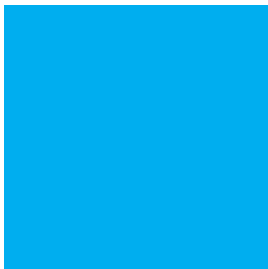


21ST CENTURY SCHOOLS



CONSULTATION ON THE REORGANISATION
OF PRIMARY SCHOOLS, SECONDARY SCHOOLS
AND SIXTH FORM PROVISION
IN THE PONTYPRIDD AREA

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Introduction

Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council wishes to seek the views of a wide range of stakeholders on the proposals to:

- Develop post 16 centres of excellence based at Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School, Beddau and Coleg y Cymoedd, Nantgarw. For those students who opt for a Roman Catholic education, provision will be available at St David's College, Cardiff;
- Create two new 3-16 schools, in Pontypridd and Hawthorn, which will take a radically different approach to education in the areas, by sharing both primary and secondary sector resources;
- Improve and increase Welsh Medium primary provision by building a new school on the former site at Heol y Celyn, which will incorporate the former provisions at both Heol y Celyn and YGG, Pont Sion Norton;
- Amend the catchment areas of Pontypridd High, Hawthorn High and Bryncelynnog Comprehensive Schools to better meet and match the demand for school places;
- Improve the learning environments for pupils with additional learning needs (ALN).

To achieve this, the proposal is to:

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

To achieve these changes, the Council, in partnership with Welsh Government, is planning to invest £37.4m in new or refurbished/remodelled school buildings and facilities.

The proposals are inter-dependent projects and it is proposed that the changes will be implemented over the period to 31 August 2022. Given the number of schools affected by the proposals, the consultation document has been set out in the following five sections, encouraging consultees to provide feedback on specific school proposals:

- **Section 1** – Overview of the Proposals;
- **Section 2** – The proposed sixth form changes;
- **Section 3** – The proposed changes to primary and secondary provision in Hawthorn;
- **Section 4** – The proposed changes to primary and secondary provision in Pontypridd;
- **Section 5** – The closure of YGG Pont Sion Norton and the creation of a new Welsh Medium Primary school at the current Heol-Y-Celyn site. The Welsh Medium stream of Heol y Celyn will transfer to the new school also. This will increase capacity and improve Welsh Medium provision and will also remove dual language provision.

Who will we consult with?

We are seeking the views of the following stakeholders:

- The Governing Bodies, parents, carers and staff of Hawthorn High School, Hawthorn Primary School, Heol-Y-Celyn Primary School, Pontypridd High School, Cilfynydd Primary School, Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School, Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School and YGG, Pont Sion Norton
- The Governing Bodies, parents, carers and staff of Abercynon Primary, Cefn Primary, Coedpenmaen Primary, Coedylan Primary, Craig yr Hesg Primary, Ffynnon Taf Primary, Gwauncelyn Primary, Gwaunmeisgyn Primary, Llanilltud Faerdref Primary, Llantrisant Primary, Llwynyrwn Primary, Maesybryn Primary, Maesycod Primary, Parc Lewis Primary, Penygawsi Primary, Trallwng Infants, Trehopcyn Primary, Trerobart Primary, Ynysboeth Primary, YGG Abercynon, YGG Evan James, YGG Garth Olwg, St Michaels RC Primary, Our Lady's RC Primary, SS Gabriel & Raphael RC Primary, St Helens RC Primary (Caerphilly), Mountain Ash Comprehensive, Ysgol Gyfun Garth Olwg, Ysgol Ty Coch.
- Other Governing Bodies of neighbouring primary and secondary schools
- The Church in Wales and Roman Catholic Diocesan Authorities
- Caerphilly County Borough Council
- The Governing Body of Coleg Y Cymoedd
- The Governing Body of St David's College
- The City and County of Cardiff Council
- 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 constituencies
- 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 for Work Plus Employment Support Programme
- Community Councils : Pontypridd Town Council, Llantwit Fardre Community Council, Llantrisant Community Council, Ynysybwl/Coed y Cwm Community Council
- Neighbouring local authorities
- Mudiad Meithrin
- Menter Iaith
- The Welsh Language Commissioner

What will the consultation process entail?

The consultation will start on Monday, 15th October 2018 and will be completed at 5pm on Thursday, 31st January 2019. The feedback from the consultation will be collated and summarised, and a report presented to the Council's Cabinet in February 2019. This consultation report will 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 6 of this document.

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

If the Cabinet decides to proceed with the proposals Statutory Notices will be 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 Statutory Notices are published.

As the proposals include changes to sixth form education, the Welsh Government Minister for Education and Skills will determine the outcome of the Statutory Notice in respect of the Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School proposals. The outcome of the Statutory Notices in respect of the creation of the two 3 – 16 schools and the closure and relocation of YGG Pont Sion Norton will be determined by the Council's Cabinet.

If there are objections, the Council's Director of Education and Inclusion Services will publish an objection report providing a summary of the objections and her response to them within 7 days of the determination decision of the proposals by the Council's Cabinet, for the proposals Cabinet are responsible for. Any objections received in respect of the Cardinal Newman proposal will be sent to the Welsh Ministers for consideration within 35 days of the end of the objection period. The objection 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 6 of this document.

What do you have to consider?

The remainder of the consultation document sets out the rationale for the proposed changes to Welsh and English primary, secondary and post 16 education provision in the communities within the catchment areas of Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School, Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School, Hawthorn and Pontypridd High Schools, and YGG Pont Sion Norton. 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 as outlined in the Introduction section of this document on page 1.

How do you make your views known?

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

School Affected	Group	Time, Date & Venue
Hawthorn High School	Governors and Staff Meeting	Monday, 12th November 2018, 3.30pm, Hawthorn High School
Pontypridd High School	Governors and Staff Meeting	Monday 12th November 2018, 3.30pm, Pontypridd High School
Heol-Y-Celyn Primary School	Governors and Staff Meeting	Wednesday 14th November 2018, 4pm, Heol-Y-Celyn Primary School
Hawthorn Primary School	Governors and Staff Meeting	Wednesday 14th November 2018, 4pm, Hawthorn Primary School
Cilfynydd Primary School	Governors and Staff Meeting	Monday, 19th November 2018, 4pm Cilfynydd Primary School
YGG, Pont Sion Norton	Governors and Staff Meeting	Tuesday, 20th November 2018, 4pm YGG, Pont Sion Norton
Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School	Governors and Staff Meeting	Thursday, 22nd November 2018, 3.30pm, Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School
Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School	Governors and Staff Meeting	Thursday, 22nd November 2018, 3.30pm, Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School
Hawthorn High School	School Council	Monday, 12th November 2018, 2pm Hawthorn High School
Pontypridd High School	School Council	Monday, 12th November 2018, 2pm Pontypridd High School
Heol-Y-Celyn Primary School	School Council	Wednesday 14th November 2018, 2.30pm, Heol-Y-Celyn Primary School
Hawthorn Primary School	School Council	Wednesday 14th November 2018, 2.30pm, Hawthorn Primary School
Cilfynydd Primary School	School Council	Monday, 19th November 2018, 2.30pm, Cilfynydd Primary School
YGG, Pont Sion Norton	School Council	Tuesday, 20th November 2018, 2.30pm, YGG, Pont Sion Norton
Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School	School Council	Thursday, 22nd November 2018, 2pm Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School
Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School	School Council	Thursday, 22nd November 2018, 2pm Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School

School Affected	Group	Time, Date & Venue
Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School	Parents and public drop in session and exhibition	Tuesday, 15th January 2019, 3 - 6pm Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School
Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School	Parents and public drop in session and exhibition	Wednesday, 16th January 2019, 3 - 6pm, Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School
YGG Pont Sion Norton and Heol-Y-Celyn Primary Welsh Department – both schools and members of the local community	Parents and public drop in session and exhibition	Thursday, 17th January 2019, 4 - 6pm Rhydyfelin Children’s Centre
Hawthorn High, Hawthorn Primary and Heol-Y-Celyn Primary– all three schools and members of the local community	Parents and public drop in session and exhibition	Tuesday, 22nd January 2019, 3 - 6 pm Hawthorn High School
Pontypridd High and Cilfynydd Primary – both schools and members of the local community	Parents and public drop in session and exhibition	Thursday, 24th January 2019, 3 - 6 pm Pontypridd High School

Consultation questionnaires are attached. These will also be available at the drop-in session detailed above and on the Council’s website at www.rctcbc.gov.uk

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

Director of Education and Inclusion Services
21st Century Schools team,
Ty Trevithick,
Abercynon CF45 4UQ

Telephone: (01443) 744227

Email: schoolplanning@rctcbc.gov.uk

All correspondence should be received no later than 5pm on Thursday, 31st January 2019.

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

The majority of the schools affected by this proposal are English medium schools and therefore the consultation documents have been distributed in English based on the chosen language medium for education. Welsh language copies of the consultation document have been provided to the Welsh medium schools and to the Welsh Department of Heol-Y-Celyn Primary School. If a Welsh language copy of the consultation document is required, please contact the address above.

SECTION 1

Overview of the Proposals

Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council wishes to seek the views of a wide range of stakeholders on the proposals to:

- Develop post 16 centres of excellence based at Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School, Beddau and Coleg y Cymoedd, Nantgarw. For those students who opt for a Roman Catholic education, provision will be available at St David's College, Cardiff;
- Create two new 3-16 schools, in Pontypridd and Hawthorn, which will take a radically different approach to education in the areas, by sharing both primary and secondary sector resources;
- Improve and increase Welsh Medium primary provision by creating new school provision to replace Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Pont Sion Norton and the Welsh stream of Heol y Celyn Primary School;
- Amend the catchment areas of Pontypridd High, Hawthorn High and Bryncelynnog Comprehensive Schools to better meet and match the demand for school places;
- Improve the learning environments for pupils with additional learning needs.

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

This investment will include:

- New and refurbished buildings at Hawthorn Primary and High School sites and Pontypridd High School site to create two 3-16 schools;
- New and improved sixth form facilities at Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School;
- Construction of a new Welsh Medium Primary school that will be constructed on the current site of Heol-Y-Celyn Primary School. The capacity of the building will be sufficient to incorporate YGG Pont Sion Norton and the Welsh Medium stream of Heol-Y-Celyn Primary School;
- A review of the safe routes to school, and improvements to walkways, road crossings and road speed management measures will be made to ensure the required safety standards are met. This is the approach we have implemented in other communities in earlier school reorganisation proposals with significant improvements being made to safe routes to schools.

What is the basis for the proposals to create 3 - 16 Schools?

Successful Futures

In March 2014, the Welsh Ministers commissioned Professor Graham Donaldson to undertake an independent review of curriculum and assessment arrangements in Wales, from the Foundation Phase to Key Stage 4. His report, entitled 'Successful Futures' was subsequently published in February 2015 and was adopted by the Welsh Government as policy shortly afterwards. It is now the Welsh Government's position on curriculum reform across Wales. This document can be viewed online using the following link
<http://gov.wales/docs/dcells/publications/150225-successful-futures-en.pdf>.

