

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CONSULTATION REPORT

Proposal : To create an 'all through' 3 – 19 school at the Garth Olwg Campus, Church Village

1. Purpose of the Consultation Report

This report is prepared in accordance with the Welsh Government's School Organisation Code, statutory document 006/2013. Its purpose is to inform the outcome of the consultation held during the period 2nd October 2017 and 26th January 2018 between all stakeholders and interested parties listed below.

2. Who did we consult with?

A copy of a consultation document which fully outlined and explained our proposal was sent to the following stakeholders. The document was also published on the Council website at www.rctcbc.gov.uk/schoolconsultations

- The Governing Bodies, parents, carers and staff of YGG Garth Olwg and YG Garth Olwg.
- The Governing Bodies, parents, carers and staff of YGG Castellau, YGG Evan James, YGG Pontsionnorton, Heolycelyn Primary (dual language), Ysgol Llanhari, Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhondda and Ysgol Gyfun Rhydywaun
- Other Governing Bodies of neighbouring primary and secondary schools
- The Church in Wales and Roman Catholic Diocesan Authorities
- The Governing Body of Coleg Y Cymoedd
- The Governing Body of the University of South Wales
- Welsh Minister for Education & Skills
- Cwm Taf Local Health Board
- Teaching and support staff trade unions
- Central South Education Consortium
- South Wales Police and Crime Commissioner
- The Early Years and Childcare Partnership
- South East Wales Transport Association
- The local Communities First Partnerships
- Llantwit Fardre Community Council and Llantrisant Community Council
- Neighbouring local authorities
- Mudiad Meithrin
- Menter Iaith
- The Welsh Language Commissioner
- Garth Olwg Lifelong Learning Centre

- Assembly Members for all constituencies and regional areas serving Rhondda Cynon Taf
- Members of Parliament for the Rhondda, Pontypridd, Ogmore and Cynon Valley
- Estyn

Copies were also sent to all local authorities that share a boundary with Rhondda Cynon Taf.

3. The Proposal

The proposal consulted upon is to close Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Garth Olwg and Ysgol Gyfun Garth Olwg and to replace them with a new, all through, 3 – 19 Welsh Medium school on the existing campus, utilising existing premises.

Details of the proposal and the rationale behind it are fully outlined in the consultation document that was circulated to all the stakeholders listed overleaf which is attached as Appendix 1.

4. The Consultation Process

All stakeholders identified in Section 2 overleaf were sent paper or electronic copies of our consultation documentation. The following meetings were also convened:

School Affected	Group	Time/Date	Venue
YGG Garth Olwg	Governing Body and Staff Meeting	Tuesday 7 th November at 3:45pm	YGG Garth Olwg
YG Garth Olwg	Governing Body and Staff Meeting	Monday 6 th November at 3:45pm	YG Garth Olwg
YGG Garth Olwg	School Council	Monday 6 th November at 1:45pm	YGG Garth Olwg
YG Garth Olwg	School Council	Monday 6 th November at 2:25pm	YG Garth Olwg
Both Schools and members of the local community	Parents and public drop-in session and exhibition	Monday 4 th December at 3:30pm	YG Garth Olwg

Detailed notes of all of the above meetings were taken and are attached as Appendix 2. These notes detail all questions raised, comments and statements made with responses provided where appropriate.

An open evening/exhibition was held at the Lifelong Learning Centre on the Garth Olwg Campus on 4th December 2017, the purpose of which was to provide further information on the proposal, answer any questions and give parents in particular the opportunity to ask questions. Officers from the Education and Lifelong Learning Division were in attendance. This event was attended by 15 persons, which included school governors and parents.

5. Summary of Responses to Consultation

Responses to the matters raised at the meetings outlined above are, as indicated, summarised in the notes of the meetings attached as Appendix 2. Also enclosed as part of this Appendix are summaries of the questionnaires received (26 in total) and comments posted on a board provided for this purpose at the open evening. Written responses were also received from the following:

- The governing bodies of YG Garth Olwg (summarised on a questionnaire response) and YGG Garth Olwg
- 12 parents of pupils, YGG Garth Olwg
- 1 parent of a pupil at a neighbouring Welsh Medium Secondary school
- 1 parent of a pupil at a neighbouring Welsh Medium Primary school
- Headteacher of an associated Primary school
- The governing body of an associated Primary school
- Llantrisant Community Council
- The UCAC trades union

None of the above correspondents were strongly in favour of the proposal.

The main issues raised during consultation, with our responses to them include:

- **Concern at placing children of Primary school age in the same building as Secondary age pupils.**

If this proposal is agreed, we will assess the accommodation available in the Secondary building and look at undertaking adaptations to make the classrooms suitable for younger children, at the same time putting in place any additional measures to safeguard the needs of younger children that may be deemed necessary. It must also be noted that two classrooms in the current Secondary building are already being utilised by Primary age pupils, with no concerns being raised. Segregation of younger pupils from their Secondary aged counterparts will be maintained, as it is at present.

- **Concern at the lack of senior leadership for the Primary school**

As this is only a proposal, no work regarding the staffing structure of the new all through school has been undertaken and this includes the appointment of a Headteacher. It is important to note that the schools will no longer be separate

Primary and Secondary schools; they will be a single, 'all through' school with a new leadership team and staffing structure to reflect this.

- **Staff will lose their jobs**

The staffing structure for the new school has not yet been drawn up, but, providing pupil numbers are maintained there is nothing to suggest that fewer staff will be needed in the 'all through' school.

- **There is no spare capacity in the Secondary building. The school will be overcrowded and health and safety will be compromised**

This is incorrect as the current Secondary school has over 300 spare places at the current time; this is according to the Welsh Government's capacity calculation and the published data regarding numbers on roll. As indicated above, any building works that may be required to improve facilities for younger children and to ensure safeguarding is paramount will be undertaken.

- **What will happen to the other associated Primary schools whose pupils will join the new school in Year 7?**

The matter of better transition processes and improving links between all schools in the cluster is very important. This work will need to be led by the 'all through' school, but any advice or support required to assist the new school will be provided by the local authority.

- **Lack of strategic vision and ambition for Welsh Medium Education and no commitment to increase provision**

One of the main reasons for consideration of this proposal is the clear need to provide additional Welsh Medium Primary places in the Garth Olwg catchment area, where we have recognised and documented evidence of demand. Primary aged pupils are already taught, successfully, in the Secondary school building at Garth Olwg and this proposal simply seeks to utilise the spare capacity that exists in the Secondary school to create the additional Primary places that will be required within this catchment area. We continually monitor admission trends and requests across the County Borough for Welsh Medium education (and for all school sectors in general) and will take appropriate measures to expand provision in any areas where there is documented evidence of increasing demand from within a catchment area, that cannot be met by existing school provisions.

- **This is nothing more than a cost cutting exercise**

The details of the savings to be made are included in the consultation document; they represent just 1% of the current combined schools budgets. This proposal is not about

saving money but improving educational opportunities. It is recognised that both schools have high standards of achievement at present and we wish for these to be at least maintained, if not improved upon.

- **Concern at the proposed implementation date of September 2018; this will not leave sufficient time for senior leaders to be appointed and for a new staffing structure to be agreed and implemented.**

We note these comments and agree with them; as a consequence, the proposed implementation date has been amended to September 2019. Additional information was sent to all consultees on this proposed change and the consultation period was extended by a month to allow for further responses on this particular issue to be received.

The View of Estyn (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education and Training in Wales) of the Overall Merits of the Proposal.

This report has been prepared by Her Majesty's Inspectors of Education and Training in Wales.

Under the terms of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and its associated Code, proposers are required to send consultation documents to Estyn. However Estyn is not a body which is required to act in accordance with the Code and the Act 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 has considered the educational aspects of the proposal and has produced the following response to the information provided by the proposer and other additional information such as data from Welsh Government and the views of the Regional Consortia which deliver school improvement services to the schools within the proposal.

Introduction

This is a consultation proposal by Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council. The proposal is as follows:

- Close Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Garth Olwg.
- Close Ysgol Gyfun Garth Olwg.
- Open a new all through 3 – 19 Welsh medium school in their place on the existing campus, utilising the existing buildings.

Summary/Conclusion

Estyn is of the opinion that the proposal is likely to at least maintain the current standards in terms of education, provision, and leadership and management.

The proposer has provided a comprehensive proposal, and has researched into the successes of similar schools, such as the pilot 3-19 school in Lampeter and Ysgol Llanhari in Rhondda Cynon Taf. The local authority has recent successful experience of managing organisational change in four other schools.

Description and advantages

The proposal is to close Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Garth Olwg and Ysgol Gyfun Garth Olwg, and open one new Welsh medium 3-19 school that will use the existing site of both schools, which are already co-located on Garth Olwg Lifelong Learning Campus. The proposer has provided a clear rationale for the proposal.

The proposer has identified the advantages and disadvantages fairly as compared with the current situation. The proposer has considered the effect on parents who would prefer to send their child to two schools rather than one, and has also considered the possibility that staff may be concerned about their jobs. They have identified the steps to manage the risk of both of the disadvantages that have been identified. The proposer has considered four possible options with a comprehensive list of advantages and disadvantages for each one.

The proposer does not anticipate any changes in provision for transport as neither school will be changing site. They intend to adhere to the same provision of transporting learners to school free of charge, which is beyond the statutory expectation.

The proposer has considered the numbers at both schools over a period of five years, and has predicted future numbers. However, the figures in the historical numbers do not include nursery pupils, although the figures that forecast the numbers for the next five years include nursery pupils. This makes it difficult to compare and analyse the information that is provided.

The proposer has given full consideration to the effect on the Welsh language. It is reasonable to expect that there will not be any effect on Welsh language provision within the local authority.

Educational aspects of the proposal

The proposer has given appropriate consideration to the proposal's effect on the quality of outcomes, provision, and leadership and management; for example, they have identified an opportunity for the headteacher to distribute key leadership tasks to more staff across the teaching stages, and for teaching and support staff to be given an opportunity to experience wider responsibilities.

The proposer has given suitable consideration to the likely effect on the curriculum, including the flexibility to provide the appropriate curriculum for individuals, whatever their age. In addition, they have given appropriate consideration to the advantages of a cohesive and consistent style of teaching and learning, and a common system for assessing and

recording. The proposal also includes fair consideration to the education of pupils with additional needs.

