rhondda Cynon Taf. The furthest address on the eastern side of the catchment area is 0.9 miles; on the upper western side of the catchment area it is 1.2 miles. It is not considered that these distances will be a barrier to any child who wishes to participate in the pre, and after school provision that will be offered at the new 3 - 16 School in the future; all pupils will be given equal access and encouragement to participate in as many activities as they wish. Having all Primary aged pupils in the Hawthorn area in one school, along with their elder siblings who may attend the Secondary department is considered to be of benefit to parents in future, as their children's school provision will be located on one site, as opposed to being a mile apart as it is at present

The catchment area of the Secondary section of the new school will remain as it is for the existing Hawthorn High School, with the exception of the omission of the catchment area of Coedpenmaen Primary School, Pontypridd plus the Graig area of Pontypridd that is in the catchment area of Maesycoed will also be omitted. Transportation for children will be provided in accordance with the Council's Learner Travel Policy in force at the time of the transfer of school provisions to the new 3 - 16 School. Assessments will be undertaken in accordance with legislation in force and will involve the application of both distance and dangerous route criteria, if applicable.

Proposal to close Cilfynydd Primary and Pontypridd High Schools and to create a new 3 – 16 school on site of the current Pontypridd High School

Community Impact Assessment

This assessment is prepared in accordance with guidance contained within Annex C of the new statutory guidance circular 011/2018, the School Organisation Code, which was implemented with effect from 1st November 2018. For this purpose, circular 011/2018 incorporates all statutory obligations contained within statutory guidance circular 006/2013.

This proposal was consulted on between 15th October 2018 and 31st January 2019, as part of a wider consultation regarding the reorganisation of school provision in the Pontypridd and Hawthorn areas of Rhondda Cynon Taf. A detailed consultation document was circulated to all prescribed consultees. Copies were forwarded to the WG in compliance with consultation and publication guidelines. The document advised of the availability of all required Impact Assessments and informed all consultees as to how they could obtain copies if they required them.

At the time of the consultation, the percentage of pupils attending the respective schools who resided within the catchment areas of those schools was as follows:

- Cilfynydd Primary – 90%
- Pontypridd High – 68%

A relatively large number of children (30) who reside in the Cilfynydd catchment area choose to attend Coedpenmaen Primary School, which is approx. 1 mile from Cilfynydd Primary. This number of children represents 27% of the total number of statutory age children who currently attend Cilfynydd Primary.

Cilfynydd Primary School offers breakfast club to all pupils at present; we will recommend that this provision should continue in the new 3 - 16 school if these proposals are agreed.

Cilfynydd Primary is not used outside of school hours by community organisations; any usage made is by school based groups such as the PTA. The school offers after school clubs to its pupils on two evenings each week.

The Secondary school runs a full programme of extra-curricular activities after school each day. The full facilities of the current Secondary school will be available for the younger children to use, under supervision, so the programme of after school activities available to them can in fact be enhanced and extended.

There is a sports hall on the High school site that is widely used by community groups outside of school hours; the organisation and running of this facility will not change as a result of these proposals.

This proposal seeks to enhance the school accommodation and facilities available to both Primary and Secondary aged pupils resident in the Pontypridd area , to cater for all children who may attend the school in the future from its catchment area (which will differ for the Primary and Secondary departments of the new proposed 3 – 16 School). This is not a rural area, and the existence of so many other schools and other community facilities within a short distance means that it is not deemed necessary to consider the enhancement of other community facilities that may exist in the local area.

The distance between the existing school and new school sites for Primary aged pupils who may attend the new 3 – 16 school is just 0.9 of a mile; this is the driving distance, the walking distance is much shorter, via a footbridge over the A470 trunk road.

