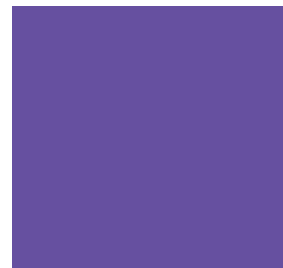
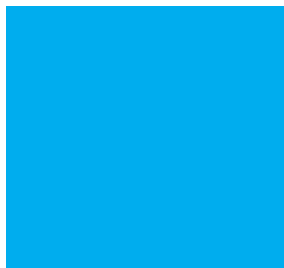


**21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY SCHOOLS****CONSULTATION REPORT****CONSULTATION ON A PROPOSAL TO CLOSE TREF Y RHYG PRIMARY SCHOOL WITH PUPILS TRANSFERRING TO TONYREFAIL COMMUNITY SCHOOL**

The Consultation Report and Appendices are also available on the 'Get Involved' page on Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council's website.

Mae'r ddogfen yma ar gael yn y Gymraeg/This document is available in Welsh.

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## **1. Proposal**

Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council (RCTCBC) wishes to seek the views of stakeholders on the proposal to close Tref y Rhyg Primary School and extend the catchment area of Tonyrefail Community School to incorporate the catchment area of Tref y Rhyg Primary School. It is proposed that Tref y Rhyg Primary School will close with pupils transferring to Tonyrefail Community School by no later than September 2025.

The proposal is made in accordance with the Welsh Government's (WG's) School Organisation Code (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition) (011/2018). Section 2.1 of the WG's School Organisation Code (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition) (011/2018) refers to elements of school organisation that require the publication of proposals, including:

- The closing of a maintained school.

Details of the proposal and the rationale behind it are fully outlined in the Consultation Document and Impact Assessments that were circulated to all the stakeholders. The link to these documents is below:

[Proposal to close Tref Y Rhyg Primary School with pupils transferring to Tonyrefail Community School | Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council \(rctcbc.gov.uk\)](https://www.rctcbc.gov.uk)

## **2. Purpose of the Consultation Report**

This Consultation Report is prepared in accordance with the WG's School Organisation Code (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition) (011/2018). Its purpose is to inform the stakeholders listed below of the outcome of the consultation held between Monday 30<sup>th</sup> September 2024 and 17:00 on Friday 15<sup>th</sup> November 2024.

## **3. Who Have We Consulted With?**

A copy of the Consultation Document, which fully outlined and explained the proposal, was sent to the following stakeholders. The Consultation Document was also published on RCTCBC's website.

- The Governing Bodies of:
  - Tref y Rhyg Primary School.
  - Tonyrefail Community School.
  - Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Tonyrefail (YGG Tonyrefail).
  - Cwmlai Primary School.
  - Hendreforgan Primary School.
- Parents/carers, prospective parents/carers (where possible), and staff members of:
  - Tref y Rhyg Primary School.
  - Tonyrefail Community School.
- Pupils of:
  - Tref y Rhyg Primary School.
  - Tonyrefail Community School.
- Neighbouring Councils.
- The Church in Wales and Roman Catholic Diocesan Authorities.
- Welsh Ministers.
- Members of the Senedd for the Rhondda, Cynon, Taf and Ogmore constituencies and regional Members of the Senedd for the area.

- Members of Parliament for the Merthyr Tydfil and Aberdare, Rhondda and Ogmore and Pontypridd constituencies.
- Estyn.
- Teaching and staff trade unions.
- Central South Consortium Joint Education Service.
- Police and Crime Commissioner for the area.
- Childcare providers.
- Mudiad Meithrin.
- Menter Iaith.
- Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership.
- Children and Young People's Partnership.
- Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board.
- Welsh Language Commissioner.
- Tonyrefail Community Council.

#### 4. Consultation Process

All stakeholders identified in section 3 were sent a link to electronic copies of the Consultation Document and Impact Assessments, and those that requested paper copies received them. The table that follows also outlines the meetings that were convened with the Governing Body and staff members and School Council of Tref y Rhyg Primary School and Tonyrefail Community School.

Making your Views Known			
School(s) Affected	Group	Time/Date	Venue
School Council			
Tref y Rhyg Primary School.	School Council.	Wednesday 6 <sup>th</sup> November 2024 at 14:00.	Tref y Rhyg Primary School.
Tonyrefail Community School.	School Council.		Tonyrefail Community School.
Governing Body and Staff			
Tref y Rhyg Primary School.	Governing Body and Staff	Monday 21 <sup>st</sup> October at 15:45.	Tref y Rhyg Primary School.
Tonyrefail Community School.	Governing Body and Staff		Tonyrefail Community School.
Public Drop in Session			
Parents/carers and members of the local community.		Wednesday 6 <sup>th</sup> November 2024 between 15:30 and 17:30	Tref y Rhyg Primary School.
			Tonyrefail Community School.

All meetings outlined in the previous table were held face-to-face.

Notes of the meeting with the Governing Body and staff members of Tref y Rhyg Primary School and Tonyrefail Community School on Monday 21<sup>st</sup> October at 15:45 were taken and are attached at Appendix 1A – Minutes of Meeting with Governing Body and Staff Members of Tonyrefail Community School and Appendix 1B – Minutes of Meeting with Governing Body and Staff Members of Tref y Rhyg Primary School. These notes record questions

raised, comments and statements made during the meeting along with the responses provided where appropriate.

Notes of the meeting with the School Councils of Tref y Rhyg Primary School and Tonyrefail Community School on Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> November 2024 at 14:00. were taken and are attached at [Appendix 2A – Minutes of Meeting with School Council of Tonyrefail Community School](#) and [Appendix 2B – Minutes of Meeting with School Council of Tref y Rhyg Primary School](#). These notes record questions raised, comments and statements made during the meeting along with the responses provided where appropriate.