The proposal has given purposeful consideration to Estyn's latest inspection reports on both schools, in addition to Estyn's recommendations to Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council in 2012. Estyn's reports on both schools have judged that the schools' prospects for improvement are good. They have considered the current categories of both schools. Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Garth Olwg is in the 'green' category, which means that it shows resilience at all levels and is challenged to move forward towards excellence or to maintain excellence. Ysgol Gyfun Garth Olwg is in the 'yellow' category, which means that it has evidence of self-improvement activities, which have had an effect on improving pupils' outcomes.

The proposer has provided the main headline data for Ysgol Gyfun Garth Olwg for 2016 and 2017 at the end of key stage 5 and key stage 4, but has not identified any data at the end of key stage 3, key stage 2 or the Foundation Phase. The data that has been provided has not been benchmarked in order to compare the school with similar schools in terms of the percentage of pupils who are eligible for free school meals.

6. Conclusion

The recommendation agreed at a meeting of the Council's Cabinet held on 15th February 2018 is that a statutory notice be published, to progress this proposal. The statutory notice will be published on Friday, 2nd March 2018 and it will allow for a 28 day period, that includes 15 school days (to 5pm on 29th March 2018) during which any person may lodge an objection to the proposals. At the end of the objection period, an Objection Report will be compiled, summarising any objections received, this Report will be published within 7 days of the determination of the proposal. The outcome of this part of the process will be considered by Cabinet again at their meeting to be held in April 2018, for a final decision on the proposal to be made.

Appendix 1



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

**CONSULTATION ON A PROPOSAL TO CREATE A
NEW, ALL THROUGH 3 – 19 SCHOOL AT THE
GARTH OLWG CAMPUS, CHURCH VILLAGE**

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1. Introduction

Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council wishes to seek the views of a wide range of stakeholders on a proposal to close Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Garth Olwg and Ysgol Gyfun Garth Olwg and to replace them with a new, all through, 3 – 19 Welsh Medium school on the existing campus, utilising existing premises.

Who will we consult with?

We are seeking the views of the following stakeholders:

- The Governing Bodies, parents, carers and staff of YGG Garth Olwg and YG Garth Olwg.
- The Governing Bodies, parents, carers and staff of YGG Castellau, YGG Evan James, YGG Pontsionnorton, Heolycelyn Primary (dual language), Ysgol Llanhari, Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhondda and Ysgol Gyfun Rhydywaun
- Other Governing Bodies of neighbouring primary and secondary schools
- The Church in Wales and Roman Catholic Diocesan Authorities
- The Governing Body of Coleg Y Cymoedd
- The Governing Body of the University of South Wales
- Welsh Minister for Education & Skills
- Assembly Members for all constituencies and regional areas serving Rhondda Cynon Taf
- Members of Parliament for the Rhondda, Pontypridd, Ogmore and Cynon Valley
- Estyn
- Cwm Taf Local Health Board
- Teaching and support staff trade unions
- Central South Education Consortium
- South Wales Police and Crime Commissioner
- The Early Years and Childcare Partnership
- South East Wales Transport Association
- The local Communities First Partnerships
- Llantwit Fardre Community Council and Llantrisant Community Council
- Neighbouring local authorities
- Mudiad Meithrin
- Menter Iaith
- The Welsh Language Commissioner
- Garth Olwg Lifelong Learning Centre

What will the consultation process entail?

The consultation will start on the 2nd October 2017 and will be completed at 5pm on 29th December 2017. The feedback from the consultation will be collated and summarised, and a report presented to the Council's Cabinet in January 2018. A consultation report will be prepared and will be available for all persons to view on the Council internet site, copies can be obtained on request from the address detailed on page 5 of this document.

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

If the Cabinet decides to proceed with the proposal a Statutory Notice is published providing a 28 day notice period for objections. The School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 requires that anyone wishing to make objections to a school organisation proposal has the opportunity to do so. To be considered as statutory objections, objections **must** be made in writing or by email, and sent to the Council within 28 days of the date on which the proposal was published.

If there are objections, the Council's Director of Education & Lifelong Learning will publish an objection report providing a summary of the objections and his response to them within 28 days of the end of the objection period. This report will also be available for all persons to view on the Council's internet site and copies can be obtained on request from the address detailed on page 5 of this document.

If the Council's Cabinet approve the proposal, the proposal will be implemented in accordance with the date given in the statutory notice or any subsequently modified date. In the case of this proposal the implementation dates are 31st August 2018 for the school closures and 1st September 2018 for the opening of the new school.

What do you have to consider?

The remainder of the consultation document sets out the rationale for the proposed creation of an all through, 3 – 19 school at Garth Olwg. We would like you to consider the information contained within this document and to hear your views as to whether or not you support the proposals.

To achieve this we will have to close both YGG Garth Olwg and YG Garth Olwg and open a new 3 -19 Welsh Medium school, that will utilise the existing premises and site of the current schools, which are co-located on the Garth Olwg Lifelong Learning Campus, Church Village, Pontypridd.

How do you make your views known?

Consultation events will be held and you are welcome to attend the appropriate meeting.

School Affected	Group	Time/Date	Venue
YGG Garth Olwg	Governing Body and Staff Meeting	Tuesday 7 th November at 3:45pm	YGG Garth Olwg
YG Garth Olwg	Governing Body and Staff Meeting	Monday 6 th November at 3:45pm	YG Garth Olwg
YGG Garth Olwg	School Council	Monday 6 th November at 1:45pm	YGG Garth Olwg
YG Garth Olwg	School Council	Monday 6 th November at 2:25pm	YG Garth Olwg
Both Schools and members of the local community	Parents and public drop-in session and exhibition	Monday 4 th December at 3:30pm	YG Garth Olwg

Consultation questionnaires are attached. These will also be available at the drop-in session detailed above and on the Council's internet site at <http://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/EN/GetInvolved/Consultations/Schoolconsultations.aspx>.

You are also welcome to put your views and any questions you may have in writing to:

Director of Education and Lifelong Learning

21st Century Schools Team

Ty Trevithick

Abercynon CF45 4UQ Telephone (01443) 744227 Fax (01443) 744201

E-mail schoolplanning@rctcbc.gov.uk

All correspondence should be received no later than 5pm on Friday 29th December 2017.

Please note that responses to the consultation will not be counted as objections to the proposal. Objections can only be forwarded following the publication of the Statutory Notice.

2. Background to the Proposal

What is the basis for this proposal?

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, attendance levels, surplus places and safeguarding. Estyn's conclusion in March 2012 on the quality of education services for children and young people in Rhondda Cynon Taf was:

- **Overall Judgement – Adequate** (Strengths outweigh areas for improvement);
- **Capacity to Improve – Adequate.**

In addition Estyn made the following recommendations for the Council:

- R1 - raise standards in schools particularly in key stage 4;
- R2 - improve attendance rates in all schools;
- R3 - improve the evaluation and analyses of data across service areas and partnerships to drive improvements in outcomes for learners;
- R4 - use the full powers available to the authority to improve leadership and management in schools;
- R5 - reduce surplus places; and
- R6 - improve the rigour and the level of scrutiny and challenge across all services and partnerships.

Over the past five years the Council has focused its attention on these six recommendations, and in particular recommendations 1, 2 & 5, which will have the greatest impact on pupil achievement in our schools. As a result, schools that, when compared with similar schools across Wales based on free school meals are in the third and fourth quartiles are being subject to significant challenge, scrutiny and support. Where there is little evidence of significant progress, the Council is intervening using a range of its powers. One of the powers is to close schools that over an extended period continue to under-perform providing an education to children that is not good enough.

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 have accepted Estyn's recommendations and have undertaken a review of our school provision. The criteria we have 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, of meeting Estyn's criteria as a school in need of significant improvement or special measures.

When assessing the schools against the abovementioned criteria - the two schools located on the same campus and are 'paired' with pupils progressing from one school to the other (subject to parental preference). Also, YG Garth Olwg has more than 27% surplus places when comparing the numbers on roll against the published capacity, which is clearly more than the 25% referred to in the criteria above. Whereas YGG Garth Olwg requires additional capacity to meet current and forecasted demand.

The opportunity exists to reconfigure the primary and secondary schools to create educationally and financially viable schools that serve the local communities. This proposal seeks to achieve this.

What is the educational case for the proposal?

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 all through 3-19 schools will:

- **Improve educational outcomes:**
 - 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 curriculum and wider extra-curricular opportunities which will improve attendance and educational outcomes;
- **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;
- **Improve leadership and management:**
 - Provide 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 and across phases of education;
 - Create leadership opportunities for other staff, and for others to specialise in key areas, which will enhance educational provision and outcomes;

- o 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 and across different phases;
 - An increased range of expertise;
 - Improved opportunities for staff interaction /co-ordination.

What is the educational case for creating 3-19 schools?

In bringing schools together whether that is through amalgamation, federation or informal clustering, the purpose has to be to improve teaching and learning and pupil outcomes. The benefits of 3-19 schools can be summarised as follows:

- A common ethos means pupils do not have to adapt to a new culture on moving schools;
- Coherent and consistent styles of teaching and learning progressing through the years gives stability to pupils' learning experiences;
- A comprehensive and common system for assessing, recording and tracking pupil progress throughout his/her schooling;
- Flexibility to provide the appropriate curriculum for individuals regardless of age;
- Increased access for pupils to a range of specialist accommodation, facilities and learning resources;
- Pupils with additional needs can maintain relationships with supporting agencies throughout their school career if required;
- A common attendance and behaviour policy means that routines are established and values understood from an early age;
- Parents may remain more involved in their children's education as they do not have to establish new relationships with staff.

The great strength of all-through education is the continuity of educational experience which negates the transition "dips" in pupil performance. A 3-19 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. It can allow for a significant sharing of subject expertise and primary pedagogy in particular across key stages 2 and 3.

A study of the pilot 3-19 school in Lampeter has highlighted the scope provided by an all-through school for establishing a single unified team of specialist support staff and learning support assistants working closely with professionals from health, social care, and family services. This has the potential to further enhance the already high standards of care provided for pupils with a wide range of additional learning difficulties, social and emotional needs. For many children with specific needs, the continuum of care and support provided by the school is more important than the particular age of the pupil concerned and there are obvious advantages in prolonging the relationships between teachers and other adults with support roles and individual pupils across the period of transition.