No address within the Primary age catchment area will qualify for free home to school transport on the grounds of distance, as the furthest addresses from the new school site are all within the qualifying distance, which is 1.5 miles for Primary aged pupils in Rhondda Cynon Taf. The furthest address on the eastern side of the Cilfynydd catchment area to the site of Pontypridd High (Albion Court) is 1.4 miles by car and 1.1 miles on foot. It is not considered this distance will be a barrier to any child who wishes to participate in the pre, and after school provision that will be offered at the new 3 - 16 School in the future; all pupils will be given equal access and encouragement to participate in as many activities as they wish. Having all Primary aged pupils in the Cilfynydd area of Pontypridd in one school, along with their elder siblings who may attend the Secondary department is considered to be of benefit to parents in future, as their children's school provision will be located on one site, as opposed to being almost a mile apart as it is at present

The catchment area of the Secondary section of the new school will remain as it is for the existing Pontypridd High School, with the addition of the catchment area of Coedpenmaen Primary School. The Graig area of Pontypridd that is in the catchment area of Maesycod Primary School, will also be included. Transportation for children will be provided in accordance with the Council's Learner Travel Policy in force at the time of the transfer of school provisions to the new 3 - 16 School. Assessments will be undertaken in accordance with legislation in force and will involve the application of both distance and dangerous route criteria, if applicable.

Proposal to close YGG, Pont Sion Norton and Heol y Celyn Primary School (dual language) and to open a new, enlarged Welsh Medium Community Primary School on the former Heol y Celyn site.

Community Impact Assessment

This assessment is prepared in accordance with guidance contained within Annex C of the new statutory guidance circular 011/2018, the School Organisation Code, which was implemented with effect from 1st November 2018. For this purpose, circular 011/2018 incorporates all statutory obligations contained within statutory guidance circular 006/2013.

This proposal was consulted on between 15th October 2018 and 31st January 2019, as part of a wider consultation regarding the reorganisation of school provision in the Pontypridd and Hawthorn areas of Rhondda Cynon Taf. A detailed consultation document was circulated to all prescribed consultees. Copies were forwarded to the WG in compliance with consultation and publication guidelines. The document advised of the availability of all required Impact Assessments and informed all consultees as to how they could obtain copies if they required them.

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

- YGG Pont Sion Norton – 91%
- Heol y Celyn (Welsh Unit only) – 88%

A relatively large number of children (30) who reside in the Heol y Celyn catchment area choose to attend other Welsh Medium schools in the area, including YGG Pont Sion Norton and YGG Evan James. These pupils may possibly choose to return to their catchment school if a new, full Welsh Medium school is constructed on the Heol y Celyn site.

Both schools offer breakfast club to all pupils at present; we will recommend that this provision should continue in the new Welsh Medium Primary school if these proposals are agreed.

Heol y Celyn Primary is not used outside of school hours by community organisations; any usage made is by school based groups such as the PTA. The school offers after school clubs to its pupils on three evenings each week.

YGG Pont Sion Norton hosts Welsh for Adults classes on one evening a week, organised by the University of South Wales. Menter Iaith also host their 'Clwb Carco' after school provision for pupils on two evenings each week, in addition the school itself offers their own after school clubs on two evenings each week.

The new school will be strongly encouraged to continue with the after school and adult education provision currently offered, with opportunity to expand and extend this if there is recognised demand.

This proposal seeks to enhance the school accommodation and facilities available to pupils who require a Welsh Medium education in the Pontypridd area. In addition to improving provision, it is hoped that a new school with 21st Century Schools facilities will encourage parents to choose a Welsh Medium education for their children, thus assisting the Council in achieving one of the key aims outlined in its Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP). This is not a rural area, and the existence of so many other schools and other community facilities within a short distance means that it is not deemed necessary to consider the enhancement of other community facilities that may exist in the local area.