The key recommendations from Successful Futures for all-through schools are:

- The curriculum 3–16 should be organised into Areas of Learning and Experience.
- The new national curriculum in Wales should have six Areas of Learning and Experience: Expressive Arts; Health and Well-being; Humanities; Languages, Literacy and Communication; Mathematics and Numeracy; and Science and Technology.
- Children and young people should have their learning developed across the curriculum through three cross-curriculum responsibilities that should be the responsibility of all teachers: literacy; numeracy; and digital competence.
- A digital competence framework and an accompanying 'Routes to Learning Digital Competence' should be developed and be included as a cross-curriculum responsibility.
- The expectations for the three cross-curriculum responsibilities and wider skills should be embedded within the Areas of Learning and Experience
- The new national curriculum should be organised as a continuum of learning from 3 to 16 without phases and key stages.
- Progression should be described in relation to a continuum of learning in each Area of Learning and Experience from when a child enters education to the end of statutory schooling.
- Progression should be signalled through Progression Steps at five points in the learning continuum, relating broadly to expectations at ages 5, 8, 11, 14 and 16
- All teaching and learning should be directed to achieving the four curriculum purposes.
- Teachers should apply the pedagogical principles identified in this report when planning their teaching and learning, to ensure that the activities relate directly to the curriculum purposes.
- Children and young people should have opportunities to learn from expertise and experience from outside the school.

The first and most obvious change to the curriculum is the reorganisation of what pupils learn into six Areas of Learning and Experience and three Cross-Curriculum Responsibilities. Adopting this approach at national level will give schools more freedom to teach a wider range of things in different ways. Letting teachers make more decisions about what is taught will give schools and teachers much more freedom to work on subjects and topics that are relevant to their learners, so it will be possible for any two schools in Wales to teach and assess different things to measure progress of learners. This will affect how schools can be organised, so that all-through schools will be able to organise a wider range of staff to do things in different ways.

The removal of phases and key stages will give teachers more freedom to work by accommodating the needs of their pupils. This breaks down the distinctions between what happens in a primary and secondary school and especially between the key stages – clearly this puts an all-through school in an advantageous position when thinking about deciding what pupils learn and how they learn it across a whole-school continuum. In turn, this ability to work with a wider range of colleagues will help all teachers develop their practice. A single workforce in a school reflecting on and jointly developing and designing what works for five-year olds, teenagers and young adults is capable of a wider range of points of reference and a wider range of practices than a smaller group of teachers with a one-phase window to consider.

These changes to what pupils learn and how they learn it are easier to manage in an all-through environment than in a single-phase school or group of schools. They do, though, bring significant challenges as well as opportunities to leadership and practice. The more flexible workforce with greater capacity and flexibility, and the ability to play a role as part of a professional learning community are all likely to be enhanced by the all-through model. Simply by increasing the number and widening the variety of staff, the all-through model enjoys an advantage over the single-phase in the Successful Futures vision of learning.

Similarly, there are implications of the new reforms for buildings, for spaces within buildings for working, teaching and learning, and for access to technology across the whole learning age-range. All-through schools provide a wider range of physical spaces for teaching and learning, and a better range of specialist spaces, resources and materials that can be accessed by a wider age-range than in a single-phase setting. This includes digital, information and learning technology, which is critical to several of the recommendations and which is difficult to afford, maintain and refresh in single-phase schools.

Finally, all-through schools and the reforms in the curriculum carry implications for the role of parents, the local community and the local economy in supporting pupils' progress. The need for transition between Primary and Secondary phases is removed and this can also lead to more continuous and therefore better relationships with parents and carers. Successful Futures is very clear that not all learning that happens to young people happens in a classroom and because of a teacher.

Criteria for the Review of School Provision

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.

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

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

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

The 3 primary schools and 2 secondary schools included within these 3-16 proposals have been assessed against the aforementioned criteria:

- 4 of the 5 schools have surplus places in excess of 25%;
- The combined maintenance backlog of the 5 schools is £4,352,000 which equates to £1,804 per pupil;
- The educational performance and pupil attendance of the 2 LA maintained secondary schools at Key Stage 4 is consistently in the third and fourth quartiles when compared to similar schools in Wales;

In addition Hawthorn and Pontypridd High Schools combined have small sixth forms of less than 250 pupils (the national recommended minimum number for an efficient and effective sixth form), and with relatively poor educational performance. Please refer to the data contained in sections 2, 3 and 4 of this document for the evidence to support this statement.

Pupil numbers attending the sixth form at Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School have also fallen dramatically in the last three years; in September 2015 there were 195 pupils in the sixth form, this fell to just 80 in January 2018, a reduction of 60%. Having such small post 16 numbers has a significant impact on the post 16 provision available and on the wider sixth form experience for the students. Numbers are forecast to fall even further by January 2019. This reduction in pupil numbers and consequent reduction in post 16 funding from the Welsh Government has meant that the Cardinal Newman School budget is predicted to fall into a deficit balance of over £700k.

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

What is the educational case for the proposals?

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

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

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

- **Improve educational provision;**
 - Provide the conditions that will enable a broader and more diverse curriculum to be developed to better meet the needs of the school's young people and in ways that will be viable and sustainable over the longer term;
 - Improve the range and quality of facilities and learning resources available to the benefit of all pupils;
 - Enable greater continuity of support for vulnerable groups of pupils;
 - Allow for the potential for financial savings in terms of staffing structures and purchase of services, which accrue to a larger school;
 - Broaden the range of extra-curricular and out-of-school activities and develop them in ways that are sustainable over the longer term;
 - Deliver the future capital investment benefits that would arise from the modernisation of a small number of institutions rather than many;
 - Create schools of a sustainable size for their catchment area by removing surplus capacity, providing greater educational and financial stability;
 - Release resources that will be reinvested in improving the buildings and in improving standards of teaching and learning, which otherwise would not have been available;
 - Enable schools to build better relationships with parents and carers.

- **Improve leadership and management;**

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

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

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

What is the educational case for creating larger sixth forms?

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

- There are too many small sixth forms and a rationalisation would better meet the educational needs of the students by strengthening management arrangements, improving the effective and efficient use of resources, and better ensuring a quality educational experience. A viable sixth form, both educationally and financially should, ideally, have at least 250 students; In January 2018 (source : PLASC return), Hawthorn High had 114 sixth form students attending and Pontypridd High 131, just 245 in total between the two schools. Bryncelynnog Comprehensive had 147 sixth form students at the same point in time. Numbers at Cardinal Newman have fallen from 195 in 2015 to just 80 in January 2018, a fall of almost 60%.
- The delivery of post-16 education is inefficient and for many the educational experience could be considerably better. There is still unnecessary post 16 duplication of provision between schools and colleges, choice for many learners is restricted, class sizes are too small, and secondary school surplus places in the County Borough are projected to be almost 3,500 by 2022 and over 775 in the Pontypridd area alone. This leads to valuable education funds being directed at additional staff costs and infrastructure when they would be better directed at the learners and the learner experience. Currently, across Rhondda Cynon Taf, funds amounting to over £300 per pupil that were originally provided to educate 11-16 pupils are redirected at sixth form learners, to subsidise loss making courses due to small class sizes. This amount increases to an average of over £700 per pupil across both Hawthorn and Pontypridd High Schools; at Cardinal Newman this figure is almost £800.
- Small class sizes found in many sixth forms leads to limited student interactions, which diminishes the effectiveness of learning. Across the four secondary schools, 44 post-16 courses were delivered in 2017 with less than 5 pupils per course. This poor learning experience for students is impacting on the numbers of students continuing their post 16 education in the four schools. The percentage of students opting, to stay on in their respective school, for a sixth form education in September 2017, was very low, being 31% in Cardinal Newman, 36% in Pontypridd HS, 46% in Hawthorn and 51% in Bryncelynnog. Where providers have made the greatest progress in collaborating to reduce inefficiencies and improve effectiveness, learner opportunities and student interactions increase. However, travel between providers is seen by some students as a barrier to access a wider choice of courses.
- Choice is often dependent upon learner postal code. There is no equitable post 16 options entitlement for the County Borough;
- The educational achievement and success at Key Stage 4 (in relation to the Average Capped Wider Points Score) and Key Stage 5 (in relation to the Average Wider Points Score) in the County Borough are below Welsh averages and are amongst the lowest in Wales. A step change is still required to raise the number of young people participating in education post 16 and improve the quality of learning outcomes by raising attainment, retention and progression.

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

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

Further information on this part of the proposals can be obtained in Section 2 of this document.

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

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

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

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

The School has strong leadership, which creates a vision that resonates with all phases, all staff are fully engaged and the school benefits from ‘coherence and continuity’ which assists pupils’ learning progression.

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 for more able and talented pupils;
- 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 3-16 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).

The primary aged pupils will receive the majority of their lessons in a specialist remodelled primary school building. Nevertheless, the 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 11 pupils assisting primary school pupils with their reading. This is the case in Ysgol Llanhari, the first ‘all through’ age 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. Pupil transition is important and the Council, through its 21st Century Band A programme has instigated some innovative programmes to ensure the quality of integration at Year 7 was seamless regardless of where they have received their primary experience. No pupil will be disadvantaged when they join the new school at Year 7.

Benefits of a new Welsh Medium Community Primary School

This proposal is outlined and explained in detail in Section 5 (starting on Page 56) of this document. Please refer to this section for more information on this particular proposal.

To comply with Welsh Government guidance and its initiative to create a million Welsh speakers by 2050, which includes an expectation on local authorities to promote Welsh Medium education, the Council is reviewing its Welsh Medium school provision, to ensure that evidenced demand for places is met and that wherever possible, provision is expanded and improved to encourage parents to select a Welsh Medium education for their children. The proposal is to construct a brand new, purpose built school, that will have sufficient pupil capacity to cater for the current pupils of both YGG, Pont Sion Norton and those attending the Welsh Medium stream at Heol y Celyn Primary School; this is one of the schemes being planned to assist in achieving this aim.

All local authorities in Wales now have to produce a Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP). This document indicates how the local authority intends to promote the teaching of the Welsh Language, how it intends working towards increasing the number of children taught through the medium of Welsh and how it can assist achieving the Welsh Government’s target of having one million people in Wales speaking Welsh by 2050. The WESP for RCT can be viewed and downloaded from the Council website via this link

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

Included among the list of actions and outcomes the Council will undertake to help achieve the targets set out in the WESP, by increasing the number of seven year-old children being taught through the medium of Welsh are the following:

- New and improved school buildings with appropriate capacity levels to fully meet forecasted demand for WM provision in their catchment areas
- Consideration of making dual language Primary schools in to full WM schools

This part of the overall proposal, which is to close YGG Pont Sion Norton and Heol y Celyn Primary and open a brand new school, constructed to 21st Century Schools standards and with an increased capacity of 480 pupils plus Nursery provision, which will in turn incorporate a dual language provision, will work towards the achievement of these targets in this area of the County Borough.

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

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

- Some may have a longer or a different route to school, and some may be transported to school by bus. Some children may lose their entitlement to free transport, but others could gain entitlement;
- Being in classes with predominantly their own age group, the teacher will be better able to offer the primary pupils a wider and more varied curriculum to support all learners, including the least and most able;
- The teachers and teaching assistants may be different, however, the majority of teachers and teaching assistants should be able to transfer between the schools, if they wish to do so;
- For sixth form students there will be less, probably no travelling during the school day to access the curriculum and therefore there will be greater opportunities for more unstructured/informal interaction between students and teachers during the school day. The time saved from not travelling can also be used to focus on studying or completing course work;
- There will be more competition for pupils in and outside the classroom which is what children require if they are to achieve good educational outcomes;
- Being part of a larger school creates opportunity to run school sports teams, debating team etc. The children attending the ALN Classes will also have the opportunity to engage in a wider range of curricular and extra-curricular activities.