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:

- Provision of specialist teaching in KS2 or extending literacy and numeracy programmes into KS3;
- Access for primary phase pupils to the facilities of secondary phase;
- Providing scope for acceleration programmes;
- Joint Professional Development;
- Directing resources at early intervention;
- Planning a joint curriculum;
- Sharing equipment, hardware and accommodation;
- Increasing the range and capacity for extra-curricular/after school learning;
- Creating common administrative appointments.

Will primary and secondary pupils have to share facilities and resources?

It needs to be stressed that a 3-19 school would not result in young children sharing playgrounds or break times with much older pupils. There are already strict safeguarding protocols which are observed when any primary aged pupils visit a secondary site (walking in pairs in line with teachers or adult helpers at the front and rear). At the Garth Olwg campus, the oldest Primary age pupils (Year 6) already have their class base in the Secondary school building, this has been the case for several years and this arrangement has worked well, with no perceived disadvantages. Other safeguarding arrangements include a separate entrance for the primary age pupils into the Secondary school building, plus separate toilet facilities for primary age pupils.

The majority of primary aged pupils will receive most of their lessons in the specialist primary school building. Nevertheless, all pupils will have the opportunity to be taught in the secondary school to develop their curricular skills through the use of specialised facilities e.g. science and technology. Secondary phase pupils will also be able to have learning opportunities in the primary phase especially around any care related vocational activities and meeting some of the requirements of the Welsh Baccalaureate. These learning opportunities will also provide support to the primary phase staff through such activities, for example year 12 and 13 pupils assisting primary school pupils with their reading. This is the case in Ysgol Llanhari, the first 3-19 school in Rhondda Cynon Taf.

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. In Lampeter, where there is a similar arrangement, the pilot evaluation has highlighted that these primary schools have sought to further strengthen their relationship and transition arrangements with the primary and secondary phase of the 3-19 school, in order that their pupils might benefit fully from the future all-through developments and to ensure that they will not be disadvantaged when they join the new school in Year 7.

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

As the two schools already share a learning campus and are located just a few metres away from each other, the school pupils should notice very little change from their current provision. The principal changes will be improved transition between educational phases and an improvement in the quality of the educational provision, and this should have a significant impact on the educational performance of the pupils.

As neither school is relocating to a new site, there will be no changes to the current provision of home to school transport and the Council's policy regarding free school transport will continue to apply. 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.

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 will benefit the children who will attend the new all through school in accordance with the seven core aims set out above.

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

For these changes, the two schools involved in the proposal will close and a new school will be opened with a new governing body. Should the proposal proceed, a temporary governing body will need to be appointed for the interim period until the new school opens.

The temporary governing body will appoint a new headteacher, who will then formulate and propose the leadership, management and staffing structures for the new school. The Council recommends that if the proposal is accepted that the temporary governing body of the new school “ring fences” for recruitment, all teaching and associated staff posts to staff within the existing schools in the first instance.

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 Aberdare, Tonypany, Porth & Tonyrefail.

What are the disadvantages of this proposal?

School reorganisation will inevitably cause some disruption and uncertainty for a period of time, although experience shows that this can be kept to a minimum and the children’s education does not suffer. The disadvantages of the proposal and how these risks can be managed by the Council and the schools are as follows:

Disadvantages	Risk Management
Some parents may prefer to send their child to two schools rather than to one all through school. 3-19 schools are a new concept of education provision to many parents and there may be concerns.	Factors such as the appeal of a modern school campus with the latest education facilities and the availability of free transport (where eligible) could be important considerations for many in making their choice. The 3-19 pilot in Lampeter has been independently evaluated and it is considered to be a success. Ysgol Llanhari is also a 3-19 school and the feedback from parents has been very positive. Other local authorities are adopting a similar approach across Wales, England and Scotland.
There will be staffing implications in that, for example there will be need for only one Headteacher. Staff will be concerned about the security of their jobs.	The temporary governing body will, as soon as possible, once the statutory procedures are completed, address the staffing issues. In practice governing bodies seek to ensure as much continuity in the staffing as possible in these situations.

Despite these disadvantages, the Council considers that the educational advantages of the proposals outweigh the short-term impact of the changes for pupils and parents.

What alternative options have been considered?

There are very few alternative options that could be considered in this instance.

Options	Advantages	Disadvantages
(i) - Retain the status quo	• No capital investment required by the Council; • No disruption to the pupils, parents and the staff; • No impact on home to school transport; • The schools have a strong tradition and are well supported in the local communities.	• Does not address the need to reduce the high number of surplus places in the Secondary school and the issue of overcapacity in the Primary school, in accordance with Welsh Government requirements; • Formal transition between KS2 and KS3 still required.
(ii) – Federate the two schools under one governing body, but with two headteachers	• Education provision would continue as at present; • Opportunities for sharing staff expertise and good practice; • Minimum disruption to pupils, parents and staff; • No impact on home to school transport.	• Does not address the need to reduce the high number of surplus places in the Secondary school and the issue of overcapacity in the Primary school, in accordance with Welsh Government requirements; • Formal transition between KS2 and KS3 still required. • No financial savings will be achieved
(iii) Create an all through 3 – 16 school on existing campus, with 6 th form provision being provided elsewhere	• Removes some surplus places in the Secondary school, utilising this spare capacity to provide additional Welsh Medium Primary places, for which there is evidence of increasing demand ; • Enables the primary and secondary pupils to share specialist facilities, such as sporting facilities;	• ‘All through’ schools are a new concept in Rhondda Cynon Taf, and parents will have concerns at what is a relatively new and untested model of education provision • Pupils will have to travel long distances to access Welsh Medium post 16 provision, either at YG y Cymer or Ysgol Llanhari

Options	Advantages	Disadvantages
	- Improves the transition between KS2 and 3; - Better enables the school to provide an appropriate curriculum to all pupils; - Achieves revenue savings that can be reinvested in the school system	(which has a very small 6th form). Removal of the 6th form will create even more surplus capacity at Garth Olwg
(iv) – Model being Proposed – all through 3 – 19 school on existing campus	- Removes surplus places in the Secondary school, utilising this spare capacity to provide additional Welsh Medium Primary places, for which there is evidence of increasing demand ; - Enables the primary and secondary pupils to share specialist facilities, such as sporting facilities; - Improves the transition between KS2 and 3; - Better enables the school to provide an appropriate curriculum to all pupils; - Achieves revenue savings that can be reinvested in the school system	3-19 schools are a new concept in Rhondda Cynon Taf, and parents will have concerns at what is a relatively new and untested model of education provision;

The options (i, ii and iii) above have been considered by the Council and have been discounted and the preferred option, (iv), is that proposed in this consultation document.

3. Community, Equality and Welsh Language Impact Assessments

As set out in the Welsh Government's School Organisation Code, it is a requirement to publish Community Impact, Welsh Language Impact and Equality Impact Assessments. The Welsh Language Impact Assessment is attached at Appendix 1. The Community Impact Assessment

and Equality Impact Assessment have been produced as separate documents and are available on the Council's website using the following link <http://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/EN/GetInvolved/Consultations/Schoolconsultations.aspx>. The overall impact of all the proposals outlined in this document will be neutral; any facilities currently offered in the schools, such as after school and breakfast clubs will be retained and hopefully enhanced and extended. The impact on the Welsh Language is a positive one, in that it will provide additional Welsh Medium Primary School places in an area where there is evidence of increased demand for such provision.

4. Admissions Arrangements

Admissions to the new school, for pupils aged between 3 – 16, will be managed by Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council, as the Admissions Authority in accordance with the Welsh Government School Admissions Code. The Council's Admissions Policy for all maintained schools is outlined in the Council produced "Starting School" admissions booklet. Admissions to sixth forms are managed by the individual schools. The two schools included in these proposals are Community schools, maintained by Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council.

Admission numbers for the proposed new school will be calculated and published once the consultation on this proposal is concluded and if it is agreed that a statutory notice is to be published. It is expected that the Primary age admission number will increase, from its current figure of 45 per year group to at least 52, this could increase further in years to come if demand for places continues to rise from within the catchment area. The Secondary admission number will reduce accordingly (currently 184 per year group), but it must be stressed that admission numbers will ensure that sufficient school places are made available to meet the current and forecasted demand for school places in the catchment areas of the current schools.

5. Land and Buildings

If the proposals outlined in this document are implemented, there will be no change to the existing site, buildings and facilities at the Garth Olwg Campus as no changes will be required in order to implement the proposals.

6. Accommodation

The accommodation available to pupils of all ages will be the same as at present; the only difference will be that as the new school will be a single entity, the headteacher and governing body will be able to utilise the accommodation to best meet demand for places and to benefit children of all age ranges that will attend the school.

7. Information on the Schools

The schools included within the proposal and the pupil numbers over the past five years are shown below. The pupil numbers are obtained from the statutory annual pupil count (PLASC) which must be undertaken in January each year.

School	Type of School	Age Range	School Capacity 2017	Jan 2013	Jan 2014	Jan 2015	Jan 2016	Jan 2017	% Surplus Jan 2017
YGG Garth Olwg *	Primary	3 - 11	324	292	294	286	283	302	6.8%
YG Garth Olwg	Secondary	11-19	1106	825	818	801	807	803	27.4%

**Note: The figures in the table above exclude nursery pupils*

Nursery pupil numbers are shown below:

School	Nursery Places	Jan 2013	Jan 2014	Jan 2015	Jan 2016	Jan 2017
YGG Garth Olwg	46	45	39	45	44	53

Sixth form pupil numbers are shown below:

School	Jan 2013	Jan 2014	Jan 2015	Jan 2016	Jan 2017
YG Garth Olwg	139	148	134	133	127

Pupil projections

Over the next five years the pupil projections for the five schools, which are calculated in accordance with guidance issued by Welsh Government, are as follows. The projections take into account previous trends together with predicted demographic changes. It is important to note that this cannot take account of any unforeseen deviations in local trends.