Two drop-in sessions were also arranged so that members of the public could discuss the proposal with officers from RCTCBC's Directorate of Education and Inclusion Services and provide any feedback at the session. The sessions were held face-to-face at Tref y Rhyg Primary School and Tonyrefail Community School on Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> November 2024 at 15:30 to 17:30. At the drop-in sessions all attendees were requested to sign in so that the level of attendance could be recorded. The attendance register indicates that a total of 18 people signed in at Tref y Rhyg Primary School and four people signed in at Tonyrefail Community School. Where appropriate, attendees were asked to complete and submit a Consultation Response Form. A record of the verbal comments made at each public drop-in session was made and has been included within the themes of this Consultation Report.

## 5. Summary of Consultation Responses

Responses to the questions raised at the Governing Body and staff meetings and School Council meetings are summarised in the minutes of the meetings attached at Appendix 1A and 1B and 2A and 2B, respectively.

In total, 98 responses were received. Eight were received in writing and 89 were received via the online survey (one response was the online survey supplemented with additional information in writing). In addition, 714 signatures were added to an online petition, this has been classed as one response for the purpose of this Consultation Report. Of the responses received, 7 (7.1%) agreed with the proposal, 86 disagreed (87.8%) with the proposal and 5 (5.1%) were not sure about the proposal. This is summarised in the table that follows.

<b>Summary of Consultation Responses</b>		
<b>Determination</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>%</b>
Agree	7	7.1
Disagree	86	87.8
Not Sure	5	5.1
Not Answered	0	0.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>100.0</b>

In compliance with the WG's School Organisation Code (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition) (011/2018), a summary of the written responses received during the consultation period are detailed in the table that follows along with clarification (where required).

**To confirm, all responses received during this consultation have been made available and reviewed by RCTCBC's Cabinet Members.**

<b>Summary of Written Responses</b>
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Theme	Clarification
<p><b>Active travel implications.</b></p> <p><b>Implications of traveling to Tonyrefail Community School.</b></p> <p>Comments received in relation to this theme included:</p> <p><i>“Tref y Rhyg Primary School is only a walk away from my home which is nice if we wanted a bit of exercise.”</i></p> <p><i>“There is no no way I can get my child to [Tonyrefail Community School] every day especially in the winter my child would be absolutely knackered before we got to school she wouldn't even walk it she would stop an ask to be carried an I couldn't do that...I can't afford £68.00 a month for buses, I'm on low income and with the cost of living still rising there's no way I could afford it... I picked Tref y Rhyg Primary School as I know I could walk there and back and get my child to school every day.”</i></p>	<p>All routes within the Tref Rhyg Primary School, Tonyrefail Community School, and Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Tonyrefail catchment areas are deemed available and in daily use by many pupils. As a result, no school transport is currently provided to pupils living across the Tonyrefail area that live within RCTCBC's current discretionary walking distance criteria, which is this instance is 1.5 miles. This will not change should this proposal be implemented.</p> <p>Notwithstanding the above, as part of the consultation process RCTCBC has commissioned an independent walking route assessment between Tref y Rhyg Primary School and Tonyrefail Community School. Whilst the final report is still awaited, the independent consultants have confirmed that the route is deemed to be available.</p> <p>In terms of public transport, there is a public transport service bus which runs regularly. The bus stops are in close proximity to Tref y Rhyg Primary School and Tonyrefail Community School. However, the cost and operation of the public transport in the area is not within the remit of RCTCBC to manage.</p>
<p><b>Will the additional learning needs (ALN) support provided to children at Tref y Rhyg Primary School continue at Tonyrefail Community School.</b></p> <p>Comments received in relation to this theme included:</p> <p><i>“I chose to change my daughter's school to Tref y Rhyg Primary School as she has additional learning needs and I felt and still feel that she will receive more 1:1 support and not just be a number but have an identity within the school and receive the best support available.”</i></p> <p><i>“My daughter is ALN with an IDP [Individual Development Plan] and would never cope in a big class</i></p>	<p>Yes, all pupils with ALN will continue to be supported. The Additional Learning Needs Education Tribunal (ALNET) Act provides detailed guidance on the duties and responsibilities of Councils in meeting the ALN of children and young people. Children and young people have ALN if they have a learning difficulty which calls for an additional learning provision to be made for them.</p> <p>The ALN Code for Wales (2021) recommends that Early Years and school settings adopt a graduated response to meeting ALN. A graduated response means that progressively greater expertise and support can be brought in to address the difficulties a child or young person may be experiencing. Additional or different provision should be made depending on the severity of the child/young person's level of need.</p>