The principal change will be an improvement in the quality of the educational provision, and this should have a significant impact on educational performance of the pupils.

Home to School Transport Provision

There is a statutory duty placed upon the local authority (LA) to provide learners with free transport to their nearest suitable school if they reside beyond safe “walking distance” to that school. The term suitable school applies to the catchment area English, Welsh or dual language mainstream school or special school/class as appropriate. The law relating to safe “walking distance” is defined as two miles for learners of compulsory school age receiving primary education and three miles for learners of compulsory school age receiving secondary education.

Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council has exercised the discretionary powers afforded to it under the provisions of the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008 to make a more generous provision to learners as set out below:

- The eligibility criterion for walking distance for learners receiving compulsory primary education at their nearest suitable school has been set at 1½ miles, instead of 2 miles as required by the Measure;
- Free transport to their nearest suitable school, where places are available, is provided to children who meet the 1½ mile eligibility criterion from the start of the Foundation Phase (the start of the school term after their third birthday), rather than from the start of compulsory education (the start of the school term after their fifth birthday) as required by the Measure.
- The eligibility criterion for walking distance for learners receiving compulsory secondary education at their nearest suitable school has been set at 2 miles instead of 3 miles as required by the Measure.
- Free transport is provided to post 16 learners who meet the 2 mile eligibility criterion for two years after the end of compulsory education, rather than until the end of compulsory education as required by the Measure. This provision applies to full time attendance at the nearest school or college to the learner’s home at which the approved course of study that they wish to pursue is offered.
- Free transport to their nearest suitable school is provided to learners (as set out above) in accordance with their preferred religious denomination.
- The term suitable school applies to the catchment area English, Welsh, dual language or voluntary aided (faith) mainstream school or special school/class as appropriate.

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

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

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

1. have a flying start in life;
2. have a comprehensive range of education and learning opportunities;
3. enjoy the best possible health and are free from abuse, victimisation and exploitation;
4. have access to play, leisure, sporting and cultural activities;
5. are listened to, treated with respect, and have their race and cultural identity recognised;
6. have a safe home and a community which supports physical and emotional wellbeing;
7. are not disadvantaged by poverty.

We consider that this proposal benefits the children in the Pontypridd community 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 the English Medium school changes in Hawthorn and Pontypridd, and for the creation of the new Welsh Medium Primary School, all the schools involved in the proposals will close and new schools will be opened with a new governing body. Should the proposals proceed, the new 3-16 schools for Hawthorn and Pontypridd and the new Welsh Medium Primary School will need to appoint temporary governing bodies for the interim period until the new schools open. These temporary governing bodies will be responsible for establishing the schools, agreeing new staff structures and undertaking the appointment process for all the staffing posts.

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

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

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

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

What are the disadvantages of the proposals?

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 proposals and how these risks can be managed by the Council and the schools are as follows:

Disadvantages	Risk Management
Sixth form students will be required to travel further for sixth form provision.	Sixth form students already study courses at alternative establishments as part of the Taff Ely Post 16 Consortium of schools and have to travel at the beginning, middle or at the end of the school day.
There will be increased costs of home to school transport	The increased costs of transport due to the need to transfer post-16 students to the new centres will be significantly less than the cost of continuing the inefficient post 16 provision in the two secondary schools. Additional transport provision will also need to be considered for YGG Pont Sion Norton pupils if the distance they will have to walk to the relocated school exceeds 1.5 miles.
Some parents may prefer to send their child to two or three schools rather than to one all through school. 3-16 schools are a new concept of education provision to many parents and there may be concerns.	Factors such as the appeal of a modern 21st Century School 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 respective governing bodies 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

The current position is that we have too many schools, too many schools with small sixth forms, too many surplus places, and too many schools housed in Victorian or CLASP construction buildings that are expensive to maintain, with limited specialist and outdoor facilities, all of which result in educational standards being too low and limited financial resources not being used efficiently and effectively.

The options available to the Council to improve educational performance and ensure the provision represents value for money are as follows:

Options	Advantages	Disadvantages
(i) - Retain the status quo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not address the need to reduce the high number of surplus places in accordance with Welsh Government requirements; • Does not address the need to improve the school buildings to meet 21st Century School standards; • Financially unviable in the future due to the high on-going maintenance costs of the school building estate; • Post 16 funding is insufficient to support the post 16 curriculum offered in the 3 secondary schools which further drains resources that should be spent on 11-16 aged pupils; • Educational performance continues to be at best adequate in some schools.
(ii) – Federate groups of schools, maintain the school buildings but with fewer headteachers and governing bodies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education provision would continue on each school site; • Opportunities for sharing staff expertise and good practice; • Minimum disruption to pupils, parents and staff; • No impact on home to school transport. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not address the need to reduce the high number of surplus places in accordance with Welsh Government requirements; • Does not address the need to improve the school buildings to meet 21st Century School standards; • Financially unviable in the future due to the high on-going maintenance costs of the school building estate; • Post 16 funding is insufficient to support the post 16 curriculum offered in the 3 secondary schools which further drains resources that should be spent on 11-16 aged pupils; • Post 16 provision will continue to be limited in the 3 schools.

Options	Advantages	Disadvantages
<p>(iii) – Further development of the Taff Ely post 16 Consortium working through greater collaboration between schools and the Further Education College, including better use of video conferencing facilities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education provision would continue on each school site; • No capital investment required by the Council; • No disruption to the pupils, parents and the staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timetabling highly difficult- possible permutations may arise whereby a pupil might study 3 or more subjects on 3 or more sites; • Increased transportation of learners during the school day, which is difficult to manage and a poor experience for the pupils; • Post 16 funding does not pay for travel between school sites. As a result, the travel is paid for by resources allocated to 11-16 provision; • Limited personal, social and educational interaction between the pupil cohorts.
<p>(iv) - Retain the secondary school sixth forms but close one of the secondary schools.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removes a significant number of surplus places; • Increases the size of other secondary schools and other sixth forms; • Increases the educational and financial viability of the secondary schools and the sixth form provision. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post 16 funding is still insufficient to support post 16 curriculum offered in the remaining secondary schools which further drains resources that should be spent on 11-16 aged pupils; • Post 16 provision will continue to be limited. • Significantly increases the home to school transport costs; • Insufficient savings generated to invest in new buildings to accommodate additional pupils with improved facilities; • Issues with high surplus places, high maintenance costs and unsuitable school buildings in the primary sector not addressed.

Options	Advantages	Disadvantages
<p>(v) – Model being proposed for the Welsh medium primary provision in the area – Merge the primary schools onto existing or new sites, refurbishing existing or building new primary schools.</p> <p>This could include building new primary schools on the sites of secondary schools but the primary schools would be under the control of a separate governing body.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removes a significant number of surplus places; • Increases the size of some primary schools; • Increases the educational and financial viability of the primary schools. • Given there are only 4 Welsh medium secondary schools across Rhondda Cynon Taf, it is not feasible to develop a 3-16 or 3-18 Welsh medium school for Pontypridd, and this option offers the best local solution. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited space in some communities to build new primary schools or to expand existing schools; • Issues with high surplus places, high maintenance costs and unsuitable school buildings in the secondary sector not addressed; • The educational and financial viability of the school sixth forms is not addressed.
<p>(vi) – (iv) & (v) above combined</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removes a significant number of surplus places; • Increases the size of other primary and secondary schools and other sixth forms; • Increases the educational and financial viability of the primary schools, secondary schools and the sixth form provision 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The educational and financial viability of the school sixth forms is not fully addressed; • Significantly increases the home to school transport costs; • Insufficient savings generated to invest in new buildings to accommodate additional pupils with improved facilities.

Options	Advantages	Disadvantages
<p>(vii) – Model being Proposed for the English medium schools –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop post 16 centres of excellence at Bryncelynnog Comprehensive, Beddau and Coleg y Cymoedd, Nantgarw with Roman Catholic faith based provision available at St David’s College, Cardiff; • Create two new 3-16 schools; • Improve the learning environment for pupils who require Welsh Medium education • Revise English Medium catchment areas to utilise surplus capacity that currently exists. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removes a significant number of surplus places; • Increases the size of sixth form provision and included primary schools • Retains local schools in the community; • Increases the educational and financial viability of the primary schools, secondary schools, the sixth form provision and the College; • Enables the primary and secondary pupils to share specialist facilities, such as sporting facilities; • Improves the transition between KS2 and 3; • Better enables schools to provide an appropriate curriculum to all pupils; • Financially the most cost effective approach and enables the Council to fund its proportion of the investment required; • Minimises the increase in home to school transport costs in some cases. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3-16 schools are a new concept in Rhondda Cynon Taf, and parents will have concerns; • Many sixth form students will have further to travel to access the provision; • Amending catchment areas may not be popular with parents who have an affinity with the school that has served their area in the past; • Increases the home to school transport costs in some cases.

For the changes to the English medium provision options (i) – (vi) above have been considered by the Council and have been discounted and the preferred option, (vii), is that proposed in this consultation document.

For the changes to the Welsh medium provision options (i) – (iv) and (vi) – (vii) have been considered by the Council and have been discounted and the preferred option, (v), is that proposed in this consultation document.

Community, Equality and Welsh Language Impact Assessments

As set out in the Welsh Government School Organisation Code, it is a requirement to publish Community Impact, Welsh Language Impact and Equality Impact Assessments. These have been produced as separate documents and are available on the Council’s website. 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 in the new provisions and hopefully enhanced and extended.

The Timetable for the proposed changes

Project	Indicative Start Date	Indicative Completion Date
Hawthorn 3-16 all through school	September 2020	September 2022
Pontypridd 3-16 all through school	September 2020	September 2022
Cardinal Newman 11 – 16 School (no 6th form)	September 2021	September 2022
New Welsh Medium Community Primary School	September 2020	September 2022

Admissions Arrangements

Admissions to all schools, for pupils aged between 3 – 16, outlined in this document 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, with Coleg Y Cymoedd and St David's College, Cardiff managing their own post 16 admissions. All schools included in these proposals are Community schools, maintained by Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council, except for Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School, which is a voluntary aided school.

Admission numbers for the proposed new schools will be calculated and published once the design and planning work for the buildings is completed. 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 schools included in these proposals.

Land and Buildings

If the proposals outlined in this document are implemented, there will be some redundant school sites and buildings. As this is an initial consultation process, no decisions have yet been made in respect of the future of these sites and buildings. This issue will be managed in accordance with the agreed Council Policy on Surplus Land and Buildings.

Accommodation

It must be stressed that this is a consultation process and that all design and planning work for the new school buildings is at an early stage of development. However, all works planned are included as part of the Council's 21st Century Schools proposals and any work undertaken, whether this is new build accommodation or refurbishment/remodelling of existing school buildings will be of a high quality, with flexible and sustainable learning environments fully conforming and complying with the standards outlined by Welsh Government for 21st Century Schools.

SECTION 2

The Proposed Changes to Sixth Form Provision

Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council proposes to:

- Develop post 16 centres of excellence based at Beddau and Nantgarw. For those students who opt for a Roman Catholic education, provision will be available at St David's College, Cardiff;
- Create two new 3-16 schools, in Pontypridd and Hawthorn, which will take a radically different approach to education in the areas, by sharing both primary and secondary sector resources;
- Amend the catchment areas of Pontypridd High, Hawthorn High and Bryncelynnog Comprehensive Schools to better meet and match the demand for school places.