School	School capacity 2017 (inc. Nursery)	Jan 2018	Jan 2019	Jan 2020	Jan 2021	Jan 2022	% surplus in Jan 2022
YGG Garth Olwg *	370	367	368	364	366	377	-2%
YG Garth Olwg	1106	802	806	843	859	849	23.2%

**Note: The figures in the table above include nursery pupils*

Current condition of the existing schools

Building condition surveys were commissioned by Welsh Government on both schools and undertaken by EC Harris in January 2010. The results of the survey are as follows:

School	Building Condition Survey Result	Suitability Survey Result
YGG Garth Olwg	A	A
YG Garth Olwg	A	A

Category A for building condition means that the building is in a good condition, performing as intended and operating efficiently.

Category A for suitability means that the school has good facilities that are suitable for teaching, learning and wellbeing.

Quality and standards

Estyn inspections

As part of a national programme of school inspection, Estyn inspects all schools in Wales. YGG Garth Olwg was last inspected in January 2011; YG Garth Olwg was last inspected in May 2013. The overall judgements reached by the inspection teams were:

School	Date Inspected	Judgement - Current Performance	Judgement - Prospects for Improvement
YGG Garth Olwg	Jan 2011	Good	Good
YG Garth Olwg	May 2013	Adequate	Good

As a consequence of receiving an adequate judgement for current performance, YG Garth Olwg was placed in the category of requiring monitoring by Estyn. However, the school was advised in November 2015 that it had been judged to have made good progress in respect of the key issue for action arising from the inspection and was subsequently removed from the list of schools requiring Estyn monitoring.

Consortium categorisation

Since September 2012, the Council's School Improvement Services have been provided by the Central South Consortium, a regional school improvement services for the five local authorities of Bridgend, Cardiff, Merthyr Tydfil, Rhondda Cynon Taf and the Vale of Glamorgan. Since 2014, schools are rated as either Green, Yellow, Amber or Red in respect of their standards. The Consortium categorises the performance of each school in the region and considers that:

YGG Garth Olwg is a 'Green' school, the highest level it can achieve. This rating means that the school has a track record of sustaining a high level of learner outcomes, it demonstrates resilience at all levels and is challenged to move forward towards, or sustaining excellence.

YG Garth Olwg is a 'Yellow' school. This is because the school has many strengths, with evidence of self improvement activities which have had an impact on improved outcomes for pupils. Self evaluation is robust and evaluative and identifies the appropriate areas for development'.

Educational outcomes

Key Stage 5 Outcomes

The following tables set out the KS5 results for 2016 and 2017:

	2016				2017*			
School	No on Roll	No entering a volume equivalent to 2 A Levels	% entering a volume equivalent to 2 A Levels who achieved the Level 3 threshold	Average wider points score	No on Roll	No entering a volume equivalent to 2 A Levels	% entering a volume equivalent to 2 A Levels who achieved the Level 3 threshold	Average wider points score
YG Garth Olwg	53	44	95.45%	718.6	43	42	97.6%	TBC

NB - * - provisional unverified data from the school

The Level Three Threshold is achieved by pupils through passing the equivalent of two or more A Levels and this includes BTEC qualifications. The tables below set out the performance of the sixth form pupils over the past two years for each of the main qualifications undertaken in KS5.

Of those sixth form students who studied A Levels, the examination performance over the past two years is set out below:

	2016				2017			
School	No of entries	%A*-E	%A*-C	%A*-A	No of entries	%A*-E	%A*-C	%A*-A
YG Garth Olwg	108	90.74	65.74	12.04	111	98.2	72.97	24.32

WJEC results only

Of those sixth form students that studied BTEC qualifications the performance over the past two years is set out below:

	2016		2017	
School	No of BTEC entries	% Pass Rate	No of BTEC entries	% Pass Rate
YG Garth Olwg	7	86%	4	100%

Provisional data supplied by school

Of those sixth form students that studied the Welsh Baccalaureate (WB) the performance over the past two years is set out below:

	2016		2017	
School	No of WB entries	% Pass Rate	No of WB entries	% Pass Rate
YG Garth Olwg	31	93.5%	24	92%

Provisional data supplied by school

Key Stage 4 Outcomes

Subjects	YG Garth Olwg	
	2016	2017
Level 1 Threshold	100%	100%
Level 2 Threshold	99.22%	77.4%
Level 2 Threshold including English/Welsh & Maths	67.97%	67.7%
Core Subject Indicator (CSI)	67.19%	66.9%
Average Capped Wider Points Score	374.89	TBC

The 2017 figures are provisional based on data from the school.

Attendance

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

Percentage of half-day sessions attended by pupils of statutory school age during the academic year						
School	2015	2015 Benchmark Quartile	2016	2016 Benchmark Quartile	2017	2017 Benchmark Quartile
YGG Garth Olwg	96.3	2	96.2	2	Not yet available	Not yet available
YG Garth Olwg	94.5	2	94.4	3	94.3	Not yet available

Financial Information

	YG Garth Olwg (Current)	YGG Garth Olwg (Current)	New 3 – 19 school (Future)	Revenue Savings
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Annual Revenue Budget based on 2017/18 budget	3,201	1,054	4,211	44

Note: Revenue savings to be reinvested in the school system.

8. What is the statutory process to close schools and open a new school?

The Code on School Organisation ("The Code") is made under Sections 38 and 39 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013. The Code came into force on 1 October 2013 and applies in respect of all school proposals published by way of a statutory notice after that date. Proposals to close schools and open a new school have to follow the following process:

1. The Council's Cabinet considers the Code and authorises a consultation on the changes to the schools;
2. At the start of the consultation period the Council **must** provide consultees with a consultation document and give them at least 42 days in which to respond, with at least 20

of these days being school days. If the Council considers it appropriate meetings are held with stakeholders during the consultation period;

3. Consultation comments are collated and summarised by the Council. This summary together with the Council's officers own responses is published in a consultation report within 13 weeks of the end of the consultation period and presented to the Council's Cabinet for consideration;
4. The Council's Cabinet decide whether to proceed with the changes within 26 weeks of the end of the consultation period. If the decision is to proceed, Step 5 is taken. If a new option emerges during the consultation which the Council's Cabinet wish to consider, then Steps 1-3 are repeated;
5. Statutory notice is published providing a 28 day notice period for objections. The notice **must** be published on a school day and with 15 school days (not including the day of publication) in the notice period;
6. If objections are received, the Council **must** publish an objection report providing a summary of the objections and their responses to them before the end of 7 days beginning with the day of the local authority's determination as to whether to proceed with the proposals;
7. The Council's Cabinet must decide to issue its decision on the proposals within 16 weeks of the end of the objection period;

If the proposals receive approval they should be implemented in accordance with the date given in the statutory notice, or any subsequent modified date.

Appendix 1

Welsh Language Impact Assessment

It must be noted that the both schools included in this proposal are full Welsh Medium schools, where all education provision is delivered solely through the medium of Welsh. If these proposals are agreed this will not change; the new 'all through' 3 – 19 school will make exactly the same language provision as the two schools that will be closing. There will be no alternative school provision made, the new school will have the same pupils and will utilise the same school facilities, both sites and buildings as at present. Any extra-curricular or additional provision for pupils, such as breakfast clubs and after school clubs that are currently provided will also continue in the new school, there will be no changes made at all.

The two schools are currently located on the Garth Olwg Lifelong Learning Campus, which also accommodates a lifelong learning centre, public library and day nursery (operated by Mudiad Meithrin and providing Welsh medium pre-school provision), as well as the Primary and Secondary schools. All facilities outside of the schools that currently share the campus will also remain.

The lifelong learning centre currently shares some facilities with the secondary school. Operation of this will be unaffected by the creation of the new school. Their links with the school will remain. They will also continue to offer a multitude of courses to the general public, which include many courses through the medium of Welsh.

The main change to the school provision will be the way it is managed, with just one leadership and management structure instead of the two it has at present. Being one single, 'all through' school will allow the site and facilities to be managed as one single entity, thus giving more flexibility as to how the buildings are used and where pupils are accommodated and taught. The pupil data provided in this report clearly shows current and forecasted demand for Welsh Medium Primary school places in the current school catchment area rising beyond the published capacity of YGG Garth Olwg within 5 years. At the same time, YG Garth Olwg currently has over 300 surplus places and although this is set to fall in the next 5 years to 257 surplus places, this figure still represents over 23% of the total capacity of the Secondary school. Some primary school children are already based in the Secondary school, due to the physical constraints of their building. This arrangement has been in place for several years and a further class of primary school children relocated to the secondary school building in September 2017. Extending this relocation of classes and managing the school as a single, 'all through' provision will allow the Headteacher and governing body more flexibility to restructure the school and use the buildings more appropriately and effectively; this will subsequently allow them to increase capacity for Primary aged pupils to meet recognised demand for places, whilst at the same time removing spare capacity that currently exists in the Secondary school building. This represents a cost effective and very efficient way of providing the extra places for Welsh Medium Primary Education that are clearly required in this area.

Consultation Response Pro-forma

In order to help the Council reach a decision, it would be very helpful if you could answer the following questions. Completed questionnaires should be returned to:

Director of Education and Lifelong Learning

21st Century Schools Team

Ty Trevithick

Abercynon

CF45 4UQ

or by fax to 01443 744201, or e-mail schoolplanning@rctcbc.gov.uk

The Proposal

To create an 'all through' school on the Garth Olwg Campus, catering for children aged between 3 and 19 years, by closing YGG Garth Olwg and YG Garth Olwg

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

Please let us know the reasons for your choice

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

3. Please indicate who you are (e.g. parent of a pupil at named school, governor at named school etc.)

4. Name (optional)

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

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire

Please forward completed questionnaires to the above address no later than 29th December 2017

Appendix 2

Notes of a meeting held with the school council of Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Garth Olwg to discuss the proposal to close Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Garth Olwg and Ysgol Gyfun Garth Olwg and make one new school.

Monday 6th November 2017 at 1:45pm

Present: Esther Thomas, Sophie Nicholls, Julie Hadley, Miss Thomas, and twelve members of the school council from Years 3-6.

ET outlined the proposal to close Ysgol Gyfun Garth Olwg and Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Garth Olwg and create a new Welsh Medium 3-19 school on the current site. The consultation process was explained in detail and it was noted that in January 2018 the Council's Cabinet will have the final decision as to whether or not the proposal is taken forward. If the decision to proceed with the proposal is taken, there will be a 28 day period following the acceptance of the Cabinet report for individuals to formally object to the proposal in which case a further report will be presented to Cabinet for a decision on the proposal.