	<p>This duty and responsibility in this regard will be met regardless of which school a child attends.</p>
<p><b>Children should be part of the decision to close Tref y Rhyg Primary School.</b></p> <p>Comments received in relation to this theme included:</p> <p><i>“Listen to the children of [Tref y Rhyg Primary] School. It was disappointing that school children were not allowed to speak in RCTCBC’s [Cabinet] meeting.”</i></p>	<p>RCTCBC has acknowledged that the voice of children and young people is important, and they must be involved as active participants in the development, delivery, management, and improvement of their educational experience.</p> <p>Children and young people have a right to express their views in all matters affecting them and for their views to be heard and considered in accordance with their age and maturity. As such, RCTCBC’s Directorate of Education and Inclusion Services 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Team have ensured that suitable arrangements were made to involve children and young people as active participants throughout this consultation process, and if a decision is made to progress the proposal, throughout the implementation process.</p>
<p><b>Could negatively impact pupils’ attendance.</b></p> <p>Comments received in relation to this theme included:</p> <p><i>“It will further disadvantaged those pupils already experiencing disadvantages. Evidence shows that a community where pupils feel safe, will increase their attendance. Some of the pupils will have a 1.5 mile walk each way, which during adverse weather conditions will affect their attendance, and attainment.”</i></p>	<p>RCTCBC has a statutory legal duty to ensure that every child of compulsory school age is getting the education required by law, either at home or at school. In RCTCBC this statutory legal duty is devolved to the Attendance and Wellbeing Service.</p> <p>As with every school, attendance will be monitored and support from RCTCBC’s Attendance and Wellbeing Service will be provided where required. RCTCBC’s Attendance and Wellbeing Service already works in partnership with pupils, parents/carers and Tonyrefail Community School to identify strategies to improve pupils’ attendance where this is needed and will continue to do so should the proposal proceed.</p>
<p><b>The Consultation Document comments negatively on the mixed classes in Tref y Rhyg Primary School, but there are also mixed classes in Tonyrefail Community School.</b></p> <p>Comments received in relation to this theme included:</p> <p><i>“The Consultation Document indicates that the mixed classes that occur at Tref y Rhyg Primary School are detrimental to pupils</i></p>	<p>Tref y Rhyg Primary School currently has four classes, three of which are made up of mixed year groups, with one mixing three year groups. The projected fall in pupil numbers at Tref y Rhyg Primary School could make this situation more challenging in time.</p> <p>Tonyrefail currently has 12 classes and they have two year groups within each class. Whilst two year groups in one class is not uncommon three year groups in one class would present significant differentiation challenges. This</p>

<p><i>learning and achievement. I would like to point out that mixed classes are implemented by choice at Tonyrefail Community School and are advertised as being healthy for the learning environment. So, which is it, are mixed classes detrimental or healthy?"</i></p>	<p>situation is likely to become increasingly common in Tref Y Rhyg if numbers continue to decline.</p> <p>There are significant challenges to teaching mixed year groups across more than 2 year groups. In what is considered to be a standard size class of pupils, there will always be a range of abilities that need to be catered for through effective differentiation to ensure that the work meets the pupils' needs, ensuring they make strong progress in their learning and are suitably challenged. In a small school where you have mixed year groups of more than two years, and a wide range of abilities it can prove to be challenging for the teaching and support staff to meet the wide range of academic needs, as well as the social and emotional needs, of all the pupils. It is acknowledged that Tref y Rhyg Primary School offers pupils positive learning experiences, nevertheless the teaching of 3 year groups within one classroom environment can be a significant challenge in educational settings.</p>
<p><b>Good.</b></p> <p>Comments received in relation to this theme included:</p> <p><i>"Over all from reading the information it seems a fair suggestion albeit some wont be happy, the alternative schools suggested are also very close."</i></p>	<p>The Consultation Document outlines the benefits of the proposal.</p>
<p><b>Impact on community.</b></p> <p>Comments received in relation to this theme included:</p> <p><i>"The school is the heart of the community, we're like a close family and teachers know the needs of each individual child in their class and I feel like moving them to [Tonyrefail Community] School would not help their education and could disrupt their connections and love for school."</i></p> <p><i>"The school is and always has been a central part of the community."</i></p>	<p>A Community Impact Assessment for the proposal has been prepared in line with the requirements of the WG's <u>School Organisation Code (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition) (011/2018)</u>.</p> <p>However, as advised in the published Community Impact Assessment, this document has been revisited and updated following a review of the comments received throughout the duration of the consultation process. The updated version of the Community Impact Assessment will be available on RCTCBC's website once the Consultation Report is formally published.</p>



<p><b>Impact on parents/carers.</b></p> <p>Comments received in relation to this theme included:</p> <p>“My anxiety is through the roof the thought of [my son] having to start him in another school.”</p>	<p>It is anticipated that the proposed changes will not have a long term, adverse impact and it should be noted at this point in the statutory school organisation consultation process that RCTCBC considers the overall impact of the proposal to be positive.</p> <p>The transition arrangements that will be delivered for pupils will also be available to parents and carers too, and there will be opportunities for both parents and pupils to visit the school prior to any changes being implemented, with more enhanced opportunities for learners with ALN. This will help both the pupils and their families navigate the change and happily settle into their new school as quickly as possible.</p>
<p><b>Impact on pupils.</b></p> <p>Comments received in relation to this theme included:</p> <p><i>“The closure of Tref y Rhyg [Primary School] would disrupt the education and emotional well-being of all of our pupils who have formed essential relationships with their teachers and their peers in a familiar environment”.</i></p>	<p>The well-being of all pupils has been considered and is paramount to RCTCBC. The transition arrangements that will be delivered, ensure there will be lots of opportunities to help the pupils navigate the change and happily settle into their new school as quickly as possible.</p> <p>Further information is included within the Equality Impact Assessment. In addition, RCTCBC considers that the proposal benefits the children and young people in accordance with the seven core aims set out within the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.</p>
<p><b>Impact on staff.</b></p> <p>Comments received in relation to this theme included:</p> <p><i>“The potential job loss for teachers and staff is a significant concern and it threatens financial stability and the dedicated work place that nurtures our pupils.”</i></p>	<p>RCTCBC has well established Human Resource (HR) policies and procedures that give reassurance to staff and employers about the management of organisational change.</p> <p>RCTCBC HR officers have already visited all staff in Tref y Rhyg Primary School, and all are aware of the processes that may follow and the operational and personal support that is on offer.</p>
<p><b>Is there room at Tonyrefail Community School to accommodate pupils from Tref y Rhyg Primary School?</b></p> <p><b>Concerns that there is space in all year groups to accommodate all pupils from Tref y Rhyg Primary School.</b></p>	<p>Yes. The live pupil data combined for both schools shows that all year groups will be accommodated at Tonyrefail Community School. In addition, the capacity of the primary phase will increase by 30 to 415 pupil places, and the overall school capacity to 1,808. This increase will be achieved by utilising an area within Tonyrefail Community School that is</p>