To achieve this, the proposal is to:

- Close the sixth forms of Hawthorn High School, Pontypridd High School and Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School and transfer the post-16 provision to Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School or Coleg y Cymoedd, Nantgarw. For those students who opt for a Roman Catholic education, sixth form provision will be available at St David's College, Cardiff;
- Close Pontypridd High School and Cilfynydd Primary School and create a new 3-16 'all through' school on the site of the current Pontypridd High School;
- Close Hawthorn High School, Hawthorn Primary School and Heol-Y-Celyn Primary School and create a new 3-16 'all through' school on the site of the current Hawthorn High and Hawthorn Primary Schools.

This proposal will create a school based sixth form at Bryncelynnog of over 350 students (this will depend on student choice) and further enhance the sixth form and vocational offer at Coleg Y Cymoedd's Nantgarw Campus that already has 350 post 16 students studying traditional A Level subjects and over 1,000 post 16 students studying vocational subjects.

To achieve this change the Council is proposing to invest £ 26.7m across this element of the programme, an estimated breakdown is indicated below:

- £10m at Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School to improve the sixth form facilities and other infrastructure;
- £12m to improve the buildings at Hawthorn High and Hawthorn Primary Schools to ensure they meet the learning and safeguarding requirements of a 3-16 school;
- £4.7m to improve the buildings at Pontypridd High School to ensure they meet the learning and safeguarding requirements of a 3-16 school.

Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School's Sixth Form admission criteria states that access to the sixth form is open to all children of any faith or religion and it is not exclusive to the Christian Faith. For those students who opt for a Roman Catholic education, sixth form provision will be available at St David's College, Cardiff.

Background to the Proposed Post 16 Changes

Since 2009, the Council has been exploring ways to improve post 16 provision with the secondary schools, the FE College and Welsh Government, in a financial climate of decreasing post 16 funding and falling pupil numbers. In September 2011 the Council's Cabinet agreed a way forward which was accepted by the secondary schools that sought to:

- Improve the quality of provision;
- Improve the education outcomes; and
- Be financially viable.

Over the following three years, action was taken to:

- Enhance the 14-19 post 16 consortia of schools, by consolidating the consortia, from 5 to 4 from September 2012. The Welsh medium schools remained as a separate consortium, but only due to the geographical difficulties of sharing minority subjects/courses;
- All the post 16 funding, including the 14-19 Grant, was delegated to each school and/or consortium, with specific targets being set and agreed between the parties;
- Each consortium had a separate governance structure, with a consortium manager;
- The consortium governors were encouraged to determine the curriculum offer and where the curriculum is delivered;
- Ensure the quality of provision is of paramount importance. Schools in each consortium will only be able to offer sixth form provision for those subjects where the quality of teaching and learning is high;
- Specialist vocational provision was to be provided by FE Colleges.

Progress was made in delivering these actions, however with further decreasing student numbers and post 16 funding from Welsh Government, the issues of quality and financial viability of the post 16 provision remain.

As a result, despite the best efforts of the headteachers, schools and the Council:

- There are too many small sixth forms and a rationalisation would better meet the educational needs of the students by strengthening management arrangements, improving the effective and efficient use of resources, and better ensuring a quality educational experience. Other than Coleg Y Cymoedd, none of the sixth form provisions in the Pontypridd area have more than 250 pupils, and have not done so for many years;
- The delivery of post 16 education is inefficient and for many the educational experience could be considerably better. There is still unnecessary post 16 duplication of provision between schools and colleges, choice for many learners is restricted, class sizes are too small, and secondary school surplus places in the three secondary schools considered within this proposal are projected to be over 950 by 2019. This leads to valuable education funds being directed at additional staff costs and infrastructure when they would be better directed at the learners and the learner experience. Currently, across Rhondda Cynon Taf funding amounting to £300 per pupil that was originally provided to educate 11-16 aged pupils is being redirected at sixth form learners, to subsidise loss making courses due to small class sizes. This amount increases to an average of £700 per pupil in Hawthorn and Pontypridd High Schools and almost £800 in Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School;
- Small class sizes found in many sixth forms leads to limited student interactions, which diminishes the effectiveness of learning. Where providers have made the greatest progress in collaborating to reduce inefficiencies and improve effectiveness, learner opportunities and student interactions increase. However, travel between providers is seen by some students as a barrier to access a wider choice of courses.
- Choice is often dependent upon learner postal code. There is no equitable post 16 options entitlement across the County Borough;

- The educational achievement and success at Key Stage 5 (in relation to the Average Wider Points Score) in the County Borough is well below Welsh averages and among the lowest in Wales. A step change is still required to raise the number of young people participating in education post 16 and improve the quality of learning outcomes by raising attainment, retention and progression.
- In 2017, in all 3 of the secondary schools included in this proposal, less than 60 students were entered for 2 or more A Levels or equivalent. Providing an educationally and financially viable curriculum in the three of the four schools is evidently not possible.

In 2014, the Council's Cabinet recognised that the financial position for post 16 provision had significantly worsened and, if the provision was left unchanged, the foreseeable future looked bleak. Therefore, the Council began a rationalisation of post-16 provision, starting with the post-16 provision in the Rhondda Valleys and Tonyrefail. In September 2018 the post 16 changes to the schools in the area were fully implemented, with three sixth forms closing, and only two of the five secondary schools in the area providing post 16 provision. These changes were made to ensure the schools and college provide a suitable and viable post 16 curriculum offer that meets the needs of the students, the local community and the needs of employers.

In the East Taf Ely area of the County Borough, the sixth form position has deteriorated since 2014. Despite two of the three schools collaborating on sixth form provision, the class sizes are too small and uneconomic, particularly when you consider that a Key Stage 5 class requires 18 pupils per teacher to break even. As a result, the small sixth form class sizes, are financially subsidised by funding allocated to the pupils in Key Stages 3 & 4.

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	Jan 2014	Jan 2015	Jan 2016	Jan 2017	Jan 2018	% Surplus Jan 2018
Bryncelynnog Comprehensive	Secondary	11-19	1442	1034	1046	1044	1088	1126	21.9%
Cardinal Newman RC	Secondary	11-19	957	732	761	777	790	770	19.5%
Hawthorn High	Secondary	11-19	1098	856	816	755	729	736	32.9%
Pontypridd High	Secondary	11-19	1338	1003	1031	967	945	910	31.9%

The sixth form numbers are shown below.

School	Jan 2014	Jan 2015	Jan 2016	Jan 2017	Jan 2018
Bryncelynnog Comprehensive	196	170	153	135	147
Cardinal Newman RC	174	199	191	153	80
Hawthorn High	168	136	111	115	114
Pontypridd High	124	150	139	133	131
Total	662	655	594	536	472

Pupil projections

Over the next five years the pupil projections for the four 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	Jan 2019	Jan 2020	Jan 2021	Jan 2022	Jan 2023	% Surplus Jan 2023
Bryncelynnog Comprehensive	1442	1146	1174	1200	1224	1236	14.3%
Cardinal Newman RC	957	802	841	884	914	913	4.6%
Hawthorn High	1098	746	742	756	754	775	29.4%
Pontypridd High	1338	863	880	884	904	936	46.6%

The sixth form projections are as follows.

School	Jan 2019	Jan 2020	Jan 2021	Jan 2022	Jan 2023
Bryncelynnog Comprehensive	152	167	174	172	178
Cardinal Newman RC	65	70	73	83	93
Hawthorn High	98	107	100	92	105
Pontypridd High	111	112	112	108	105
Total	426	456	459	455	481

Schools manage their own admissions for sixth form provision and determine the entry criteria. The Council sets the catchment areas for the sixth form provision in order to determine which students will be eligible for home to school transport. As is the case at present, students have the choice of continuing to study in their catchment sixth form or studying at Coleg Y Cymoedd that offers a wide academic and vocational curriculum. If the proposal was to be implemented in the future and students that would have ordinarily opted for their catchment sixth form school, and not opted for the FE provision, the three year forecasts from the first year of the new sixth form provision will be as follows.

School	Jan 2023	Jan 2024	Jan 2025
Bryncelynnog Sixth Form	388	408	428

The 11-16 forecasts for the first year of the new school provision will be as follows:

School	Jan 2023
Bryncelynnog Comprehensive	1058
Cardinal Newman RC	820
Hawthorn High	670
Pontypridd High	831

Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School would be an 11-16 school and will have 80 surplus spaces. Some of the school buildings could be removed to reduce the surplus or the Archdiocese of Cardiff could use the space to develop or transfer primary school provision on the site.

Current condition of the existing schools

Property condition information on all school buildings is held by the Council, this information is regularly updated to reflect any changes or improvements to the buildings and reported to Welsh Government each year. The overall condition ratings of the school buildings are as follows:

School	Building Condition Survey Result	Suitability Survey Result
Bryncelynnog Comprehensive	C+	B
Cardinal Newman RC	C-	B
Hawthorn High	C-	B
Pontypridd High	C+	B

Quality and standards

As part of a national programme of school inspection, Estyn inspects all schools and further education colleges in Wales. A comparison between the quality and diversity of education provided at the four secondary schools and at Coleg Y Cymoedd during their last inspections is as follows:

School	Date Inspected	Judgement – Current Performance	Judgement – Prospects for Improvement
Bryncelynnog Comprehensive	February 2016	Adequate	Good
Hawthorn High	March 2014	Adequate	Good
Pontypridd High	January 2014	Adequate	Good
Coleg Y Cymoedd	November 2017	Adequate	Good

Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School was inspected in May 2018 under the revised framework, the outcome of the inspection is summarised below:

Inspection Area	Judgement
Standards	Good
Wellbeing and attitudes to learning	Good
Teaching and learning experiences	Good
Care, support and guidance	Good
Leadership and management	Good

As a result of receiving 'adequate' ratings, Bryncelynnog Comprehensive, Hawthorn and Pontypridd High Schools were placed in the category of requiring monitoring by Estyn following inspection. Following Estyn follow up procedures, Bryncelynnog Comprehensive, Hawthorn and Pontypridd High Schools were all deemed to have made sufficient improvement and were removed from the list of schools requiring Estyn monitoring in November 2016, October 2015 and November 2016 respectively.

Coleg Y Cymoedd despite receiving an adequate grading for performance was not placed in a category requiring Estyn monitoring. St David's College, Cardiff was last inspected in 2010 under the former inspection methodology and its overall performance was judged as excellent with excellent prospects for improvement.

Since 2014, schools have been categorised according to a four-point 'traffic light' system, (green, yellow, amber and red) with a 'green' school having the highest rating and a 'red' school the lowest. This National Schools Categorisation System introduced by the Welsh Government provides a systematic view of a school's Foundation Phase to Key Stage 4 performance as appropriate, based on publicly available data and the school's own self-evaluation in respect of leadership, learning and teaching. The aim of this system is to determine the level of support a school requires to support it to improve. The National Schools Categorisation does not take into account Post 16 provision and its respective examination outcomes.

Bryncelynnog Comprehensive, Hawthorn High and Pontypridd High Schools have been categorised as **yellow** schools. This defines them as 'effective, already doing well, know the areas needed to improve, and by identifying the right support and taking action have the potential to do even better'. Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School has been categorised as a **green** school.

FE Colleges are not subject to categorisation.

Key Stage 5 Outcomes

The table below sets out the performance of the sixth form pupils over the past four years for each of the main qualifications undertaken in KS5.