ET went on to outline the reasons behind this proposal which included improving the educational outcomes, provision, leadership and management of the school as one campus. This method has already worked successfully in other schools such as Ysgol Llanhari and the Council hope that this will happen in Garth Olwg as well. Pressures on school budgets continue and as Garth Olwg is no longer a PFI school the Council has decided that opening a 3-19 school on the Garth Olwg site is an excellent opportunity.

ET noted that the Donaldson report emphasises a fluid education that is less focused on key stages and phases and is encouraging children to reach or go beyond each progression step. Opening a 3-19 school at Garth Olwg could provide excellent opportunities for both staff and pupils to pass on expertise and knowledge as they share facilities.

ET then explained that a temporary governing body would be formed if the proposal was approved, and that they will appoint a new head teacher and create a structure for the 3-19 school. It is the temporary governing body and head teacher that will make the final decisions on structure and staff appointments.

ET then asked if there were any questions from the school council.

Q – The comprehensive school start school at 8:30am and finish at 3:30pm, will we also have to do that if we are all one school?

ET – We don't know that yet as the decision will be made by the new headteacher and governing body of the school.

Q – Will we be able to use some of the food technology, science and art rooms if we are all one school?

ET – If the new governing body decide that they want this to happen there is no reason why it shouldn't. The new curriculum suggests that those who are able to learn quickly should be able to move through their education sooner. This may mean that pupils are able to use those rooms and have lessons tailored to their needs in the future.

Q – What would be the advantages of unifying the schools?

ET – There could be many advantages to doing this. We have already discussed using the specific rooms in the comprehensive building, and there could be opportunities for pupils and staff to help each other and share their expertise in their subjects. There are many possibilities with this proposal but we want to know what pupils think about it.

Comment – I think it could be a good idea.

Q – Where will we eat if we are having lessons in the comprehensive building?

ET – At the moment primary aged pupils eat in the primary school building even when they have some year six lessons in the comprehensive building. There is no reason why that cannot continue but the new governing body could decide to change it.

Q – If teachers have to have a meeting in the comprehensive building and there is also one going on in the primary school building how are they going to be able to do this?

ET – The school will have to make a timetable to suit this. Teaching is the most important so no children will be left unattended due to staff meetings. The teachers should still be teaching their classes as usual.

Q – If the schools come together will there be a new school uniform?

ET – This will be up to the new governing body to decide with the headteacher, but they are likely to ask for pupils opinions on this too. They may want to keep the uniforms different, or they may want to make them the same to show that it is one school.

Q – If we have some lessons in the comprehensive building, will we have to move to different classrooms for every lesson?

ET – This will be up to the school. As primary age children it is unlikely that this would be the case but that younger pupils may visit a specialist technology or science room for example if they are being taught that subject. We expect it could only mean moving for some lessons but this will be decided by the new headteacher and governors.

Q – Will our physical education lessons change?

ET explained that they may change. If pupils have access to the sports hall or tennis courts then they may be able to learn more skills earlier in their school life. This will benefit the school in the long run as they will have more skills at a younger age and could use them to play for the sports teams. It is up to the new headteacher but we expect pupils will have more opportunities rather than less.

Q – Will we have play time in the primary or comprehensive yards?

ET explained that the new school governors and headteacher will decide this, but primary aged pupils will most likely be separate from older children.

Q – Will other schools be joining to make one school?

ET – The children who currently come to Ysgol Gyfun Garth Olwg from other schools will still come and join the school in year seven, but it is important that we think about those children too and make sure that we have enough transition sessions with them too so that they feel like part of the school when they arrive. This will hopefully let pupils and the teachers get to know the other pupils sooner.

Q – If we have to eat in the comprehensive building, what will happen to our catering staff?

ET explained that there need to be a certain number of staff to look after all of the children so there will still be a need for the same number of staff as there will still be the same number of children at the school.

Q – When will the governing body make these kinds of decisions?

ET – Explained that the proposal has to be agreed through this consultation first. It was explained that meetings were being held with the comprehensive school council and teachers later that day and that the consultation doesn't close until December. It is only following Cabinet approval that this proposal is fully accepted and then the headteacher and governing body can be appointed to make their decisions on the structure etc.

Q – Why can't we stay as two separate schools?

ET explained that the schools could still stay as separate schools if that was what was wanted, but that the Council think that there are more benefits to joining the schools.

Q – If the schools unite, will the buildings change?

ET explained that there are no desires to change the buildings yet as there are currently many surplus places in the comprehensive building, so there is enough room to accommodate all pupils in the school.

Q – We already benefit from going to the comprehensive building for some lessons in year six, can't we just continue to do that without joining the schools?

ET explained that it would be possible to do that, but unifying the schools could increase the opportunities for pupils and teachers as there will be one senior leadership team arranging how the school operates. This could allow more use of facilities and shared knowledge and expertise between the staff and pupils.

Q – Will other children be coming to the school if it is one school?

ET explained that there will not be any additional primary aged children joining the school.

YGG Garth Olwg School Council Meeting

Pupils were asked to write down what they thought the potential benefits or obstacles could be from creating a 3-19 school in Garth Olwg.

Pupil comments translated:

Benefits

"We could have lots of benefits from joining schools. We could use different rooms, meet different teachers and be social with older pupils."

"We could go to different rooms."

"We can play different sports."

"The school will be really big."

"We can make new friends that are older."

"We can use the specialist facilities in the comprehensive school."

"We can make one big schools council for older and younger pupils to say what they think"

"There will be more room in the other buildings."

"We could use the computer room and the canteen is big."

"We could do gymnastics in the big sports hall."

Obstacles

"Things could go wrong if older pupils start to pick on younger pupils. Younger pupils could also break and ruin the equipment that the comprehensive age children use."

"We will need to walk to and from lessons."

"It's not a good idea to have one leadership team ruling the school."

"We will have to walk between buildings more."

"There could be lots of walking for lessons."

Notes of a meeting held with the school council of Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Garth Olwg to discuss the proposal to close Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Garth Olwg and Ysgol Gyfun Garth Olwg and make one new school.

Monday 6th November 2017 at 2:25pm

Present: Esther Thomas, Sophie Nicholls, Julie Hadley, Headteacher, Deputy Head, and members of the school council.

ET outlined the proposal to close Ysgol Gyfun Garth Olwg and Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Garth Olwg and create a new Welsh Medium 3-19 school on the current site. The consultation process was explained in detail and it was noted that in January 2018 the Council's Cabinet will have the final decision as to whether or not the proposal is taken forward. If the decision to proceed with the proposal is taken, there will be a 28-day period following the acceptance of the Cabinet report for individuals to formally object to the proposal in which case a further report will be presented to Cabinet for a decision on the proposal.

ET went on to outline the reasons behind this proposal which included improving the educational outcomes, provision, leadership and management of the school as one campus. This method has already worked successfully in other schools such as Ysgol Llanhari and the Council hope that this will happen in Garth Olwg as well. Pressures on school budgets continue and as Garth Olwg is no longer a PFI school the Council has decided that opening a 3-19 school on the Garth Olwg site is an excellent opportunity.

ET noted that the Donaldson report emphasises a fluid education that is less focused on key stages and phases and is encouraging children to reach or go beyond each progression step. Opening a 3-19 school at Garth Olwg could provide excellent opportunities for both staff and pupils to pass on expertise and knowledge as they share facilities.

ET then explained that a temporary governing body would be formed if the proposal was approved, and that they will appoint a new head teacher and create a structure for the 3-19 school. It is the temporary governing body and head teacher that will make the final decisions on structure and staff appointments.

ET then asked if there were any questions from the school council.

Pupil year 13 – When will the amalgamation take place?

ET – The proposed timetable is for the new through school to open in September 2018, but this may be altered if it is thought to be too tight a timescale.

Pupil year 10 – What is the main purpose of joining the schools?

ET – The new curriculum by Professor Donaldson suggests that education should be delivered to a standard that each child can cope with regardless of their year group or key stage, so that all children have the opportunity to progress at their own pace through education. The Council think that an all through school for pupils aged 3-19 is the best way to provide this opportunity to pupils, as staff and pupils can share their expertise and knowledge and be managed by one senior leadership team.

Pupil year 8 – What factors led to you making this decision?

ET – The curriculum changes previously mentioned were a large factor in making this decision, but also we know that this system works already as other schools in RCT such as Ysgol Llanhari have been successfully run in this way for a number of years. There are also pressures on school budgets across RCT. This change would create economies of scale on this site and should help the school run more efficiently. The fact that the Council have recently bought out of the PFI contract for Garth Olwg means that there is now more flexibility in terms of how the school can be run and the Council want to take this opportunity to implement change that will benefit staff and pupils should the proposal be accepted.

Pupil year 13 – So is the change just due to financial reasons? Why didn't we do it when we first built the school?

ET – The attitude to education has changed in the last decade and only recently the idea of 3 to 19 schools has been brought forward, and now it will have a curriculum to match. When the school was built these systems were not a priority and the PFI contract made it difficult to change the structure of the school.

Pupil year 13 – If we are a through school, only one group of primary children are benefiting from our facilities and expertise. Is this fair on the other primary schools?

ET – Through doing consultations like this on 3 to 19 schools in other areas of RCT such as Porth, Tonypandy and Tonyrefail it has become clear that more transition work needs to be done with pupils from the other schools who will be joining the through school at comprehensive age. Teachers in Porth, Tonypandy and Tonyrefail have all been working with the associated primary schools so that pupils and teachers are familiar with each other before they arrive at the new school. This is very important to the Council and we would like to do more of this in the future including in Garth Olwg.

Pupil year 10 – What will happen in terms of sharing resources?

ET – There would definitely be potential to share resources with the primary and secondary pupils. There are currently 300 surplus places in the secondary school therefore there is

plenty of room for the primary age pupils to use some specialist rooms such as science, technology and physical education equipment.

Pupil year 13 – how can you say that 300 additional pupils could join the school? There is not enough room, especially in the corridors and the canteen.

