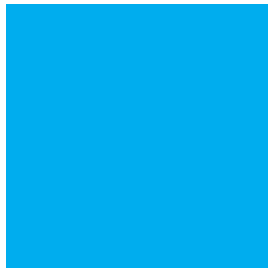


# 21ST CENTURY SCHOOLS



## COMMUNITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

All documents relating to this consultation are available on the 'Get Involved' page on the Council website

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

# Community Impact Assessment

This Community Impact Assessment is prepared in accordance with the School Organisation Code – 2018 (011/2018). It is to be read alongside the Consultation Document, the Welsh Language Impact Assessment and the Equality Impact Assessment as the information in all documents is related and the themes within them are cross-cutting.

Section 2.1 of the School Organisation Code – 2018 refers to elements of school reorganisation that require the publication of proposals. These include:

- The opening of a maintained school.
- The closing of a maintained school.

This proposal is to amalgamate Cefn Primary and Craig yr Hesg Primary Schools. The amalgamation will be achieved by closing the two existing primary schools and opening a new, bigger community primary school to replace them. The new school building is proposed to be built on the existing Craig yr Hesg Primary School site and the land adjacent to it (the former site of the Ty Gwyn Pupil Referral Unit). It is proposed that the two existing schools will close with the pupils transferring to the new school no later than September 2026.

The proposal is to be consulted on between 10<sup>th</sup> January 2022 and 21<sup>st</sup> February 2022. A detailed Consultation Document has been circulated to all prescribed stakeholders. This Community Impact Assessment is an appendix of the main document.

## **The Proposal**

The proposal is to amalgamate Cefn Primary and Craig yr Hesg Primary Schools by closing the two existing primary schools and opening a new, bigger community primary school to replace them. The new school building is proposed to be built on the existing Craig yr Hesg Primary School site and the land adjacent to it (the former site of the Ty Gwyn Pupil Referral Unit). The catchment area for the new school will be an amalgamation of the catchment areas for the two existing schools. The school will cater for children aged between 3 and 11 years of age requiring English medium primary education in the village of Glyn-coch. It will have a proposed admissions number of 51 pupils per year group, and an overall pupil capacity of 360 (plus nursery). The proposal will cost an estimated £9 million. The new school will be funded by the Council and Welsh Government via the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools and Colleges Programme.

## **Community Impact**

It should be noted at this point that the community impact of the proposals is determined to be positive. The proposal will result in a fully accessible, brand new community primary school, delivering an improved learning environment with first class facilities being built at the heart of the community. The inclusion of community facilities within the new school building, along with sporting facilities on the school site, will ensure that the opportunities for community engagement will be significantly improved compared to the current arrangements.

The current split of English medium primary education provision in Glyn-coch between two schools in very poor condition and situated just 0.6 miles apart, is unsustainable. Pupil number projections show that while Cefn Primary School is forecast to consistently have a significant percentage of surplus places over the coming years, Craig yr Hesg Primary School is projected to consistently exceed its current capacity. This demonstrates that, separately, the schools are not suitable to meet projected local demand for English medium primary education in the coming years and supports the case to replace with a larger, more educationally viable primary school of an appropriate size. It is the Council's view that a new, purpose-built 21<sup>st</sup> Century School building will help the new school to cultivate a learning environment which nurtures and supports pupils and staff and will have a positive impact on the local community.

The new school building is proposed to be built on the current Craig yr Hesg Primary School site and the land adjacent to it (the former site of the Ty Gwyn Pupil Referral Unit). The school will be designed to be a fully accessible and fully integrated community school, increasing opportunities for the whole community to access the new facilities, to strengthen relationships and fully integrate the school into the community. A dedicated area will be designed within the school itself so that the local community will be allowed to safely utilise the facilities at the school, both during and after the school day.

The new school will be built in accordance with Building Bulletin 99, which requires new primary schools to include provision for team sports, including a playing field area suitable for team games for pupils aged 8 and over and a Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) for sports such as basketball and netball. New schools are also required to include soft play areas, commonly made up of grassed space for pupils to sit and socialise, alongside hard surfaced playgrounds and sheltered space to complement the soft play areas around the school site. The new school will also include a forest schools area which will act as a space for outdoor learning and provide a valuable teaching and learning resource to deliver the new Curriculum for Wales. It will also provide lifelong learning opportunities through the medium of Welsh, promote the delivery of cultural activities, and provide access to state-of-the-art ICT facilities which will provide opportunities for local learners of all ages to achieve their full potential.

The new school will be fully accessible and compliant with the Equality Act 2010. More information on this is included within the Equality Impact Assessment.

### **Catchment Changes**

The proposal seeks to enhance the accommodation and facilities available to pupils from within the catchment areas of Cefn Primary and Craig yr Hesg Primary Schools who require English medium primary education. The catchment area for the new school will be a straightforward amalgamation of the existing catchment areas for the two existing schools.

