

24th October 2024

Re: Consultees in relation to - Statutory School Organisation – Proposal to close Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School with pupils transferring to Tonyrefail Community School

Dear Cabinet Members,

I have been instructed by this Council's Education and Inclusion Scrutiny Committee to convey the comments and observations of Members in relation to **Statutory School Organisation – Proposal to close Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School with pupils transferring to Tonyrefail Community School**, and for the comments to be included in the public consultation before its consideration by Cabinet at its meeting.

The Education and Inclusion Scrutiny Committee had the opportunity to act as consultees and gave their feedback and comments in respect of the proposal at its meeting on the 24th October 2024. Members undertook a constructive discussion in respect of the report presented by the Director of Education and Inclusion Services.

The full discussions of the committee in respect of this item of business can be viewed [here](#).

In summary, the following points were discussed in relation to Statutory School Organisation – Proposal to close Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School with pupils transferring to Tonyrefail Community School.

- A Member stated that any decision that was taken post-consultation, should be in the best interest of everyone, and any decision should take into account all aspects including transport and pupil numbers.
- Members sought reassurance around the capacity at Tonyrefail CS, with an increase of places, for the learners of Tref-Y-Rhyg, noting that a large percentage of children already attending Tonyrefail CS, instead of their catchment school e.g., Hendreforgan Primary School and Cwmlai Primary School, and asked that early consideration be given in respect of siblings, whilst acknowledging the Schools Admissions Code.
- A Member, also acknowledging there were several tables within the report which outlined those pupils that attended Tref-Y-Rhyg outside of catchment, raised concerns on the implications and impact on those pupils on home to school transport who perhaps already travel to Tref-Y-Rhyg, who would have further distances to travel.
- Members expressed concerns in respect of the robustness of data provided within the report, commenting on the confusing format with several data sets contained within and acknowledging the data provided by local Members, highlighting reference to projection numbers in terms of housing and pupils, which was not

reflected in the report. It was requested that a robust analysis of all data was provided in the report to be presented back to Cabinet.

- A Member sought reassurances that children would be at the heart of the decision made, and was concerned that some may struggle financially, as a result of the proposal.
- Members acknowledging that property prices had escalated enormously and taking into consideration the dueling of the A4119, questioned if Tonyrefail CS would have enough capacity for future growth in the area, if there was a ripple effect up the valley.
- A Member sought clarification around the classroom repurposing in Tonyrefail CS, which was currently used as an ancillary space, and was concerned this put even more pressure in terms of what the space was currently used for.
- A Member referencing a recent visit to Tonyrefail CS by the Task & Finish Group, was concerned that the traffic management around the school was challenging, particularly on the primary side, and sought reassurance around the impact of additional footfall from parents and carers, along with potential additional vehicle usage, acknowledging the knock on effect in terms of sustainability and the carbon footprint.
- A Member asked if the local community had been consulted in respect of potential increased traffic implications and footfall noting that it wasn't referenced specifically in the impact assessment.
- A Member sought assurance that there wouldn't be restrictions on breakfast club numbers for Tonyrefail CS, with the potential increased numbers going there.
- A Member raised concern around formal allocation of additional teaching staff, acknowledging the potential excess of 30 pupils moving across to Tonyrefail CS, whilst recognising that the school was in a deficit budget.
- A Member noting on page 33 of the report that it stated that Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School would continue to have classes of mixed year groups and having to organise classes in such a way could pose significant challenges for teaching and learning queried if any guarantee could be given that if children moved to Tonyrefail CS, they would never be put in a mixed class.
- A Member sought reassurance that appropriate consultees were included in the consultation including, RhAG (Rhieni ar gyfer Addysg Gymraeg / Parents for Welsh Education), recognising the opportunity for Welsh Language Immersion, as referenced in the report, should the proposal go ahead.
- Members requested further detail be made available to Cabinet in respect of 'safe walking routes' in relation to the proposals.

- Members sought clarification in respect of the backlog maintenance figure listed within the report, in respect of accessibility, in addition to how much the refurbishment costs had been in the past 10 years, and what this was for, acknowledging that this information would be provided for the report back to Cabinet.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Christian Hanagan', written over a faint circular stamp.

Christian Hanagan
Service Director Democratic Services and Communication