JH – The calculation is a national calculation based on current school numbers on roll and the square meters of the school. For example any classroom not in use at a particular time could in theory hold another 30 pupils. Most schools will say that there is no space but we need to look at how the space is being used to see where we can maximise the space we have got to fit any extra primary age classes if needed.

Headteacher – the DT block has one room that is never used, and another room that is only used for 3 hours a week, therefore in theory we could have another 60 pupils having lessons in those classrooms at any one time. This doesn't mean that we want to fill another 300 places, but that the building is built so that we could do this in future.

Pupil year 8 – Will the school uniform stay the same?

ET – That is up to your new headteacher and temporary governing body once they have been appointed. They would want to consult with pupils on this too.

Pupil year 7 – Will staff have to reapply for their jobs?

ET – Yes. The headteacher will be appointed by the temporary governing body, and together they will establish the new school structure. Once that structure is complete teachers will be able to apply for roles within that structure. The recruitment process will be ring fenced to those teachers who are already working in the school at the time. There should not be any issues in this school but we cannot guarantee 100% that all teachers will have positions in the new school structure as it is down to the headteacher and governing body.

Pupil year 10 – How will we ensure pupil safety as all children move around the site?

ET – Pupil safety is the most important thing to the Council. We will need to look at traffic flow around the site and make necessary adjustments. Some year 6 pupils already have some lessons here and there are no issues with getting them safely from one building to the other.

Pupil year 13 – will sharing rooms result in lower teaching standards?

ET – It is likely that teaching standards will increase rather than decrease. Teachers in the primary and secondary will then be able to work together, share knowledge and expertise to provide a strong education and deliver the new curriculum. This will benefit pupils who are excelling as well as pupils who may need more support in terms of literacy and numeracy as primary school teachers have expertise in helping children with reading etc.

Pupil - I still think that adding a further 300 pupils will decrease teaching standards.

ET – We will not be adding 300 children to the school. We will just be letting slightly more primary age pupils into the school to use the space effectively. This is an excellent opportunity to expand Welsh medium education in the future.

Notes of a meeting with staff and governors of Ysgol Gyfun Garth Olwg

Monday 6th November 2017 at 3:45pm

Meeting to discuss the Council's proposals in respect of the possible closure of the school

Present

Esther Thomas, Temporary Director of Education and Lifelong Learning

Andrea Richards, Head of 21st Century Schools

Julie Hadley, School Organisation Manager

Nicola Goodman, Senior 21st Century Schools Officer

Grace Zecca-Hanagan, 21st Century Schools Officer

Sophie Nicholls, 21st Century Schools Graduate Officer

Ellen Williams, Human Resources Adviser

Sarah Corcoran, Senior Challenge Adviser

Mererid Davies, UCAC

Dean Price, Unison

67 members of school staff and the governing body.

Introductions from Council officers.

Esther Thomas (ET) welcomed everyone to the meeting and outlined the purpose of the meeting and the process, referring also to the detailed information contained within the consultation document.

ET outlined the proposal to close Ysgol Gyfun Garth Olwg and Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Garth Olwg and create a new Welsh Medium 3-19 school on the current site. The consultation process was explained in detail and it was noted that in January 2018 the Council's Cabinet will have the final decision as to whether or not the proposal is taken forward. If the decision to proceed with the proposal is taken, there will be a 28 day period following the acceptance of the Cabinet report for individuals to formally object to the proposal in which case a further report will be presented to Cabinet for a decision on the proposal.

ET went on to outline the reasons behind this proposal which included improving the educational outcomes, provision, leadership and management of the school as one campus. This method has already worked successfully in other schools such as Ysgol Llanhari and the Council hope that this will happen in Garth Olwg as well. Pressures on school budgets continue and as Garth Olwg is no longer a PFI school the Council has decided that opening a 3-19 school on the Garth Olwg site is an excellent opportunity.

ET noted that the Donaldson report emphasises a fluid education that is less focused on key stages and phases and is encouraging children to reach or go beyond each progression step. Opening a 3-19 school at Garth Olwg could provide excellent opportunities for both staff and pupils to pass on expertise and knowledge as they share facilities.

ET then explained that a temporary governing body would be formed if the proposal was approved, and that they will appoint a new head teacher and create a structure for the 3-19 school. It is the temporary governing body and head teacher that will make the final decisions on structure and staff appointments. ET then asked if there were any questions from the staff and governors.

The meeting was then opened for questions.

Q – Will we be losing any TLRs as part of the new structure?

EW explained that should the proposal proceed, once the new governing body and head teacher were appointed and the new structure set in place, staff would be able to apply for roles within that structure. There may be cases where staff responsibilities change slightly and this could result in the loss of some TLR allowances. In these cases HR will be advising throughout the process but all staff wages will be protected for three years.

Q – Will staff be losing jobs?

EW explained that the appointments to the new structure will be ring fenced for current staff in the first instance. HR does not envisage unnecessary changes to the staffing structure. Ultimately the decision is down to the new head teacher and governing body.

Q – As a teacher who is responsible for a whole subject in the secondary school, what will happen if there is someone in the primary school with the same responsibilities?

ET explained that the temporary governing body and head teacher would decide the structure.

Q – In terms of preparing work, will we be expected to prepare the work for that subject to cover pupils from ages 3-19 or just secondary age children as before?

ET explained that this could be possible depending on the structure that the head teacher and governors decide. The other 3-19 schools in RCT have varying structures. The appointments to the new structure would be based on the appointment criteria, so staff would have to meet this.

Q – Is the timetable for closure and reopening too tight?

ET explained that the Council is taking note that this is how some people feel. The most important thing is that the new structure is completed to a high standard and the Council

wouldn't want to rush this process. Timings could be amended in future if needed. Until a decision is made on the proposal the temporary governing body and new head teacher cannot be appointed, so it may be sensible to push back the implementation date.

Q – Have the other new 3-19 schools in the Rhondda had more notice than we have of these proposals?

ET explained that they have due to the construction works that needed to take place. The consultation therefore had to be done in advance in order to allow time for construction works to take place.

Q – Will the other primary schools associated with Garth Olwg be disadvantaged?

ET explained that the process of creating 3-19 schools in recent years had highlighted that much more work needs to be done to ensure that pupils from other associated schools have a smooth transition. Teachers from the other 3-19 schools such as Tonypany, Tonyrefail and Porth have been teaching classes in the primary schools and forming working relationships with the children before they arrive at the new school. Something similar will need to be done in Garth Olwg to ensure pupils transition with ease.

Q - In order to increase the intake of pupils in the primary section of the school will the admission number increase?

JH explained that the primary school catchment will not be increasing to the detriment of other schools. There are housing developments within the catchment that are increasing in number and putting pressure on the school. Only children within catchment will be admitted to the school.

ET noted that there are many proposed housing developments in the surrounding area that may or may not materialise. We cannot plan for developments that we don't know for certain will happen.

Q – If the additional housing developments are built and there is need for a new primary school, will that school be Welsh medium?

AR explained that there are strategic sites which have had plans for years but nothing has materialised from them. At present the Council would not open another Welsh medium primary school if the pupils are able to attend Garth Olwg.

JH noted that any new housing developments need to be identified as needing a new school if the predicted pupil numbers rise beyond capacity, but the language of that school would be decided much later when plans are underway.

Q – When the temporary governing body and headteacher create the new structure, what happens if individuals decide not to apply for a position in the new school?

EW noted that this is a school closure process so anyone who wants to take this as an opportunity to retire can do so. If anyone is thinking of doing this they would need to contact HR at the stage of applications and options can be discussed.

DP explained that the unions are available to support staff through the process of applying for roles. DP emphasised the importance of consultation and that this is the opportunity for all staff to express their concerns regarding the proposal and the timescale in which it takes place.

Q – You mentioned that there are 300 surplus places in this school at the moment. I am concerned about adding more pupils as we do not have a hall and the corridors are extremely busy between lessons as it is. Will there be some budget for extension works?
ET explained that the surplus places calculation is a national calculation and the school is currently built to accommodate many more pupils than it currently has, hence, there are no plans to extend the building at present.

Comment – The canteen is full as it is. If the primary age children come up to use the canteen or play space it will be unsafe. I am concerned that in an emergency primary age pupils will be trampled in an evacuation. There is no room for additional parking on site and I am concerned for pupil safety. Also if we have another 300 pupils using the canteen and sports hall on rainy days I am concerned that the teaching equipment could be damaged.
AR explained that the school and parking was built for 1100 pupils and that they can be accommodated there. It is possible that the Council could assist in future by extending some outdoor covered spaces for unstructured times like they have in Aberdare Community School.

Q – Did the other 3-19 schools have concerns about space?

AR explained that all 3-19 schools are different as the refurbishments and remodelling varies at each site. The Council listened to space concerns and that is how the canopies etc for unstructured times were added.

DP noted that the other 3-19 schools were different as they had much older facilities that needed improving, rather than the quality of building that Garth Olwg has already. Physical changes to the buildings were needed in the other cases.

AR explained that the Council listen to the school's concerns and are still improving facilities at Garth Olwg by investing in the new 3G pitch for the school and community.

Q – Will the school name change again?

ET commented that there is no reason why the school name should change but it will be up to the new governing body and headteacher to agree whether they wish to propose such changes.

Q – Will we be expected to teach subjects that primary pupils currently don't learn such as drama to the primary children in the new school?

ET explained that this is possible but is down to the new governing body. It could be an excellent idea to teach drama to younger pupils as it is proven to increase confidence and social interactions. It could be an excellent opportunity for staff and pupils.

Q – Who will be on the temporary governing body?

JH explained that members of the current governing bodies of both schools will be invited to apply for a position on the temporary governing body. The Council would decide who was to be appointed to the temporary governing body. The comprehensive and primary school governing bodies would also run alongside the temporary governing body.

Q – I agree that there are advantages to co-location. I have spoken to the other associated primary schools and the feedback is positive, but there are some concerns that the primary age pupils at Garth Olwg will have more opportunities than those who are not on site.

ET expressed that she was pleased that the primary schools had met and that the positive feedback is encouraging. ET explained that there is a need for more transition work to take place. Since undertaking consultation on the other 3-19 schools they have engaged in music projects and space projects that involve all primary schools to help increase their working partnership before they arrive at the school.