<p>Comments received in relation to this theme included:</p> <p><i>“Tonyrefail Community School cannot cope with the number of pupils it has already. The amount of pupils already in a class is too high if a child struggles, they get left behind and fall through the cracks.”</i></p>	<p>currently designated as an ancillary space. This space will be redesignated as a classroom and as such will accommodate 30 additional pupils.</p> <p>To note, only 35.0% of the pupils that currently attend the primary phase in Tonyrefail Community School reside in the Tonyrefail Community School catchment. These combined changes will ensure that all pupils currently attending Tref y Rhyg Primary School can be accommodated in Tonyrefail Community School from September 2025. RCTCBC will strictly implement the admissions criteria, in accordance with the WG’s School Admission Code 2013 (005/2013) to manage the allocation of places from 2025 onwards.</p> <p>In terms of how pupils are distributed across year groups, all maintained schools must admit pupils (during compulsory education) up to their Admission Number (AN) – this can be found in the RCTCBC’s <u>Staring Schools Book</u> for the years 2025 to 2026. The published AN for Tonyrefail Community School for statutory primary aged pupils (reception to year six) is currently 55 for reception to year six.</p> <p>In order to ensure that pupils from Tref y Rhyg Primary School can attend Tonyrefail Community School, the capacity at Tonyrefail Community School will increase by 30 places, increasing the capacity of the primary phase to 415 pupil places, and the overall school capacity to 1,808. This increase will be achieved by utilising an area within Tonyrefail Community School that is currently designated as an ancillary space. This space will be redesignated as a classroom and as such will accommodate 30 additional pupils.</p> <p>Should the proposal proceed, the published AN for Tonyrefail Community School will be reviewed. The new published AN for Tonyrefail Community School would be 59.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The live pupil data combined for both schools shows that all year groups will be</li> </ul>
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	<p>accommodated under the new published AN for Tonyrefail Community School.</p> <p>Should the proposal proceed, there is space across all year groups to accommodate the additional pupils from Tref y Rhyg Primary School at Tonyrefail Community School.</p>
<p><b>Is there room at Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Tonyrefail (YGG Tonyrefail) to accommodate all pupils from Tref y Rhyg Primary School.</b></p> <p>Comments received in relation to this theme included:</p> <p><i>"[YGG] Tonyrefail is full."</i></p>	<p>Yes. There is sufficient capacity at YGG Tonyrefail for pupils of Tref y Rhyg Primary School who wish to attend Welsh medium primary education instead of continuing with English medium primary education provision at Tonyrefail Community School. Pupils of Tref y Rhyg Primary School have the option to attend YGG Tonyrefail, the local Welsh medium primary school. RCTCBC's Welsh Language Immersion Team provide excellent support for pupils who choose to move into Welsh medium education from the English medium sector. This provision has proved successful in other schools and will be available for any pupils that wish to utilise it.</p>
<p><b>More pupils benefit from an education in 21st century school standard buildings.</b></p> <p>Comments received in relation to this theme included:</p> <p><i>"About time! Tref y Rhyg [Primary School] is in very poor condition and clearly cannot be improved, our pupils have the right to an education in 21st century school standard buildings."</i></p>	<p>Tref y Rhyg Primary School does not form part of RCTCBC's and the WG's Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme. This means that no investment to create 21<sup>st</sup> century school facilities is planned for at Tref y Rhyg Primary School, and there is no budget to make significant improvements in the meantime.</p> <p>Attending a new school of a 21<sup>st</sup> century schools standard could result in a significant improvement to the quality of the educational experience for the pupils of Tref y Rhyg Primary School. The proposal addresses the significant surplus capacity and declining pupil numbers in Tref y Rhyg Primary School and offers more sustainable education in the area, delivering enhanced resources to invest in the quality of teaching and learning, to meet the need of all pupils, including the most vulnerable.</p>
<p><b>Reports of issues with applying for a school place at Tref y Rhyg Primary School.</b></p> <p>Comments received in relation to this theme included:</p>	<p>During the school admissions period between 2nd September 2024 and 8th November 2024, RCTCBC received on-line applications for Tref y Rhyg Primary School for the 2025 academic year.</p>