School	2014				2015			
	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
Bryncelynnog Comprehensive	83	71	97.2	663.9	80	72	98.6	670.2
Cardinal Newman RC	40	35	91.4	804.2	87	79	96.2	832.4
Hawthorn High	71	65	89.23	758.5	60	57	98.25	772.7
Pontypridd High	40	39	87.18	820.1	66	63	95.24	856.8

School	2016				2017			
	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
Bryncelynnog Comprehensive	63	58	100	823.8	54	53	94.3	787.5
Cardinal Newman RC	79	75	98.7	812.1	74	68	95.6	774.8
Hawthorn High	47	42	97.62	772.3	48	Not available	100	739.9
Pontypridd High	52	51	100	928.4	57	Not available	100	820.9

The Level Three Threshold is achieved by pupils through passing the equivalent of two or more A Levels and this includes BTEC qualifications.

Of those sixth form students who studied A Levels, the examination performance over the past three years is set out below: Source - All Wales Core Data Sets

School	% A* to E grades at A Level			% A* to C grades at A Level			% A* and A grades at A Level		
	2015	2016	2017	2015	2016	2017	2015	2016	2017
Hawthorn High	98.2	97.6	100	59.6	61.9	41.7	1.8	0	2.1
Pontypridd High	95.2	100	100	68.3	64.7	42.6	3.2	5.9	5.6
Cardinal Newman	96.2	98.7	95.6	73.4	68	58.8	3.8	2.7	4.4
Bryncelynnog	98.6	100	94.3	34.7	67.2	52.8	5.6	8.8	18.9
Highest performing RCT	100	100	100	74.2	89.5	76.9	5.6	9.2	18.9
Lowest performing RCT	89.2	92.2	86	27	40.2	16.3	0	0	0
RCT average	97	97	96.3	57.9	65.2	45.1	3.1	4	5.5
Welsh average	97	98	97.1	68.1	70.6	54.7	7.9	6.7	10.5

The tables above do not contain information in respect of Coleg Y Cymoedd or St David's College, Cardiff as the current arrangements for measuring performance in sixth forms and in further education colleges are entirely separate. They are derived from different data systems, which means that Welsh Government, Estyn, or individual organisations are unable to measure outcomes in a meaningful way across learning settings. As a result, learners and parents do not have access to transparent information to inform their choices. Welsh Government recognises this and in January 2018 committed to developing a set of consistent measures for further education institutions and sixth forms to enable them to publish headline and provider level information on an annual basis.

Financial Information

Sixth forms and all post 16 provision are funded directly from Welsh Government based on the mix and type of qualifications being studied by each student. The more subjects a student studies the greater the funding. For a school to ensure that its sixth form funding covers the costs of delivering the respective subject, it requires an average of 18 students per the course provided.

If you consider that most schools provide greater than 12 A Level courses, most students would be expected to enter 2 A Levels, and a minimum number of students in each subject should be at least 18, you would need at least 90 students in each year group. All the schools were significantly below this figure and it is evident that class sizes are very small, and inefficient.

The table below shows that there are insufficient students opting for post 16 provision in each school.

School	Post 16 students on roll (September)			Number of A Level courses offered			Number of courses with 5 or fewer students		
	2015	2016	2017	2015	2016	2017	2015	2016	2017
Bryncelynnog	162	142	150	18	20	16	8	9	8
Cardinal Newman	195	154	78	24	20	22	13	8	11
Hawthorn High	119	118	123	17	19	19	10	13	14
Pontypridd High	141	134	135	20	23	20	9	15	11

The table also shows that student numbers are falling with students choosing alternative provision at Coleg Y Cymoedd or one of the other neighbouring FE colleges which provide a wider post 16 offer and by having greater numbers, offer a different student experience. This in turn has had a significant impact on the finances of three of the four schools as illustrated in the table below.

School	Average Class Sizes, A Level courses (rounded to nearest whole number)			Cross-phase subsidisation per 6th form pupil	Current budget deficit	Projected budget deficit
	2015	2016	2017	April 2017	April 2018	April 2019
Hawthorn High	5	5	4	£680	£400k	£415k
Pontypridd High	7	6	6	£790	£520k	£518k
Cardinal Newman	6	9	7	£799	£324k	£707k
Bryncelynnog	8	8	6	£776	£215k surplus	£104k surplus

If the proposal was to proceed, the post 16 funding would be removed from Cardinal Newman RC, Hawthorn and Pontypridd secondary schools. Revised funding would be provided to the sixth form in Bryncelynnog and Coleg Y Cymoedd or any other post 16 provider according to the Programmes of Study being undertaken by the students.

Proposed Changes to the Catchment Areas

Secondary schools are responsible for admissions to their sixth forms and can accept students from across the County Borough. However, the Council applies notional catchment areas for post 16 provision for the purpose of managing home to school transport. Students that attend sixth form outside their catchment area are not eligible for home to school transport unless the Programme of Study of their choice is not available in the catchment school. For example, some students travel to Bridgend College to study Agricultural Studies which is not available locally and the Council provides suitable transport.

If these proposals are agreed, we would amend the catchment areas of both Pontypridd and Hawthorn High Schools for post 16 provision, to place these areas in the sixth form catchment area of Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School, Beddau. Bryncelynnog is located just over 5 miles from Hawthorn High and 6 miles from Pontypridd High. The post - 16 facilities of Bryncelynnog would be improved and upgraded as part of these proposals.

Students from Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School, Hawthorn High School and Pontypridd High School will have the option of attending another school's sixth form provision of their choice, or the local college, Coleg y Cymoedd, Nantgarw, for their post 16 education. Pupils who wish to continue their post 16 education through the Catholic faith could choose to attend St David's 6th Form College, Cardiff. The Council will provide free transportation to the nearest provision that offers the chosen selection of courses for RCT-resident students, providing that they meet the initial qualifying distance criteria of residing more than 2 miles from their provision of choice.

It is proposed that the 11-16 catchment areas will also change. The changes all directly relate to the new 3-16 School at Hawthorn which will:

- Include the catchment area of Gwauncelyn Primary School, Tonteg (which is currently in the catchment area of Bryncelynnog Comprehensive).
- Exclude the Graig area of Pontypridd that is in the catchment area of Maesycoed Primary School, which will be included in the catchment area of the new Pontypridd 11-16 school. Currently 91% of the 11-16 aged pupils in this area choose to go to Pontypridd High School;
- Exclude the catchment area of Coedpenmaen Primary School, which will be included in the catchment area of the new Pontypridd 11-16 school. Currently 54% of the 11-16 aged pupils in the area choose to go to Hawthorn High School and 46% choose Pontypridd High School. With surplus places in both new 3-16 schools for the foreseeable future, the choice of both schools will remain for pupils and parents.

These adjustments are being made to the catchment areas of pupils aged 11-16 to match the demand for places with the available supply across the secondary school provision in East Taf Ely. The additional demand for places is driven by housing development in the south east of the County Borough.

The timetable for the Sixth Form changes and the management of the transition

In September 2022 it is proposed that the sixth forms of Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School, Hawthorn High School and Pontypridd High School will close. Prior to September 2022, the Council will ensure that the Year 12 students, who will be most affected by the change, will be undertaking Programmes of Study that will be continued in the new sixth forms. This approach has been adopted by the Council recently in the Rhondda Valleys and Tonyrefail, where three sixth forms closed and two sixth forms extended.

SECTION 3

The proposed changes to primary and secondary school provision in Hawthorn

Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council proposes to:

- Close Hawthorn High School sixth form and transfer the post-16 provision to either Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School or Coleg y Cymoedd, Nantgarw, dependent on student choice. The catchment area school for sixth form provision will be Bryncelynnog;
- Close Hawthorn High School, Hawthorn Primary School and Heol-Y-Celyn Primary School and create a new 3-16 'all through' school on the adjoining sites of the current Hawthorn High and Hawthorn Primary Schools. In respect of Heol-Y-Celyn Primary School, which is a dual language provision, only the pupils that are educated through the medium of English will transfer to the 3 – 16 school; those pupils that are educated through the medium of Welsh will transfer the new Welsh Medium Primary school that will be constructed on the current Heol y Celyn site. Details of this particular proposal can be found in Section 5 of this document;
- Provide a 1,260 capacity 3-16 School for Hawthorn, for 540 pupils aged 3-11 (including Nursery provision) and 720 pupils aged 11-16; the local authority designated ALN class will also be accommodated in the new school.

To achieve this change the Council is proposing to invest £12m to improve the buildings at Hawthorn High and Hawthorn Primary to ensure they meet the learning and safeguarding requirements of a 3-16 school.

The investment will also include a review of the safe routes to school, and improvements to walkways, road crossings and road speed management measures will be made to ensure the required safety standards are met. This is the approach we have implemented in other communities in earlier school reorganisation proposals with significant improvements being made to safe routes to schools.

What are the reasons for the proposed changes?

Across Wales there is a recognition that whilst educational standards have improved, when compared internationally they are still too low and need to be improved and quickly. In this environment of rapid change and increasing pressures on schools and local authorities to improve learning standards, the sustainability and performance of the present educational provision in Rhondda Cynon Taf is being challenged and reviewed.

The Welsh Government sets the overall policy and legislative framework for school organisation however, local authorities have a responsibility for the planning and management of school places and must secure efficient and effective provision so as to focus resources on improving educational outcomes for young people.

The Council has been considering the way forward for education in the County Borough and in Hawthorn for some time and the reasons for change are both educational and financial:

- Hawthorn High has 362 (32.9%) surplus places and this is not forecast to change significantly over the next 5 years;
- The costs of providing the sixth form provision in Hawthorn High are very high, with an average of only 9.25 pupils per class (Post 16 - Level 3 courses), including those classes shared with other schools;
- The small sixth form classes are partially funded by the financial resources which were intended and should be made available to pupils in Key Stage 3 (11-14 years old) and Key Stage 4 (14-16 years old). This has an adverse impact on the quality of the education provision for Key Stage 3 and 4 pupils;

- A further consequence of the financially inefficient sixth form is that Hawthorn High School has a financial deficit in excess of £400,000;
- Hawthorn Primary School is currently operating almost at full capacity and has very few surplus places, there is no opportunity to expand the accommodation on its existing site. This proposal will allow the use of surplus accommodation in the Secondary school that is located next door to the Primary to cater for the demand in Primary age places;
- Heol-Y-Celyn Primary School has 72 surplus places, equating to 18.5% of its total capacity. It must also be noted that 97 children resident in the Heol-Y-Celyn catchment currently attend Hawthorn Primary School due to parental choice; this large number of out-catchment pupils represents almost 40% of the total pupil population of Hawthorn Primary and demonstrates that parents in this area are already choosing to send their children to Hawthorn instead of their designated catchment school;
- The two buildings that comprise Heol-Y-Celyn Primary are 1960's CLASP constructions, which consist of steel frames, concrete sectional walls and flat felt roofs. Both buildings are in a relatively poor condition overall and have reached the end of their useful life.

Background to the proposal

Information on the Schools

The schools included within the proposal and the pupil numbers over the past four years are shown below. The pupil numbers are obtained from the statutory annual pupil count (PLASC) which must be undertaken in January each year. The numbers shown exclude nursery age pupils, as we are required to exclude these from the table by the Welsh Government's Statutory School Organisation Code, however we have shown the nursery numbers separately. The data for Heol-Y-Celyn is that for the English Medium element of the school only, that will transfer to this 3 – 16 school; the Welsh medium pupils will transfer to the new proposed Welsh Medium Primary school. Total capacity of the school is 388 pupils, the current percentage 'split' of pupils attending this school is 69% English: 31% Welsh (218 English medium pupils and 98 Welsh), capacity has been split using the same percentages.