AR explained that there are many opportunities for all staff and pupils involved and that some comprehensive students and teachers have been running STEM subject clubs in the primary schools to benefit the pupils' education and working partnership.

DP noted that the 21st Century Schools programme is about creating more opportunities for all involved, not taking opportunities away from anyone. All opinions on this are welcome and will be supported.

ET asked staff to email or telephone any other questions that may arise to the 21st Century Schools team in the near future.

ET thanked all for their attendance and inputs.

The meeting closed at 4:50pm.

**Notes of a meeting held with staff and governors of Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg
Garth Olwg**

Tuesday 7th November 2017 at 3:45pm

**Meeting to discuss the Council's proposals in respect of the possible closure
of the school**

Present

Esther Thomas, Temporary Director of Education and Lifelong Learning

Andrea Richards, Head of 21st Century Schools

Julie Hadley, School Organisation Manager

Nicola Goodman, Senior 21st Century Schools Officer

Lisa Howell, Senior 21st Century Schools Officer

Ellen Williams, Human Resources Adviser

Dean Price, Unison

21 members of school staff and the governing body.

Introductions from Council officers.

Esther Thomas (ET) welcomed everyone to the meeting and outlined the purpose of the meeting and the process, referring also to the detailed information contained within the consultation document.

ET explained that questions had been received from other schools (e.g. Evan James) regarding whether they would be closing and confirmed that this was not the case. Only two schools were closing, namely Ysgol Gyfun (YG) Garth Olwg and Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg (YGG) Garth Olwg.

ET explained that some Council officers had met with the School Council the previous day and written comments had also been received from pupils which would also be looked at.

The consultation process and timeline was detailed. A report collating the consultation responses would be presented to Cabinet in January 2018 and Cabinet would decide whether to proceed or not with the proposal. If a decision to proceed was made, a statutory notice would be published giving people the opportunity to oppose the plans. These responses would feed into a further Cabinet report.

ET referred to page 5 of the consultation document which outlines how people can make comments. ET also explained that Council officers would be taking notes of the meeting and that questions asked during the meeting would feed into the Cabinet report, as would the feedback from the pupils.

ET referred to page 6 of the consultation document and emphasised that the Council is not proposing closure due to poor standards. There have been very high standards at the school for many years.

ET outlined other through schools that have been / are in the process of being established in Rhondda Cynon Taf , namely, Llanhari, Porth, Tonypandy and Tonyrefail.

ET explained that the number of pupils in YGG Garth Olwg was increasing and some pupils were already being educated in the secondary school building, as the secondary school has a high number of surplus places.

ET explained that the proposals also gave great opportunities for staff, for example CPD.

This was not a cost saving exercise, however, the budget situation for schools is getting worse and the new proposal would enable economies of scale to be achieved, for example in terms of buying resources.

ET outlined the references in the Donaldson Report to the 3-16 curriculum and the digital curriculum and opportunities that were increased when schools were not restricted to certain key stages. Donaldson also refers to Welsh medium schools becoming a hub for English medium schools to help them teach Welsh.

The timeline outlined in the consultation document was again referenced and ET detailed the process of appointing a temporary board of governors, new Headteacher and structure / appointment of SLT (Senior Leadership Team) thereafter.

The meeting was then opened for questions.

Q - As there is room in the secondary school to create more space for primary school children, has consideration been given to changing admission numbers?

Response

JH explained that if primary school numbers increased further by virtue of increased in catchment demand, the primary school's admission number would increase accordingly, but only to meet demand from within catchment.

Pupil forecasts for five years take into account growth in the area and the projections are still showing 250 surplus places in five years' time.

Q - Will this involve a reconfiguration of the building?

R - JH advised that minor building works would be considered if required.

Comment - Concerns were expressed regarding younger pupils going into a secondary school.

R - ET explained that it was not envisaged that pupils younger than Year 4 would be based in the secondary school building. Safeguarding measures would be in place. Examples were quoted of middle school structures in place or being put in place in other through schools and safety emphasised as a main priority.

JH added that there was demand for more Welsh medium primary school places and the primary school building could not be extended. The secondary school has surplus places and the building could be better used to meet the primary school demand.

Q - Why does this mean closure?

R - ET explained that Welsh Government rules prescribe this and that the pupils would see no difference. Also, there would be no break in service for staff as the change would happen over a summer holiday period.

Q - The main worry is the ethos of the primary school being swallowed up in a bigger school. Does this proposal come down to money?

R - ET explained that money is not the factor here. The ethos is that there would be a team of managers and a completely different structure. It will not be just a structure of people from the secondary school. The structure would be determined by the new Headteacher and temporary governing body.

C - Concerned that the primary school needs to have its own voice.

R - ET explained that there would be representatives of the primary school and the secondary school on the governing body and it was from here that the progress would be made. It would not be a 'takeover' by the secondary school. Example given of the new Porth through school.

Q - Who chooses the new governing body?

R - JH explained that the temporary governing body runs alongside the existing governing bodies. Membership of the temporary governing body is ring-fenced to members of the governing bodies of the existing two schools and appointments are made by a committee in Clydach Vale who would ensure (as far as possible, depending upon the number of applications received) that it is equally representative of both schools.

DP emphasised that the staff voice was important and Unison are keen to receive the views of their members to ensure they feed into the process. Primary schools involved in the Tonypany and Porth proposals also had similar concerns regarding being swallowed up, but these have been addressed. In many 21st Century Schools restructures, proposals change as views are taken on board during the consultation process.

ET added that when the structure is in place, the Local Authority in consultation with the Unions ensure that everyone is treated fairly.

Q - Will there be any staff job losses?

R - ET explained that this could not be stated 100%, however, there would be the same number of pupils at the school. If some staff wished to take the opportunity to retire, this could also be looked at.

Staff with management points will be determined by the new structure. There may also be opportunities for people to apply for different jobs once the structure was determined.

Q - Will people need to apply for jobs?

R - The process will be agreed by the temporary governing body and SLT. Until the structure is decided and compared against the current situation, it is difficult to say, however, there are tried and tested processes already in place within the Council.

Q - What about classroom assistants?

R - They go through the same process.

Q - What if no-one applies for the post of Headteacher?

R - ET advised that a Headteacher will need to be appointed even if the advert needs to go further afield.

Q - How could it be ensured that the Headteacher spends the budget evenly across the schools?

R - ET commented that there would be one school and the budget would be for the whole school. Primary years are where the foundations are laid. Donaldson refers to the transition dip. The primary school also have expertise that the secondary school can use. No-one is going to ask primary school staff to teach GCSEs but there will be more opportunities, for example, for primary school pupils to take science etc.

C - Transition already works well between both schools with year 6 already using science and food technology rooms.

R - ET commented that this could be improved and extended with a through school.

Q - What about other associated primary schools?

R - ET commented that there is a need to ensure that the other schools will have these opportunities. In other through schools, heads work very closely with all primary schools in the cluster to ensure smooth transition.

Q - There are sometimes 30 plus children in one classroom. What if children from other catchments want to come in?

R - JH emphasised that this school's capacity would only be increased to reflect extra demand from within catchment. The capacity of this school would not be increased to the detriment of other schools.

DP added that the 21st Century Schools ethos regarding the modernisation and improvement of conditions and learning standards is supported by Unison. This ethos is not about increasing pupil numbers without associated teaching support. Staff have until 29th December to feed into the process and any concerns they have about possible structures also need to be fed in.

ET explained that it was understood that any proposed change causes concern, but until the structure was confirmed, it was difficult to make promises, however the majority of people who want to be part of the new school will have a job.

Q - If the new school does not open until September what will happen regarding budgets?

R - The existing schools will have five-twelfths budget from April until the end of August, with the new school having seven-twelfths budget from September onwards.

Q - Are the timescales realistic?

R - ET recognised that by the time the structure etc. was established, the timescale of September 2018 might be ambitious. This was part of the consultation.

C - Looking at figures over the next five years, there is still a large surplus in the secondary school.

R - There are a lot of building works and potential planning applications in this area, so this could impact upon the figures.

C - Nursery numbers are increasing and only part-time places can therefore be offered.

R - Whoever is the Headteacher of the proposed new school would need to look at spreading the funding. There will be the same amount of money coming in. A strong voice for the primary department on SLT will ensure that this is implemented, however, the concern was understood.

C - Examples given in the consultation document do not reflect this school – for example, references to poor results; problems regarding transition which do not exist. Parents like having a primary school Headteacher who knows the children's names.

R - ET explained that would not be lost. The primary element would be looked after by an SLT leader.

C - Concerns were expressed regarding school name / uniform / school times.

R - People will be given an opportunity to input.

Comment -The timescales are not realistic.

Q - Will Key Stages still be categorised in a bigger school and finance spread evenly throughout the Key Stages?

R - ET explained that green / yellow etc. categorisation process will not change. At Llanhari, the school is looked at as a whole. Funding is for the whole school.

Q - Will monies be split equally? We get funded by different bodies and groups.

R - ET advised that funding bids could still be submitted, that would not change.

Q - Will inspections be of the whole school?

R - ET stated that Llanhari were recently inspected and there was a mixture of inspectors to reflect the school structure.

Q - Is there a model of a primary school and secondary school similar to Garth Olwg? What is better about it?

R - Lampeter and many in England. More opportunities are available to staff and pupils in such schools with primary schools getting lots of experience in specialist subjects.

Q - As a parent, the model we have at the moment works. The secondary school has had the best results it has had for some time. Youngest daughter is five years old and no-one can guarantee that her experience will be better. Because of the models in Lampeter etc. are we going to play with the future of our children?

R - The quality of staff will still be good, only the structure will change.

C - Some staff will need to be taken out as part of the restructure and this will impact upon the children.

Q - Can you tell us that things will improve?

R - Everyone can change and everyone can improve.

Discussion / debate followed regarding whether things will improve and concerns expressed that children's futures were being played with.

C - Concerned that this is being done to resolve the surplus places in the secondary school.
R - ET commented that this is not the case. Donaldson Report examples given. It was recognised that some criteria for consideration of school closures given in the consultation document are not relevant to these two schools.

C - Points regarding middle schools in England are not relevant – the education system in Wales does not have specialities through Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. There are different curriculums. There is a need to close the gap.