<p><i>"I believe this decision has been predetermined. This is because when applying for my son's reception place, no matter what I put in to search for the school, Tref y Rhyg [Primary School] would not come up as an option. This was only rectified when [RCTCBC's] Admissions Team were made aware."</i></p>	<p>As with any online application system sometimes there can be technical glitches and these issues are not unique to parents/carers of Tref y Rhyg Primary School.</p>
<p><b>Parents should be part of the decision to close Tref y Rhyg Primary School.</b></p> <p>Comments received in relation to this theme included:</p> <p><i>"Listen to the parents."</i></p>	<p>The purpose of the consultation is to seek the views of stakeholders on the proposal, and this is what took place during the consultation period. As well as completing the online form, parents/carers had the opportunity to speak to RCTCBC's officers as part of the statutory process during the drop-in sessions that were arranged at both schools.</p>
<p><b>Prefer separate age phases for primary and secondary education.</b></p> <p>Comments received in relation to this theme included:</p> <p><i>"Tonyrefail Community School is one of the best [secondary schools] in RCT area, however that is just the secondary part, not primary."</i></p>	<p>Tonyrefail Community School, being a 3 to 19 through school offers many benefits. The great strength of a through school is the continuity of educational experience which negates the transition dips in pupil performance. A through school provides the opportunity to provide a bridge between progression steps in order to create a seamless transition for pupils in terms of curriculum planning, learning and teaching. It can allow for a significant sharing of subject expertise and primary pedagogy in particular across progression steps.</p> <p>A through school eases the transition process between the age groups and staff and teachers know the pupils well as they progress through the year groups. This enables them to assist pupils where additional support is required.</p> <p>It is also able to achieve greater effectiveness through the sharing of resources, and being able to target those resources, whether financial, physical or human, at key areas of school improvement. Additional benefits of 3 to 19 through schools include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provision of specialist teaching in years 3 to 6 or extending literacy and numeracy programmes into years 7 to 9.</li> <li>• Access for primary phase pupils to the facilities of the secondary phase.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing scope for acceleration programmes for more able and talented pupils.</li> <li>• Joint professional development.</li> <li>• Directing resources at early intervention approaches.</li> <li>• Planning a joint curriculum.</li> <li>• Sharing equipment, hardware and accommodation.</li> <li>• Increasing the range and capacity for extra-curricular/after school clubs.</li> <li>• Creating common administrative appointments.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Smaller schools are better.</b></p> <p>Comments received in relation to this theme included:</p> <p>“My children would not cope in a large school.”</p> <p>“Parents benefit from the community feel to this small school and can help their children thrive way more than they would in the big school where that would undoubtedly get lost.”</p>	<p>There is a duty and responsibility placed on all Councils to ensure that all pupils receive the support they need regardless of the size of the school.</p> <p>Creating larger schools can build capacity within staffing structures and enable opportunities for developing more specialist wellbeing and/or family liaison posts which will clearly benefit more vulnerable children and families.</p>
<p><b>The buildings at Tref y Rhyg Primary School is in poor condition and the external space is limited.</b></p> <p><b>The information presented in the Consultation Documentation regarding the condition of Tref y Rhyg Primary School is inaccurate.</b></p> <p>Comments received in relation to this theme included:</p> <p><i>“[Tref y Rhyg Primary School] needs a refurbishment or better yet demolishing... the yards are unfit for kids; they flood in the rain with no drain accessibility or at least one that’s maintained to an up to manner...close this school.”</i></p> <p><i>“I feel as though the school no longer meets the standards for the children.”</i></p> <p><i>“I believe numerous details in the Consultation Document need to be looked at...such as the [property] condition [survey]. The [property condition survey] used was [from] 2022.</i></p>	<p>RCTCBC have reviewed the information included within the condition survey as a result of the comments received during the consultation process. During the period of time between the condition survey site visit being undertaken and the quality assurance process that takes place prior to the condition survey being signed off (which includes an assessment of the cost of required works by specialists), certain works were completed at the Tref y Rhyg which were not reflected in the backlog maintenance figure published in the Cabinet report and consultation document.</p> <p>In light of this new information, and to ensure full transparency, in November 2024, RCTCBC undertook a new property condition survey of Tref y Rhyg Primary School. According to the latest property condition survey, Tref y Rhyg Primary School is graded B for condition, where A is the highest and D is the lowest performing building, respectively. According to the previous property condition survey carried out Tref y Rhyg Primary School was graded C for condition. It should be noted that further investment since the building</p>

<p><i>Numerous projects have been completed since then."</i></p>	<p>condition survey was completed in 2022 has contributed to the recategorisation of the condition of the School.</p> <p>According to the newest property condition survey, the backlog maintenance figure for Tref y Rhyg Primary School is circa. £456,372. whilst the previous property condition survey carried out, indicated that the backlog maintenance figure for Tref y Rhyg Primary School was circa. £381,040. As well as the revised information included within the condition survey the new figure reflects the increase in costs of the current market rates.</p> <p>In accordance with the School Organisation Code, there is a duty placed upon the Council to include information in the Consultation Document relating to the quality of accommodation at all existing schools likely to be affected by a proposal, including reference to the local authority's most recent condition survey.</p>
<p><b>The information presented in the Consultation Documentation is biased in favour of Tonyrefail Community School.</b></p> <p>Comments received in relation to this theme included:</p> <p><i>"[RCTCBC has presented an awfully bias [Consultation Document], which they quickly put out for public viewing, full of made up data and reports."</i></p>	<p>The purpose of the Consultation Document is to present a proposal, and the fact that this is just a proposal at this point in time is clearly referenced throughout the Consultation Document made available during this period. To confirm, all information presented has been done so in accordance with the WG's <u>School Organisation Code (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition) (011/2018)</u>.</p>
<p><b>The parking at Tonyrefail Community School is already very problematic.</b></p> <p>Comments received in relation to this theme included:</p> <p><i>"As someone who lives local, we were re-assured that there would be MORE than enough parking on site for staff and parents. I would suggest someone goes and checks this out at different times of the day, and the chaos that exists on all the local residents where people park on the pavements, dropped curbs, grass verges etc."</i></p>	<p>As part of the significant investment at Tonyrefail Community School, there was a particular focus on enhancing the onsite and offsite traffic management arrangements, including improved staff parking and the creation of a dedicated home to school transport drop off area.</p> <p>This work has continued, and we have been recently working with Tonyrefail Community School and colleagues from Transport, Highways and H&amp;S to make some improvements to the car park to assist the school with the management of it. Some of this work has already been delivered and more improvements are planned for next term.</p>