School	Type of School	Age Range	School Capacity	Jan 2014	Jan 2015	Jan 2016	Jan 2017	Jan 2018	% Surplus Jan 2018
Hawthorn Primary	Primary	3 - 11	240	221	223	238	240	224	6.6
Heol-Y-Celyn Primary (English Dept)	Primary	3 - 11	268	183	187	184	200	218	18.5
Hawthorn High	Secondary	11 - 19	1098	856	816	755	729	736	32.9

Nursery numbers (total numbers of pupils attending):

School	Jan 2014	Jan 2015	Jan 2016	Jan 2017	Jan 2018
Hawthorn Primary	28	30	36	31	23
Heol-Y-Celyn Primary (English Dept)	30	34	42	46	35

Pupil projections

Over the next five years the pupil projections for the three 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 and average birth rates. It is important to note that this cannot take account of any unforeseen deviations in local trends.

School	School capacity (excluding nursery)	Jan 2019	Jan 2020	Jan 2021	Jan 2022	Jan 2023	% surplus in Jan 2023
Hawthorn Primary	240	215	206	200	198	194	19.2
Heol-Y-Celyn Primary	268	226	238	254	259	262	2.2
Hawthorn High							
11-19 – No.	1098	746	742	756	754	775	29.4
11-16 – No.	983	648	635	656	662	670	31.8

If the proposal was to be implemented in the future and parents/carers choose to transfer their children to the new Hawthorn 3-16 School the forecast for the first year for the new school will be as follows:

School 3-16	School capacity (excluding nursery)	Jan 2022	Surplus in Jan 2022
Primary 3-11	480	430	50
Secondary 11-16	720	636	84
Total	1200	1066	134

Proposed Primary Education provision

The plans for the new 3-16 school are at RIBA stage 0, site feasibility studies have been completed and detailed briefs will be worked up in collaboration with the pupils, Governing Body and staff of the schools. It is anticipated that the early years and Foundation Phase pupils will be accommodated in the existing primary school, with Key Stage 2 pupils being accommodated, with Key Stage 3 pupils in the adjacent classroom extension block, which will be refurbished and remodelled together with separate and segregated outdoor play facilities. The Key Stage 3 and 4 sections of the school will be remodelled and refurbished to provide modern 21st Century classrooms, which will future proof the learning environment for the new curriculum for Wales, as described on pages 8 to 9 of this document.

The dedicated ALN provision (KS3) currently accommodated at Hawthorn High School shall transfer to the new school, with consideration being given to ensure flexibility of accommodation, to allow possible expansion of this provision in the future if there is recognised demand. The Council is currently undertaking a separate consultation exercise on the proposed closure of the two ALN classes at Heol Y Celyn Primary, due to a fall in the number of pupils attending the two classes – of the 20 places available at the school, only 1 pupil is currently in attendance. If these proposals are agreed, there will be no dedicated ALN provision at the new school for pupils of either Foundation Phase, or KS2 age.

The primary age pupils will also have supervised and timetabled access to share the specialist resources and facilities available in the secondary school, including the astro turf pitch, new sports hall, playing fields, swimming pool, drama facilities, and science and technology areas.

Current condition of the existing schools

Property condition information on all school buildings is held by the Council, this information is regularly updated to reflect any changes or improvements to the buildings and reported to Welsh Government each year. The overall condition ratings of the school buildings are as follows:

School	Building Condition Survey Result	Suitability Survey Result
Hawthorn Primary	B	A
Heol-Y-Celyn Primary	B	B
Hawthorn High	C-	B

Quality and standards

As part of a national programme of school inspection, Estyn inspects all schools in Wales, a comparison between the quality and diversity of education provided at the three schools during their last inspections is as follows.

School	Date Inspected	Judgement – Current Performance	Judgement – Prospects for Improvement
Hawthorn Primary	January 2012	Adequate	Good
Heol-Y-Celyn Primary	June 2014	Adequate	Adequate
Hawthorn High	March 2014	Adequate	Good

As a result of receiving ‘adequate’ ratings, all three schools were placed in the category of requiring monitoring by Estyn following inspection. Following further Estyn inspection, Hawthorn Primary School and Hawthorn High School were both deemed to have made sufficient improvement and were removed from the list of schools requiring Estyn monitoring in April 2013 and October 2015 respectively.

Heol-Y-Celyn Primary School was re-inspected in November 2015 and found not to have sufficiently improved; it was, as a consequence, placed by Estyn in the category of requiring significant improvement. Following further inspection in January 2017, the school was deemed to have made sufficient progress and was duly removed from the list of schools requiring Estyn monitoring.

Since 2014, schools have been categorised according to a four-point ‘traffic light’ system, (green, yellow, amber and red) with a ‘green’ school having the highest rating and a ‘red’ school the lowest. This National Schools Categorisation System introduced by the Welsh Government provides a systematic view of a school’s performance, based on publicly available data and the school’s own self-evaluation in respect of leadership, learning and teaching. The aim of this system is to determine the level of support a school requires to support it to improve.

Hawthorn High School and Hawthorn Primary School are both currently categorised as **yellow** schools. This defines them as ‘effective, already doing well, know the areas needed to improve, and by identifying the right support and taking action have the potential to do even better’.

Heol-Y-Celyn Primary School is also currently categorised as a **yellow** school, having previously been red and then amber.

Information and data relating to YGG Pont Sion Norton can be found in Section 5 of this document.

Primary School Standards

The tables below set out the performance of the two primary schools for the key measures of educational performance over the past three years and compare the schools to similar schools across Wales based on free school meals. Data for Heol-Y-Celyn is for pupils attending the English department only:

Foundation Phase Outcomes						
	2015 %		2016 %		2017 %	
Subjects	Hawthorn Primary	Heol-Y-Celyn Primary	Hawthorn Primary	Heol-Y-Celyn Primary	Hawthorn Primary	Heol-Y-Celyn Primary
Foundation Phase Indicator	81.25 (3)	88.46 (1)	84.85 (3)	78.26 (3)	80.65 (3)	72.73 (4)
Personal and social development wellbeing and cultural diversity	100 (1)	88.46 (4)	100 (1)	95.65 (2)	87.1 (3)	81.82 (4)
Language literacy and communication skills English	81.25 (4)	92.31 (1)	87.88 (2)	78.26 (4)	80.65 (3)	75.76 (4)
Mathematical development	81.25 (4)	88.46 (2)	90.91 (2)	82.61 (3)	80.65 (3)	75.76 (4)

The figures in brackets in the table above, compare the schools to similar schools across Wales based on free school meals. The performance is compared using benchmarked quartiles, with 1 being the highest and 4 the lowest.

Key Stage Two Outcomes						
	2015 %		2016 %		2017 %	
Subjects	Hawthorn Primary	Heol-Y-Celyn Primary	Hawthorn Primary	Heol-Y-Celyn Primary	Hawthorn Primary	Heol-Y-Celyn Primary
English	88.24 (3)	76.67(4)	85.71 (4)	78.57 (4)	92.11 (1)	76.47 (4)
Maths	85.29 (3)	80 (3)	88.57 (3)	85.71 (3)	92.11 (2)	76.47 (4)
Science	85.29 (4)	80 (3)	88.57 (3)	85.71 (3)	89.47 (2)	76.47 (4)
Core Subject Indicator (CSI)	82.35 (3)	76.67 (3)	80 (4)	78.57 (3)	89.47 (2)	76.47 (3)

The figures in brackets in the table above, compare the schools to similar schools across Wales based on free school meals. The performance is compared using benchmarked quartiles, with 1 being the highest and 4 the lowest.

Secondary School Standards

The tables below set out the performance of Hawthorn High School for the key measures of educational performance at Key Stages 3 & 4 over the past four years and compare the school to similar schools across Wales based on free school meals:

Hawthorn High	Key Stage Three Outcomes			
Subjects	2014 %	2015 %	2016 %	2017 %
English	83.7 (2)	86.81 (2)	86.96 (3)	94.33 (1)
Maths	89.6 (1)	91.67 (1)	88.7 (3)	98.58 (1)
Science	96.3 (1)	93.06 (2)	93.04 (2)	96.45 (1)
Welsh (second language)	76.3 (3)	79.17 (2)	85.22 (2)	92.2 (1)
Core Subject Indicator (CSI)	80.0 (1)	84.72 (1)	82.61 (3)	92.91 (1)

The figures in brackets in the table above compare the school to similar schools across Wales based on free school meals. The performance is compared using benchmarked quartiles, with 1 being the highest and 4 the lowest.

Hawthorn High	Key Stage Four Outcomes			
Subjects	2014 %	2015 %	2016 %	2017 %
Level 1 Threshold	95.09 (3)	96.58 (3)	100 (1)	94 (3)
Level 2 Threshold	92.64 (1)	93.84 (1)	97.06 (1)	65.4 (1)
Level 2 Threshold including English/Welsh & Maths	40.49 (4)	49.32 (3)	61.76 (1)	45.1 (2)
Core Subject Indicator (CSI)	36.81 (4)	41.1 (4)	55.88 (2)	42.9 (3)
Capped Average Points Score	348.12 (2)	362.39 (1)	373.15 (1)	Not available
Average Wider Points Score	674.57	726.21	693.79	Not available

The figures in brackets in the table above compare the school to similar schools across Wales based on free school meals. The performance is compared using benchmarked quartiles, with 1 being the highest and 4 the lowest.

The attendance of the pupils of the three 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
Hawthorn Primary	96.14%	1	95.96%	1	95.14%	No primary benchmark
Heol-Y-Celyn Primary	93.99%	2	93.04%	4	92.66%	No primary benchmark
Hawthorn High	93.02%	3	92.33%	4	93.32%	3

Figures for Heol-Y-Celyn are for the whole school

Financial Information

A move from a position of 'three schools - three budgets', to a single school with a single budget does result in a number of budgets being removed, or reduced, for example, there will only be one budget for a headteacher not three, but conversely the new single school is able to make significant savings from which it benefits. Although it is not possible to be precise about figures related to savings, as much would depend on future decisions of the Governing Body of the new Hawthorn 3-16 School, a summary of the known budgetary impacts is set out below:

	Hawthorn Primary	Heol-Y-Celyn Primary	Hawthorn High (excluding sixth form budgets)	New Hawthorn 3-16 School	Revenue Savings
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Annual Revenue Budget based on 2018/19 budget	741	925	3,125	4,614	177

** the sixth form budgets are set by Welsh Government based on Programmes of Study and are outside the control of the Council. Therefore, only those budgets within the Council's responsibility have been included.*

Savings that do arise initially benefit the new school, as they will enable the school building improvements to be made, through use of Prudential Code Borrowing, and then schools as a whole will benefit through redistribution of the savings across the County Borough.

An investment of £12m will be made to the existing Hawthorn High and Hawthorn Primary sites and buildings, to create a single site and to improve the facilities for all pupils attending the 3 – 16 school to 21st Century Schools standard.