R - Port Talbot, Baglan is also just established. They have not had a chance to establish properly in relation to their results.

Q - How many secondary school teachers have experience in Key Stage 2? Realistically it takes one year to train a teacher in different key stages.

Primary school expertise is very different to Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4. If staff are pulled out of the classroom, when will this restructure and training happen?

R - ET outlined that all teachers know how children develop through the various key stages and secondary school staff know how primary school pupils develop.

C - This training from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3 does not exist yet. Also, it takes time to advertise posts. Establishing the school by September is not going to work.

R - ET advised that the timescales would be reconsidered as part of the consultation process.

DP commented that as part of the restructure, new job descriptions etc. would be developed.

EW added that jobs will require staff to be either secondary or primary education trained. In Llanhari, primary and secondary staff work together.

C - Llanhari was grown from scratch.

R - ET commented that Garth Olwg already has strong links between the schools and these links would be strengthened.

DP added that there are a lot of pressures on Local Authorities from Welsh Government to progress education (for example, Donaldson Report). The questions on standards could not be answered now. It is essential that staff feed their views into the consultation process, with statistics and evidence to support their opinions.

C - Staff have nothing to gain and everything to lose.

R - EW advised that opportunities would be given to staff who wished to go. Also, if any staff lost any TLRs or leadership roles, they would be protected.

DP outlined the opportunity for people to access their pension from the age of 55 if some people wished to go.

DP referred to the tried, tested and transparent processes that the Council has in place. DP emphasised that these are only proposals at present - they are subject to change and inputs are key.

Q - What happens to staff on temporary contracts if a decision is delayed?

R - ET commented that contracts could be extended.

Q - Are posts ring-fenced?

R - ET confirmed that they would be.

C - There are stress levels on staff regarding uncertainty.

R - ET commented that this was understood by all. Occupational Health can support. Also, Human Resources are always available and communication channels are always open.

Q - Is there a potential to change the capacity of the primary school?

R - JH reiterated that this would only be done to meet in catchment demand. Should in catchment demand increase, the primary school capacity / admission number would be reviewed. Any change would not be to the detriment of other primary schools. If there were any large-scale housing developments in the future, there may be a need to look at additional provision outside of the catchment, as this primary school cannot just keep growing. One planning application for housing in the catchment area has just been turned down.

ET thanked all for their attendance and inputs.

The meeting closed at 5:10pm

Comments made at the Open Evening held on 4th December 2007 (left on the 'scribble board').

The same school uniform for everyone?

Are you going to ensure the same transition systems for other schools in the cluster?

The effect of this on staff could affect the standards of education.

What assessments have been made of other 3 – 19 schools, in and out of RCT?

Equality of provision for all feeder schools

QUESTIONNAIRE FEEDBACK FOR THE PROPOSAL TO CREATE A 3 - 19 SCHOOL ON THE GARTH OLWG CAMPUS

Agree with Proposal	Completed by	Comments	Additional Views
Yes	Parent (name provided)	Makes sense - like the idea of pupils being able to share all the facilities	Assume the revised all through school will not need 2 Heads, resources could be reinvested in teaching/teaching assistant staff
Yes	School Governor	Close the Lifelong Learning Centre, courses are not as good as they used to be	Better whole school together
Yes	Parent (name provided)	The fluent transition from 3 to 19 can only be a better course of education	My only concern is the impact of traffic on nearby residents when parents collect children
Yes	Parent, YG Garth Olwg	Supports expansion of YGG Garth Olwg, this provides parents with the choice of a bilingual education for their children. Any financial savings from economies of scale will hopefully be reinvested in the school	My only concern is the school is embedded in the local community and should retain its name. A change of name is also a concern re the cost of new uniform.
Not sure	Parent	Concerned about the possible impact on other local primaries which currently are in the Garth Olwg cluster. Are these big sites a better alternative to already successful smaller primaries?	The new plans seem fine, I am concerned about the meritable next stage affecting other primaries which have been informed, which I may later comment on.
Yes	Parent (name provided)	As long as proposed details are kept to, especially the safety of the young children mixing with older students, and that all children feel comfortable.	
No	Parent, YG Garth Olwg and Castellau	YGG Garth Olwg is very dominant of all the feeder schools to YG Garth Olwg, I do not feel that creating a super school is in the interests of the other schools.	How will this affect the catchment in the future and the identity of the other feeder schools? Is it a first step to school closures
No	Parent	Information provided relates to complaints re pupil behaviour at YG Garth Olwg, not to the proposal itself	A copy of the questionnaire has been forwarded to the Headteacher for him to investigate as per correct protocol.

No	Parent (name provided)	Lengthy e mail objecting on many issues,in the main lack of information on the specific details of the new school management and expectation that very young children aged 5 yrs will be sharing facilities with 19 year olds	Advised that this is a proposal only and that no actual decisions have yet been made, also it has not been suggested that Foundation Phase children will be accommodated in the Secondary building
No	Not provided	YGG Garth Olwg is a successful school and the proposals and reasoning for the new school appear weak. Primary would lose their headteacher and their open door policy. Primary children are too young to mix with Comprehensive children other than year 6.	Concerned about losing good staff from the Primary school if this is a take over and the Comprehensive will be less affected. Benefits appear to be weighted towards the Comprehensive.
Yes	Parent (name provided)	Campus already in place, makes perfect sense	Important I feel to ensure the excellent quality Primary education is in no way affected
No	Parent, YGG Castellau	Proposal will put other schools in the cluster at a disadvantage, Garth Olwg Primary will have better access to facilities, giving them an unfair advantage. If this is not addressed I will consider placing my 3 children in an English medium school.	I want to see clear plans on how all cluster schools will be supported, including transport costs so all pupils are on a level playing field. The Garth Olwg primary site could be turned in to a cluster year 5/6 middle school
No	Parent	Cost cutting exercise made at expense of the children. I do not agree with the changes as they will not improve learning. Staff cuts may decrease overall standards of school	The current Estyn standards are rated good therefore I do not feel there is any indication for change.

	Governing Body, YG Garth Olwg	Disappointed that there is no reference in the consultation document to how the proposals related to the WESP. Many of the benefits associated with co-location are already being achieved. Proposals could create inequality and be detrimental to the other associated Primary schools, this should not be a matter for the temporary GB, the LA should be providing direction and assurances on this matter. Unclear as to how pupil places are calculated and how spare Secondary places equate to Primary places, the wellbeing and health and safety of pupils must be considered in the proposed use of spare places. Concerned at the uncertainty arising from this consultation which is an unnecessary distraction. Unless significant educational benefits for all pupils in the cluster can be articulated, it appears that disadvantages may outweigh the few advantages of this proposal.	Concerned that this proposal in isolation may create inequity in education provision across the Garth Olwg cluster and that it is the role of the local authority to articulate this. There is an opportunity for governing bodies to come together to describe a vision for shared goals, policies and governance. The local authority should provide the necessary support and expertise to facilitate this. There are real opportunities with this model and delaying the change until September 2019 could provide the much-needed time to work through and realise this model.
No	Parent YGG Garth Olwg (name provided)	I do not feel there is any benefit to the infant/junior school	Job uncertainties, upheaval, will the infant/junior school be at a disadvantage and more resources given to the secondary school?
Not sure	Parents, YGG Garth Olwg (names provided)	We have a number of concerns about the structure of the new school and the continuity for those children who already attend	It is unclear what the role of head for the Primary unit will be. For primary age children the Headteacher is a crucial person.
No	Parent	Worried about the effect on the school's strong Welsh ethos. Unfair on other Primary schools in the cluster. Losing the closeness between staff and parent. Worries regarding children's welfare, with pupils from Yr 4 onwards being taught in the Secondary building. Who will run the Primary school from day to day?	No point in closing 2 successful schools. I don't want my children to receive their education in one school between 3 - 19. Transition is an important time in their lives. What will be the spending priorities?

No	Parent and governor	Will have a negative effect on the Welsh ethos of the primary school. Welsh is spoken in the corridors and playground, unlike at the Comprehensive. Unfair on the other Primaries in the cluster, their Year 6 pupils will have different transition periods	No need to close 2 successful schools that have high standards. This will be jeopardised by changing a successful system. It will mean the loss of the close relationship between parents and staff in the Primary school. Concerns re wellbeing, children as young as Yr 4 should not receive their education in the comprehensive school. I don't want my children in one school from 3 - 19, transition is one of life's important experiences. Uncertainty for staff's jobs could lead to good staff leaving. No example given of a successful school with a catchment area or local area similar to Garth Olwg.
No	Parent (name provided)	Communication with parents and staff and decision making will be far more difficult without the presence of a headteacher. Primary and secondary schools have very different needs. Changing the current system will be detrimental to my childrens' education	
No	Parent (name provided)	I think the current model is better. I recognise the importance of having a headteacher on site. The headteacher plays a crucial role and his/her presence is crucial, a dedicated primary headteacher is vital.	
No	Parent (name provided)	It is a huge amount of upheaval to create an extra 7 places in the Primary by 2022, without more money for the other cluster primaries their pupils will be disadvantaged.	
No	Parent (name provided)	After attending the meeting it was clear that staff were unable to answer basic questions or give examples/evidence of other Welsh schools where this has happened - where are the stats?	What provisions have been considered for child safety and protection between 3 and 18 year old pupils moving together. Is there going to be a dedicated play area for 3 - 11 year olds?

No	Parent (name provided)	The Primary school has already exceeded its capacity, as Y6 is already based in the comprehensive. If you increase intake to the Primary, where would they go? Younger pupils would also need to be taught in the comprehensive and will be exposed to this environment at too young an age. There is currently no provision for 11 - 18 pupils for recreation in poor weather, this problem will only increase if younger pupils are on the site and if secondary numbers increase.	Funding won't be ringfenced and there is no guarantee that the primary school will receive the same proportion of money that is currently allocated. With pressure on KS4 and KS5 results money could be spent higher up the school as a priority. Without a defined move for pupils from Primary to Secondary at Year 6 the opportunity for children to build resilience and deal with change is taken away.
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No	Parent	I don't agree with little children mixing with big children, some of them will also be adults.	
No	Parent (name provided)	I feel that the Primary school is currently run extremely efficiently and believe that the merger would be detrimental to the education of my child.	