The catchment area of the new school will encompass that of the existing two schools. The relocation of YGG Pont Sion Norton to the Heol y Celyn site will mean that all pupils resident within this school's current catchment area will qualify for, and receive free home to school transport, as they will reside more than 1.5 miles from the new school. No child resident in the Heol y Celyn part of the catchment will qualify as none will reside more than 1 mile from the school. It is not considered that distance to school will be a barrier to any child who wishes to participate in the pre and after school provision that will be offered in the new school; it is estimated the maximum length of time any child will have to take to travel to the school will be 20 minutes.

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

Proposals to Reorganise School Provision in the Pontypridd and Hawthorn Areas

Welsh Language Impact Assessment

This assessment has been undertaken in accordance with the guidelines outlined in Annex C of the School Organisation Code.

As part of our proposals in respect of the above, we are planning to undertake some reorganisation of Welsh Medium Primary education provision in this area of Rhondda Cynon Taf, which will not only improve and enhance the learning environment but also increase Welsh Medium pupil capacity. We are proposing to close the Welsh Medium stream of Heol y Celyn Primary School, which is a dual language school and YGG Pont Sion Norton; Welsh Medium pupils attending both schools will transfer to a new, full Welsh Medium school, that will be constructed on the former site of Heol y Celyn, in a new building that will be constructed to 21st Century School standards. This will of course be subject to parental preference.

Our proposals in respect of the Hawthorn area involve the closure of Hawthorn High School, Hawthorn Primary School and Heol y Celyn Primary School, and the creation of a new, 3 – 16 'all through' school on the sites of Hawthorn High and Hawthorn Primary, which are immediately adjacent to each other. The pupils from these schools, together with the pupils from the English Medium stream of Heol y Celyn will transfer to the new school, subject to parental preference.

The vacated Heol y Celyn site will be cleared and a new Welsh Medium Community Primary school will be constructed in its place. This new building will be constructed to 21st Century Schools standards and will be a much improved provision compared with the two current school buildings. Information on current building condition and suitability is contained within the consultation document. The capacity of the new school building will be 480 pupils, plus 60 Nursery places, which represents an increase over the existing YGG Pont Sion Norton combined with the Welsh stream of Heol y Celyn of almost 100 places. We consider that this capacity will be sufficient to cater for current and forecasted pupil demand and it will also allow for growth in the Welsh Medium sector.

Any services provided by both YGG Pont Sion Norton and Heol y Celyn outside of school hours, such as breakfast clubs, after school clubs and other community facilities will continue in the new building. Any links with outside organisations such as the Urdd, Menter Iaith etc will be maintained and hopefully strengthened and expanded. The new school building will have a community room facility and the headteacher will be encouraged to consider using this facility to increase participation in the Welsh Language, such as offering opportunities to parents and other community members to learn Welsh.

Information on the standards of provision at both of the existing schools were contained within the consultation document. It must be stressed that YGG Pont Sion Norton is a well-established, successful school and whereas this proposal involves its closure, its provision will in fact be relocated to a brand new building to be constructed less than 2 miles away from its current site. We would therefore expect this new school to closely replicate and, hopefully improve upon the current provision and high standards currently available at YGG Pont Sion Norton.

One of the main targets outlined in the Council's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) 2017-2020 is to increase the number of children receiving education through the medium of Welsh, which will assist the local authority in working towards the Welsh Government target of having 1 million people in Wales able to speak Welsh by 2050. One of the ways highlighted to work towards achieving this is to consider making our three dual language schools, of which Heol y Celyn is one, in to full Welsh Medium provisions. We consider that this proposal will achieve this aim and in addition, the extra pupil capacity in a new, state of the art building will hopefully encourage more parents to choose a Welsh Medium education for their children.

In addition, following the recent consultation on the Welsh Government's draft Welsh in Education Strategic Plans Regulations (Wales) 2019 guidance which advocates an increase in Welsh medium education provision for learners with Additional Learning Needs (ALN), and in accordance with the ALN and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018, RCT will consult on establishing a Welsh medium Foundation Phase and Key Stage 2 ALN provision in the new school.