Catchment Area of the New Hawthorn 3-16 School

The catchment area of the New Hawthorn 3-16 School will be as follows:

- Admission for 3-11 pupils – the combined existing catchment areas of Hawthorn Primary and Heol-Y-Celyn Primary (English Medium)
- Admission for 11-16 pupils – the existing Hawthorn High catchment area to:
 - Include the catchment area of Gwauncelyn Primary School, Tonteg (which is currently in the catchment area of Bryncelynnog Comprehensive).
 - Exclude the Graig area of Pontypridd that is in the catchment area of Maesycloed Primary School, which will be included in the catchment area of the new Pontypridd 11-16 school;
 - Exclude the catchment area of Coedpenmaen Primary School, which will be included in the catchment area of the new Pontypridd 11-16 school.

These adjustments are being made to the catchment areas of pupils aged 11-16 to match the demand for places with the available supply across the secondary school provision in East Taf Ely. The additional demand for places is driven by housing development in the south east of the County Borough.

In the case of oversubscription at any school, published admissions criteria are applied to all applications received for places, to determine which pupils are successful in obtaining the places available. These criteria, which are outlined in our school admission policy booklet entitled 'Starting School' and listed in priority order are:

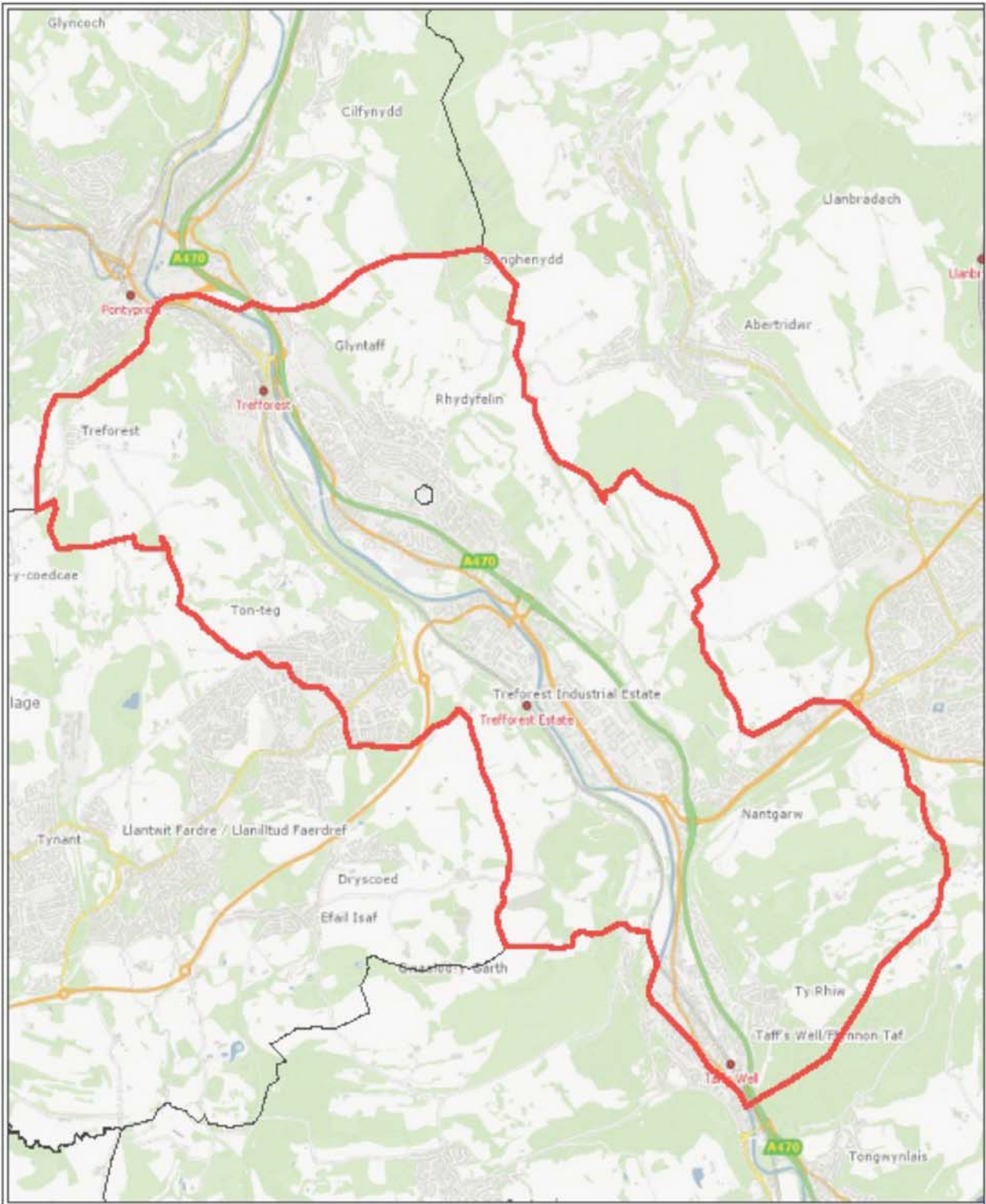
- Category 1 – 'Looked after' children (children in public care) and previously 'looked after' children.
- Category 2 – Children whose home is inside the school's catchment area and have an older sibling attending the school from the same address, who will continue to attend that school on the expected date of admission of the younger child.
- Category 3 – Children whose home is inside the school's catchment area who do not have an older sibling attending the school.
- Category 4 – Children whose home is outside the school's catchment area and have an older sibling attending the school from the same address, who will continue to attend that school on the expected date of admission of the younger child.
- Category 5 – Children whose home is outside the school's catchment area who do not have an older sibling attending the school.

The term 'home' in the categories above refers to the actual location of the residential dwelling in which the child lives.

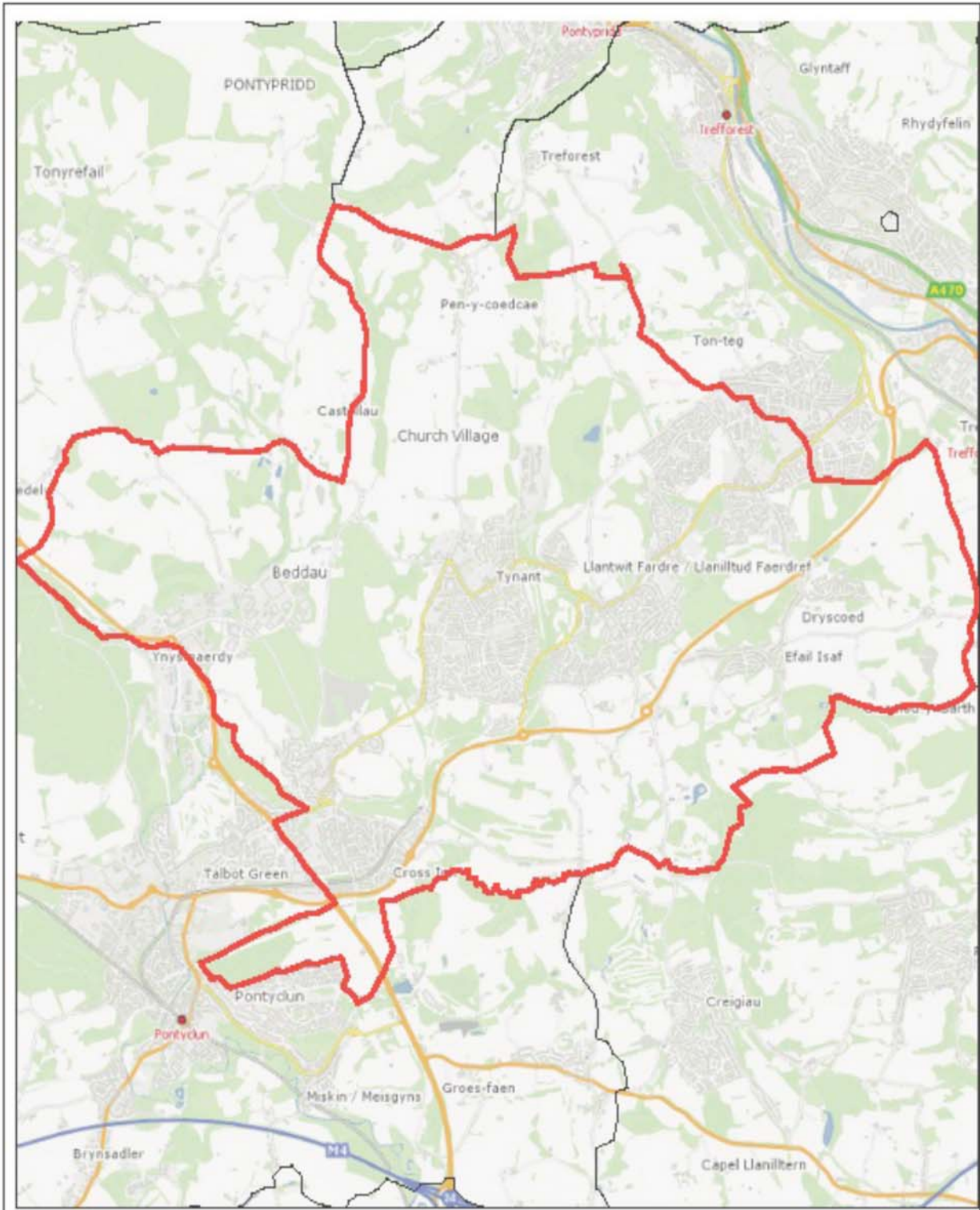
Children will be admitted up to the published Admission Number in the order of priority as outlined above. If within any one of the priority categories listed all of the applicants cannot be offered a place, preference will be given to children living nearest to the school. Distance will be measured using the shortest, safe walking route between the home address and the nearest open school gate. In areas where no safe walking route has been identified, the shortest driving route between the home address and the nearest open school gate will be used. This distance will be measured using the Mapinfo System only, measurements calculated by any other system will not be considered. The home address in instances where parents have shared responsibility for children, will be the address to which Child Benefit is paid.

For the purpose of applying admissions criteria, any child living in the areas to be transferred from the Hawthorn catchment area, as detailed on the map enclosed in this document and who has an older sibling still attending Hawthorn High in the July prior to the opening of the new school, i.e. in September 2022 will have their application considered as if they still resided in the Hawthorn catchment area, i.e. their application will fall in to Category 2 of the aforementioned criteria and not Category 4. This protection will continue until all older siblings have left the school. This will only cover siblings attending Years 7 to 11 in July 2022, any attending the sixth form, namely Years 12 and 13 will not be eligible (as they can be dual registered in more than one school). In the case of Gwauncelyn pupils, they will receive the same protection regarding being resident in the Bryncelynnog catchment if they have elder siblings attending that school on the same dates detailed above.

Pupils aged over 16 will transfer to the catchment area of Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School for sixth form provision. They may of course attend Coleg y Cymoedd, or another school sixth form centre of their choice, but free transportation will only be provided to either Bryncelynnog, or Coleg Y Cymoedd, or the nearest centre that offers the selection of subject choices that they choose, providing that they reside more than 2 miles from this provision.



	Drawing Title Proposed Hawthorn High	Date	Scale
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Drawing Title
Proposed Bryncelynog

Date

Scale

Location
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SECTION 4

The proposed changes to primary and secondary school provision in Pontypridd

Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council proposes to:

- Close Pontypridd High School sixth form and transfer the post-16 provision to either Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School or Coleg y Cymoedd, Nantgarw, dependent on student choice;
- Close Pontypridd High School and Cilfynydd Primary School and create a new 3-16 'all through' school on the site of the current Pontypridd High School;
- Provide a 1,200 capacity 3-16 School for Pontypridd, for 210 pupils aged 3-11 (including Nursery provision) and 990 pupils aged 11-16.