	<p>Parking is a challenge at the majority of schools around the county borough as unfortunately most pupils travel in cars rather than walking. If required, we will support the school with the help of Sustrans to update their Active Travel Plan so that more travel initiatives can be delivered. We will take a lead from the school on this.</p>
<p><b>The proposal is purely based on making financial savings.</b></p> <p>Comments received in relation to this theme included:</p> <p><i>“Little to no thought has been given to the children’s education or emotional welfare, this decision is being based on financial reasons resulting in significant disruption to the children.”</i></p>	<p>The financial implications of the proposal are outlined within the Consultation Document. It should be noted that the reasons for the proposal are multi-faceted and are not based solely on making financial savings alone. However, should the proposal proceed, the benefits of moving to a larger more educationally and financially viable 3 to 19 school would be realised.</p>
<p><b>The school serves a deprived area.</b></p> <p>Comments received in relation to this theme included:</p> <p><i>“The pupils of Tref y Rhyg Primary School are from the most deprived area of Tonyrefail and will not be able to afford public transport each day. I agree with the closure but think that travel arrangements should be put in place.”</i></p> <p><i>“Being a socially deprived area, parents will not be able to afford transport costs to the super school.”</i></p> <p><i>“We are in a very underprivileged area of Tonyrefail. This shows quite often in school whether it be children needing to attend breakfast club to receive a breakfast that morning or uniform being given to families as they often cannot afford it.”</i></p>	<p>All comments in relation to deprivation are noted.</p> <p>An Equality Impact Assessment for the proposal has been prepared in line with the requirements of the WG’s <u>School Organisation Code (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition) (011/2018)</u>.</p> <p>Section 3 of the Equality Impact Assessment sets out RCTCBC’s Socio-economic Duty in relation to this proposal. The socio-economic disadvantages relevant for the area are listed using data from The Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD). Each disadvantage is considered within the context of the proposal, and the given impact of the proposal upon each disadvantage is listed, detailed and evidenced.</p>
<p><b>The site is not compliant with the Equality Act 2010 and has accessibility issues.</b></p> <p>Comments received in relation to this theme included:</p> <p><i>“My husband who picks his kids up every week has issues walking up and down the steps due</i></p>	<p>The site itself and the school building at Tref y Rhyg Primary School does not fully comply with the <u>Equality Act 2010</u> and there are significant issues with access.</p> <p>Looking just at the protected characteristic ‘disability’, the site and school building at Tref y Rhyg Primary School site is largely non compliant. Given the topography and the age</p>

<p><i>to an illness. There is no easy access for wheelchairs or anyone with walking aids.”</i></p>	<p>of the buildings there will inevitably be some areas of the site and school building at Tref y Rhyg Primary School that will be inaccessible for those with mobility difficulties or for wheelchair users.</p> <p>Building Bulletin 99 (BB99): Briefing Framework for Primary School Projects, is what all Councils in Wales use as a guide to build new schools. BB99 states the following:</p> <p><i>In the context of classroom layouts ‘fully inclusive’ means that which enables a pupil using a wheelchair to access all areas of the room, and therefore, all activities easily, without any disruption to classroom layouts.</i></p>
<p><b>There is a significant amount of housing development planned for the area, will there be capacity for those children should Tref y Rhyg Primary School close.</b></p> <p>Comments received in relation to this theme included:</p> <p><i>“The catchment area is about to expand with the new developments being built in the area, therefore the school will be needed.”</i></p>	<p>In terms of pupil projections, RCTCBC collects birth data from Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board covering the Rhondda, Cynon and Taf Ely areas. This provides the births and postcode for each child. There is also an allowance for new housing developments and existing pupils on roll allowing for predictions to be accurate.</p> <p>In relation to the pupils already in school the cohort survival method is utilised, where the number of pupils in each year group is assumed to be the number in the preceding year group during the previous academic year multiplied by a constant.</p> <p>Housing developments are taken into account and are included in all school projections and form part of the RCTCBC’s PLASC returns to the WG.</p> <p>There is a falling birthrate affecting pupil numbers throughout RCT, this is also the national trend, as such any increase in pupil number projections generated by housing developments are measured against the impact of the falling birthrate, so smaller housing developments essentially have a minimal effect on school capacities and therefore pupil number projections.</p>
<p><b>There is a lot of housing developments in the area, including social housing. Have they been accounted for in the projections?</b></p>	<p>Yes they have. Each year RCTCBC’s Development and Regeneration Department provide information on planned developments with the total number of houses and the</p>



<p>Comments received in relation to this theme included:</p> <p><i>“There is a need for our school in the area. New housing in the area means our school is needed.”</i></p>	<p>numbers expected to be completed each year for the next five years. Developments for 10 or more houses are used for projection purposes, and then only dwellings where there are 2 or more bedrooms are included. This data is then allocated to the relevant school catchment areas and the expected additional pupils generated.</p> <p>There seems to have been an assumption that every new house built will generate additional pupils in the local schools and this is not the case. Up to the age of 4 pupils aren't in school so these are discounted, after the age of 11 pupils attend secondary schools, some of the children moving in will already attend local schools, some of the children moving in will choose to stay in their current schools, some pupils moving in attend specialist provisions, some pupils attend faith schools, and we allocate 20% for those who wish to attend Welsh medium education. So, whilst it may seem that new houses will generate a large additional pupil population, this isn't necessarily the case.</p> <p>It's important to note that we have a number of areas across RCT that have high numbers of social housing and none of the schools in these areas are full. Pupil yield from housing growth also needs to be balanced against the fall in birth rate that RCT and other Authorities are experiencing, and we are confident that the pupil projection methodology used is robust and provides us with the data required to manage school place effectively.</p> <p>Managing school places is a statutory responsibility and numbers are reviewed on a regular basis. RCTCBC's method for projecting pupil numbers has served us well. RCTCBC has an excellent record of planning and managing school places successfully and we are confident in the methodology that we utilise.</p>
<p><b>There will be a lack of breakfast club provision at Tonyrefail Community School.</b></p> <p>Comments received in relation to this theme included:</p>	<p>Both Tref y Rhyg Primary School and Tonyrefail Community School run a breakfast club. The breakfast club operating in Tonyrefail Community School is extremely popular with an average of 106* pupils</p>