At present, 63% of pupils who attend Cefn Primary School live within the catchment area, whilst the equivalent figure for Craig yr Hesg Primary School is 54%. This demonstrates that there is already considerable crossover where pupils who live in the Cefn Primary School catchment area attend Craig yr Hesg Primary School and vice versa; currently 25% of pupils living in the Cefn Primary School catchment attend Craig yr Hesg Primary School, whilst 13% living in the Craig yr Hesg Primary School catchment attend Cefn Primary School.

It is anticipated that the new school's 21<sup>st</sup> Century learning environment may also encourage more parents / carers who currently choose to send their children to schools outside of Glyn-coch altogether to choose the new catchment school. The new school's increased capacity will mean that all pupils from the area who would like a place at the new school will be accommodated.

### **Transport and Travel Implications**

There is a statutory duty placed upon all Local Authorities in Wales to provide pupils 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, dual language or voluntary aided (faith) mainstream school or special school/class as appropriate. The law relating to safe 'walking distance' is defined as two miles for pupils of compulsory school age receiving primary education and three miles for pupils of compulsory school age receiving secondary education.

The 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 pupils. The relevant information in relation to Cefn Primary and Craig yr Hesg Primary Schools is set out below. The same criteria will apply to the new community primary school:

- The eligibility criterion for walking distance for pupils 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 pupils who meet the 1½ mile eligibility criterion from the start of 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 term suitable school applies to the catchment area English, Welsh, dual language or voluntary aided (faith) mainstream school or special school/class as appropriate.

No pupils who live within the catchment areas of Cefn and Craig yr Hesg Primary Schools currently qualify for home to school transport. Given the close proximity of the existing schools and the proposed new school site, it is anticipated that this will not change when the new school opens. Inevitably some pupils who currently attend Cefn Primary School will live further away from the new site and so their journey to school will take a little longer, however others will, in fact, live closer to it. Overall, the impact on pupil travel arrangements is considered to be minimal.

Two local authority resourced Learning Support Classes for pupils with social and emotional needs and behavioural difficulties are currently based at Cefn Primary School. Eleven pupils, sharing four taxis, currently utilise home to school transport to access this provision. The Learning Support Classes will transfer to the new school when it opens. Pupils accessing this provision will continue to utilise home to school transport for this purpose.

A traffic impact assessment, plus an audit of the safe walking routes to school will be carried out, and any recommended enhancements to improve the safety of pupils, staff, and parents/carers travelling to the new school site will be carried out. The new school site is just off the main road and is very near to the bus route with a bus stop just outside the site boundary, making it very accessible from a public transport perspective too.

### **Current 'Out of School Hours' Usage**

Should the proposal proceed, the before and after school activities usually offered at Cefn and Craig yr Hesg Primary Schools will continue to be offered at the new school. At present, both schools offer Breakfast Club. This will continue to be offered at the new school. In the past, both schools have also run a variety of after school clubs, including sports clubs and cookery. Unfortunately, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, these are not currently being delivered. Going forward, it is intended that such after school activities will be re-established at the new school, and the range of activities on offer expanded as a result of its first-class facilities, which will include state-of-the-art ICT and sporting facilities.

Community and third-party use of the new school's facilities will also be actively encouraged. The school will be designed to be a fully accessible and fully integrated community school. A dedicated area will be designed within the

school itself so that the local community will be allowed to safely utilise the facilities at the school, both during and after the school day. This could include lifelong learning classes, parenting support groups and Welsh medium activities. Given the site's accessibility and prominent position in the heart of the community, this will be an excellent inclusive resource for the community, benefitting residents of all ages.

### **Impact on Health and Wellbeing**

The new school will be a modern, colourful, 21<sup>st</sup> Century teaching and learning environment. It is considered that the impact upon the health and well-being of staff and pupils will be positive given the challenges currently faced on the existing school sites and the poor condition of the current buildings.

The new school building will be fit for purpose and will deliver flexible teaching and learning areas to ensure successful delivery of the New Curriculum for Wales. The external spaces will have a very positive impact upon the health and well-being of both staff and pupils. The new school site will have new outdoor play spaces, an outdoor classroom, a forest schools area and a Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA), and all areas will be fully accessible.

These positive benefits for the school community will also be realised in the local community, as these facilities will also be available for community use. The school will be supported to establish links with local community groups to ensure that the wider community will also benefit from this positive investment.

More information on how this proposal contributes to the seven well-being goals and the five ways of working as set out in the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015 is included within the Equality Impact Assessment.

### **Community Safety**

The impact of the proposals on community safety is believed to be positive. The new school site will be designed to comply with 'Secured by Design' standards, which will ensure that the school boundary and buildings are fully secured and protected with CCTV. The site will be enclosed by perimeter fencing over 2 metres in height, deterring antisocial behaviour and preventing unauthorised individuals from accessing the site out of school hours. This is in stark contrast to the current situation at both existing schools, whereby individuals regularly access the school site out of school hours, as a result of low perimeter fencing.

The community facilities at the new school will be designed so that they can be accessed during the school day without comprising the safety of the staff and pupils. The site will also have a dedicated car park for staff and visitors, and consideration will be given to an on-site drop off facility.

As the new school site is in close proximity to both existing schools, existing relationships with the local police force and the Police Community Support Officer will continue.