<p><i>“The children that currently attend Tref y Rhyg [Primary School] may not be offered the same opportunities if they are forced to change school as they would potentially lose access to things that [Tref y Rhyg Primary School] currently offers like breakfast club.”</i></p>	<p>receiving a breakfast every day, as is the breakfast club operating in Tref y Rhyg Primary School with an average of 31* pupils receiving a breakfast every day. However, the breakfast club at Tonyrefail Community School will remain and be made available for the pupils of Tref y Rhyg Primary School. *Figures based on average daily attendance figures this term.</p> <p>Should the proposal proceed, the breakfast club at Tonyrefail Community School will remain and be made available for the pupils of Tref y Rhyg Primary School.</p>
<p><b>There will be a lack of after school provision at Tonyrefail Community School.</b></p> <p>Comments received in relation to this theme included:</p> <p><i>“There is already issues with lack of before/after school support for the children already in Tonyrefail Community School...leading to a number of children missing out.”</i></p>	<p>Both Tref y Rhyg Primary School and Tonyrefail Community School run a number of extra-curricular activities. Depending on the term Tref y Rhyg Primary School offers after-school activities such as sports clubs, arts and crafts, Lego, music and British Sign Language classes to name just a few. The extra-curricular activities at Tonyrefail Community School include art attack, basketball, clwb dysgu gartref, computer science club, construction club, digi wizards, dungeons and dragons club, fitness club, football, games masters club, multi-sports, netball, reading for pleasure, rugby, STEM club and Welsh club. Both schools also provide a uniform exchange service.</p> <p>Should the proposal proceed, the extra-curricular activities at Tonyrefail Community School will remain and be made available for the pupils of Tref y Rhyg Primary School.</p> <p>The provision of after school clubs are the responsibility of the individual school and whilst these provisions are considered to be important, it should be noted that post school activities are not a statutory requirement.</p>
<p><b>Tonyrefail Community School already appears to be at capacity.</b></p> <p>Comments received in relation to this theme included:</p> <p><i>“[Tonyrefail Community School] already looks over populated.”</i></p>	<p>See answer above to:</p> <p><i>Is there room at Tonyrefail Community School to accommodate all pupils from Tref y Rhyg Primary School.</i></p>

<p><b>Tonyrefail Community School should have been made larger when it was recently extended.</b></p> <p>Comments received in relation to this theme included:</p> <p><i>“This is just an example of poor planning by [RCTCBC], when the Tonyrefail Community School was extended there should have been spare capacity.”</i></p>	<p>Tonyrefail Community School was part of a wider £44 million leisure and education investment locally, which also saw the nearby Tonyrefail Leisure Centre receive a new 3G sports pitch for school and community use – along with specialist teaching facilities for physical education classes to be held at Tonyrefail Leisure Centre. The capacity of Tonyrefail Community School is sufficient for the catchment area, only 35.0% of the pupils that currently attend the primary phase in Tonyrefail Community School reside in the Tonyrefail Community School catchment.</p>
<p><b>Transition arrangements.</b></p> <p>Comments received in relation to this theme included:</p> <p><i>“I am not happy that my son has settled in to his class and the thought of settling him anywhere else scares me.”</i></p> <p><i>“This is very upsetting.”</i></p>	<p>Understandably, some pupils may initially be daunted at the prospect of moving to a new, larger school on a new site. However, should the proposal proceed, there will be targeted support for all pupils from Tref y Rhyg Primary School and Tonyrefail Community School. Meaningful and positive transition is an integral part of ensuring that pupils settle into their new school setting with little disruption to their wellbeing and education. This is supported by providing effective pastoral and academic support and structured opportunities for pupils to become familiar with the new school environment and staff.</p>
<p><b>Tref y Rhyg Primary School has a better Estyn Inspection.</b></p> <p>Comments received in relation to this theme included:</p> <p><i>“The school that is closing has had exceptional results in Estyn reviews for a significant time whereas I think the school you are moving pupils to has been i special measures and has no track record.”</i></p>	<p>Tref y Rhyg Primary School was inspected by Estyn in February 2017. At that point in time, Tref y Rhyg Primary School’s performance was deemed to be adequate whilst its prospects for improvement were good. Estyn also set out a number of recommendations for Tref y Rhyg Primary School to implement in order to make improvements to the quality of education provision on offer.</p> <p>Tonyrefail Community School was inspected by Estyn in May 2022. Estyn set out recommendations for Tonyrefail Community School to implement in order to make improvements to the quality of education provision on offer.</p> <p>It is RCTCBC’s view that the proposal to close Tref y Rhyg Primary School, with pupils transferring to Tonyrefail Community School by no later than September 2025, could have a major positive impact on all five Estyn</p>

	<p>inspection areas, as detailed in the Consultation Document.</p> <p>Estyn's response to this consultation is included in full as an appendix to this report.</p>
<p><b>Why has RCTCBC not invested more in Tref y Rhyg Primary School.</b></p> <p>Comments received in relation to this theme included:</p> <p><i>"Why isn't there a boost investment into the building to make it sustainable and 21<sup>st</sup> century approved?"</i></p>	<p>RCTCBC has invested significantly in the school over the last few years . RCTCBC has an obligation to ensure that its buildings are safe, watertight and warm, and that's what it has done. Tref y Rhyg Primary School has received regular visits by RCTCBC's Corporate Maintenance Team and its contractors, and it also undertakes cyclical maintenance checks and surveys of its mechanical and electrical equipment.</p> <p>All schools in RCTCBC buy into a Building Maintenance Service Level Agreement (SLA) and work is undertaken and managed through this Maintenance Service SLA.</p>
<p><b>Will result in class sizes at Tonyrefail Community School being too large, with too many pupils.</b></p> <p>Comments received in relation to this theme included:</p> <p><i>"When I contacted RCTCBC's Admissions Team to find out if there was space for my daughter in Tonyrefail Community School, it was stated that there was no room there."</i></p>	<p>This is not the case. There is room should the proposal proceed, there is space across all year groups to accommodate the additional pupils from Tref y Rhyg Primary School at Tonyrefail Community School.</p>

In accordance with the Welsh Standards (No.1) Regulations 2015 and in compliance with RCTCBC's statutory obligations, the consultation included the following questions:

1. Do you think the proposal could impact opportunities for people to use and promote the Welsh Language (Positive or Negative)?
2. Do you think the proposal in any way treats the Welsh Language less favourably than the English Language?
3. How positive effects on the Welsh Language could be increased, or negative effects be decreased?

The table that follows provides a summary of the responses received from those respondents that answered the questions. As a result of the responses received, the Welsh Language Impact Assessment accompanying the proposal will be updated accordingly.

<b>Welsh Standards (No.1) Regulations 2015: Summary of Consultation Responses</b>	
<b>Questions</b>	<b>Responses</b>

	No		Yes		Not Sure	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Do you think the proposal could impact opportunities for people to use and promote the Welsh Language?	53	59.5	7	7.9	29	32.6
Do you think the proposal in any way treats the Welsh Language less favourably than the English Language?	41	46.1	9	10.1	39	43.8
How positive effects on the Welsh Language could be increased, or negative effects be decreased.	<b>Positive Effects Increased</b>		<b>Negative Effects Decreased</b>		<b>Not Sure</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We have a new super school that primarily speaks English, parents/carers are naturally going to want to send them to the new school. If the WG wants the Welsh language to survive they need to invest more into Welsh speaking schools in the area.</li> <li>Should the proposal proceed, some parents/carers may opt to send their children to YGG Tonyrefail in future as its a bit closer.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Keep the community school in the community.</li> <li>There should be an English medium primary school in the Tonyrefail East ward.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>N/A.</li> </ul>	

In accordance with the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duties, RCTCBC has a legal duty to look at how its decisions impact on people because they may have particular characteristics. So as part of seeking views on the proposal, the consultation also included the following question:

1. How would the proposal affect you because of your:

1. Sex.
2. Age.
3. Ethnicity.

4. Disability.
5. Sexuality.
6. Religion/Belief.
7. Gender Identity.
8. Relationship Status.
9. Pregnancy.
10. Preferred Language.

Of those respondents that answered this question, the majority, 86.2% said the proposal would have no impact on any of the characteristics listed. Whilst 8.1% commented that the proposal would have an impact on the 'Disability' characteristic, 2.4% commented that the proposal would have an impact on the 'Relationship Status' characteristic and 1.1% commented that the proposal would have an impact on the 'Age', 'Sexuality' and 'Pregnancy' characteristics.

Of those respondents that commented that the proposal could negatively impact them due to their disability. Comments received in relation to this characteristic included:

- I have fibromyalgia and find it difficult to walk far or drive on most days. Tref y Rhyg Primary School is a stone throw from my home and it also handy if I am unwell for a family member who lives around the corner to pick my son up for me, but this would be difficult in another school.
- My daughter has ALN, and the closure of Tref Y Rhyg Primary School will be a great deterrent to her learning and development. I am afraid for her educational future with this change. My daughter will not receive the support she needs in huge class sizes, where staff are stretched and under supported.
- Both my son and I have disabilities. When I'm unwell my carer walks my son to school, if he goes to another school, he will need transport provided and free of charge as you are closing his nearest school.

As a result of responses received, the Equality Impact Assessment accompanying the proposal will be updated accordingly.

## **6. Response from Estyn**

In compliance with the WG's School Organisation Code (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition) (011/2018) the response to the proposal from Estyn has been provided in full at Appendix 3 – Estyn Response. Estyn is not a body which is required to act in accordance with the WG's School Organisation Code (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition) (011/2018) and the School Standards and Organisation Act 2013 places no statutory requirements on Estyn in respect of school organisation matters. Therefore, as a body being consulted, Estyn will provide their opinion only on the overall merits of school organisation proposals.

Estyn considered that the proposal is likely to at least maintain the standard of education provision in the area.

In accordance with the WG's School Organisation Code (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition) (011/2018), the areas of the response from Estyn that require clarification are documented in the table that follows.

<b>Response from Estyn</b>	
<b>Estyn Response</b>	<b>Clarification</b>
<p>The proposal considers, in some part, the impact of the proposal on vulnerable groups, including children with ALN, but does not provide sufficient information in this area. It does note that there will be ‘a fully accessible building and the provision of flexible spaces which will allow Tonyrefail Community School to extend its good practice and facilitate further interventions, including ways to nurture pupils as well as continued engagement with families and the local community’. However, it does not identify specifically how it will meet the needs of the increase in the number of ALN pupils (9) who will potentially transfer to the school and almost double their current number of ALN pupils (10).</p>	<p>Schools receive a high level of delegated Enhance Capacity Funding (ECF) in addition to their overall school budget and the historical notional ALN 5.0%. In line with the formula that is used to calculate ECF allocations to schools, Tonyrefail Community School will receive an increase in its ECF to take into account the additional number of pupils on roll at the school. This will support the school to provide appropriate Additional Learning Provision (ALP) to meet the needs of pupils with ALN e.g. additional staffing resource, implementation of specific interventions, ALN equipment and resources etc.</p> <p>Tonyrefail Community School will also be able to request support from RCTCBC’s Access and Inclusion Services Team on both a systemic and individual pupil basis. The designated Educational Psychologist for Tonyrefail Community School will hold a strategic ALN planning meeting at the beginning of the academic year to identify key priorities for the school in supporting the increase in the number of pupils with ALN accessing the school.</p>

## **7. Assessment of Consultation**

In accordance with WG’s School Organisation Code (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition) (011/2018), a further assessment of the proposal has been undertaken. This involved a review of the same matters assessed in formulating the proposal, in conjunction with giving consideration to the responses received during the consultation period.

After further consideration of the proposal, and consciously considering the responses received to the proposal, the conclusions that can be reached are below.

## **8. Conclusion**

Following consideration of the consultation report, associated information and the contents of this report, Cabinet are required to determine whether, and if so how, they wish to proceed with the proposal.