To achieve this change the Council is proposing to invest £4.7m to improve the buildings at Pontypridd High to ensure they meet the learning and safeguarding requirements of a 3-16 school. The investment will also include a review of the safe routes to school, and improvements to walkways, road crossings and road speed management measures will be made to ensure the required safety standards are met. This is the approach we have implemented in other communities in earlier school reorganisation proposals with significant improvements being made to safe routes to schools.

What are the reasons for the proposed changes?

Across Wales there is a recognition that whilst educational standards have improved, when compared internationally they are still too low and need to be improved and quickly. In this environment of rapid change and increasing pressures on schools and local authorities to improve learning standards, the sustainability and performance of the present educational provision in Rhondda Cynon Taf is being challenged and reviewed.

The Welsh Government sets the overall policy and legislative framework for school organisation however, local authorities have a responsibility for the planning and management of school places and must secure efficient and effective provision so as to focus resources on improving educational outcomes for young people.

The Council has been considering the way forward for education in the County Borough and in Pontypridd for some time and the reasons for change are both educational and financial:

- Pontypridd High has 428 (31.9%) surplus places and this is not forecast to change significantly over the next 5 years;
- The costs of providing the sixth form provision in Pontypridd High are very high, with an average of only 11 pupils per class (Post 16 - Level 3 courses), including those classes shared with other schools;
- The small sixth form classes are partially funded by the financial resources which were intended and should be made available to pupils in Key Stage 3 (11-14 years old) and Key Stage 4 (14-16 years old). This has an adverse impact on the quality of the education provision for Key Stage 3 and 4 pupils;
- A further consequence of the financially inefficient sixth form is that Pontypridd High has a financial deficit of almost £520,000;

- Cilfynydd Primary School is a relatively small Primary school (its total capacity is 188 pupils), that currently has just 136 pupils on roll, meaning that almost 28% of its capacity is surplus. A relatively large number (30) of pupils' resident within the Cilfynydd catchment choose to attend Coedpenmaen Primary School, which is 1.7 miles away. This represents over 10% of the total pupil roll of Coedpenmaen. The school is accommodated in three separate Victorian buildings on a steeply sloping site which is just a few hundred metres walk away from Pontypridd High School, via a footbridge over the A470 trunk road. The driving distance by car, which is considerably longer than the safe walking route, is just 0.9 of a mile.

Background to the proposal

Information on the Schools

The schools included within the proposal and the pupil numbers over the past four years are shown below. The pupil numbers are obtained from the statutory annual pupil count (PLASC) which must be undertaken in January each year. The numbers shown exclude nursery age pupils, as we are required to exclude these from the table by the Welsh Government's Statutory School Organisation Code, however we have shown the nursery numbers separately.

School	Type of School	Age Range	School Capacity	Jan 2014	Jan 2015	Jan 2016	Jan 2017	Jan 2018	% Surplus Jan 2018
Cilfynydd Primary	Primary	3 - 11	188	120	118	128	126	136	27.6
Pontypridd High	Secondary	11 - 19	1338	1003	1031	967	945	910	31.9

Nursery numbers (total numbers of pupils attending):

School	Jan 2014	Jan 2015	Jan 2016	Jan 2017	Jan 2018
Cilfynydd Primary	32	23	27	20	21

Pupil projections

Over the next five years the pupil projections for the two 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 and average birth rates. It is important to note that this cannot take account of any unforeseen deviations in local trends.

School	School capacity (excluding nursery)	Jan 2019	Jan 2020	Jan 2021	Jan 2022	Jan 2023	% surplus in Jan 2023
Cilfynydd Primary	188	143	142	141	136	124	34.0
Pontypridd High							
11-19 – No.	1338	863	880	884	904	936	46.6
11-16 – No.	1205	752	768	772	796	831	31.0

If the proposal was to be implemented in the future and parents/carers choose to transfer their children to the new Pontypridd 3-16 School the forecast for the first year for the new school will be as follows:

School 3-16	School capacity (excluding nursery)	Jan 2022	Surplus in Jan 2022
Primary 3-11	180	125	55
Secondary 11-16	990	879	111
Total	1170	1004	166

Proposed Primary Education provision

The plans for the new 3-16 school are at RIBA stage 0, site feasibility studies have been completed and detailed briefs will be worked up in collaboration with the pupils, Governing Body and staff of the schools. It is anticipated that the primary aged pupils will be accommodated in the Year 7/8 (Lower School) block which will be refurbished and remodelled together with separate and segregated outdoor play facilities. A secure soft play area for early year's children will be created at the front of the building. A new environmental outdoor classroom will also be created.

External play areas across the school site will be upgraded and improved, to also include the installation of a 3G pitch. Works to reconfigure the existing car park, to provide a dedicated pick up/drop off area for parents will also be undertaken.

The dedicated ALN class already in operation at Pontypridd High will transfer to the new school, with consideration being given to ensure flexibility of accommodation, to allow possible expansion of this provision in the future if there is recognised demand.

The primary age pupils will also have supervised and timetabled access to share the specialist resources and facilities available in the secondary school, including the new 3G pitch, sports hall, playing fields, tennis courts, music and drama facilities, and science and technology areas.

Current condition of the existing schools

Property condition information on all school buildings is held by the Council, this information is regularly updated to reflect any changes or improvements to the buildings and reported to Welsh Government each year. The overall condition ratings of the school buildings are as follows:

School	Building Condition Survey Result	Suitability Survey Result
Cilfynydd Primary	C	B
Pontypridd High	C+	B

Quality and standards

As part of a national programme of school inspection, Estyn inspects all schools in Wales, a comparison between the quality and diversity of education provided at both schools during their last inspections is as follows.

School	Date Inspected	Judgement – Current Performance	Judgement – Prospects for Improvement
Cilfynydd Primary	May 2014	Adequate	Adequate
Pontypridd High	January 2014	Adequate	Good

As a result of receiving 'adequate' ratings, both schools were placed in the category of requiring monitoring by Estyn following inspection. Following further Estyn inspection, both schools were both deemed to have made sufficient improvement and were removed from the list of schools requiring Estyn monitoring in July 2015 and November 2016 respectively.

Since 2014, schools have been categorised according to a four-point 'traffic light' system, (green, yellow, amber and red) with a 'green' school having the highest rating and a 'red' school the lowest. This National Schools Categorisation System introduced by the Welsh Government provides a systematic view of a school's performance, based on publicly available data and the school's own self-evaluation in respect of leadership, learning and teaching. The aim of this system is to determine the level of support a school requires to support it to improve.

Pontypridd High School is currently categorised as a **yellow** school. This defines them as 'effective, already doing well, know the areas needed to improve, and by identifying the right support and taking action have the potential to do even better'. Cilfynydd Primary became a **green** school for the first time in 2018; this defines them as 'highly effective and has a track record of sustaining a high level of outcomes, has the capacity to lead and contribute to supporting other schools'.

Primary School Standards

The tables below set out the performance of Cilfynydd Primary School for the key measures of educational performance over the past three years and compare the school to similar schools across Wales based on free school meals:

Cilfynydd Primary	Foundation Phase Outcomes		
Subjects	2015 %	2016 %	2017 %
Foundation Phase Indicator	76.19 (4)	90.48 (1)	83.33 (3)
Personal and social development wellbeing and cultural diversity	100 (1)	100 (1)	94.44 (3)
Language literacy and communication skills English	76.19 (4)	90.48 (2)	83.33 (3)
Mathematical development	80.95 (4)	100 (1)	83.33 (4)

The figures in brackets in the table above, compare the schools to similar schools across Wales based on free school meals. The performance is compared using benchmarked quartiles, with 1 being the highest and 4 the lowest.

Cilfynydd Primary	Key Stage Two Outcomes		
Subjects	2015 %	2016 %	2017 %
English	86.67 (3)	81.82 (4)	94.44 (1)
Maths	86.67 (3)	81.82 (4)	94.44 (2)
Science	86.67 (3)	81.82 (4)	100 (1)
Core Subject Indicator (CSI)	86.67 (2)	81.82 (4)	88.89 (2)

The figures in brackets in the table above, compare the schools to similar schools across Wales based on free school meals. The performance is compared using benchmarked quartiles, with 1 being the highest and 4 the lowest.

Secondary School Standards

The tables below set out the performance of Pontypridd High School for the key measures of educational performance at Key Stages 3 & 4 over the past four years and compare the school to similar schools across Wales based on free school meals:

Pontypridd High	Key Stage Three Outcomes			
Subjects	2014 %	2015 %	2016 %	2017 %
English	82.94 (3)	82.42 (3)	88.05 (2)	87.27 (4)
Maths	89.41 (1)	86.81 (2)	91.19 (1)	90.30 (3)
Science	90.59 (2)	85.71 (4)	94.34 (2)	93.94 (3)
Welsh (second language)	68.82 (4)	77.47(3)	73.58 (4)	75.76 (4)
Core Subject Indicator (CSI)	78.24 (2)	76.37 (4)	84.91 (2)	85.45 (3)

The figures in brackets in the table above, compare the school to similar schools across Wales based on free school meals. The performance is compared using benchmarked quartiles, with 1 being the highest and 4 the lowest.

Pontypridd High	Key Stage Four Outcomes			
Subjects	2014 %	2015 %	2016 %	2017 %
Level 1 Threshold	90.48 (4)	98.37 (2)	100 (1)	95.5 (4)
Level 2 Threshold	78.57 (3)	92.93 (1)	98.24 (1)	60.8 (4)
Level 2 Threshold including English/Welsh & Maths	52.38 (1)	53.26 (2)	61.76 (1)	51.1 (3)
Core Subject Indicator (CSI)	48.21 (2)	50 (2)	61.18 (1)	48.9 (3)
Capped Average Points Score	329.69 (3)	364.40 (1)	375.92 (2)	Not available
Average Wider Points Score		584.78	596.24	Not available

The figures in brackets in the table above, compare the school to similar schools across Wales based on free school meals. The performance is compared using benchmarked quartiles, with 1 being the highest and 4 the lowest.

The attendance of the pupils of the two 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
Cilfynydd Primary	93.81%	4	93.21%	4	94.44%	No benchmark
Pontypridd High	93.16%	2	93.60%	2	94.07%	3

Financial Information

A move from a position of 'two schools - two budgets', to a single school with a single budget does result in a number of budgets being removed, or reduced, for example, there will only be one budget for a headteacher not two, but conversely the new single school is able to make significant savings from which it benefits. Although it is not possible to be precise about figures related to savings, as much would depend on future decisions of the Governing Body of the new Pontypridd 3-16 School, a summary of the known budgetary impacts is set out below:

	Cilfynydd Primary	Pontypridd High (excluding sixth form budgets)	New Pontypridd 3-16 School	Revenue Savings
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Annual Revenue Budget based on 2018/19 budget	550	3541	4051	40

** the sixth form budgets are set by Welsh Government based on Programmes of Study and are outside the control of the Council. Therefore, only those budgets within the Council's responsibility have been included.*

Savings that do arise initially benefit the new school, as they will enable the school building improvements to be made, through use of Prudential Code Borrowing, and then schools as a whole will benefit through redistribution of the savings across the County Borough.

An investment of £4.7m will be made to the existing Pontypridd High site and buildings to accommodate the primary aged pupils in 21st Century facilities and to improve the 11-16 facilities at the School.

Any capital receipts from the future sale of vacated school sites will be used by the Council to invest in capital projects across the County Borough.

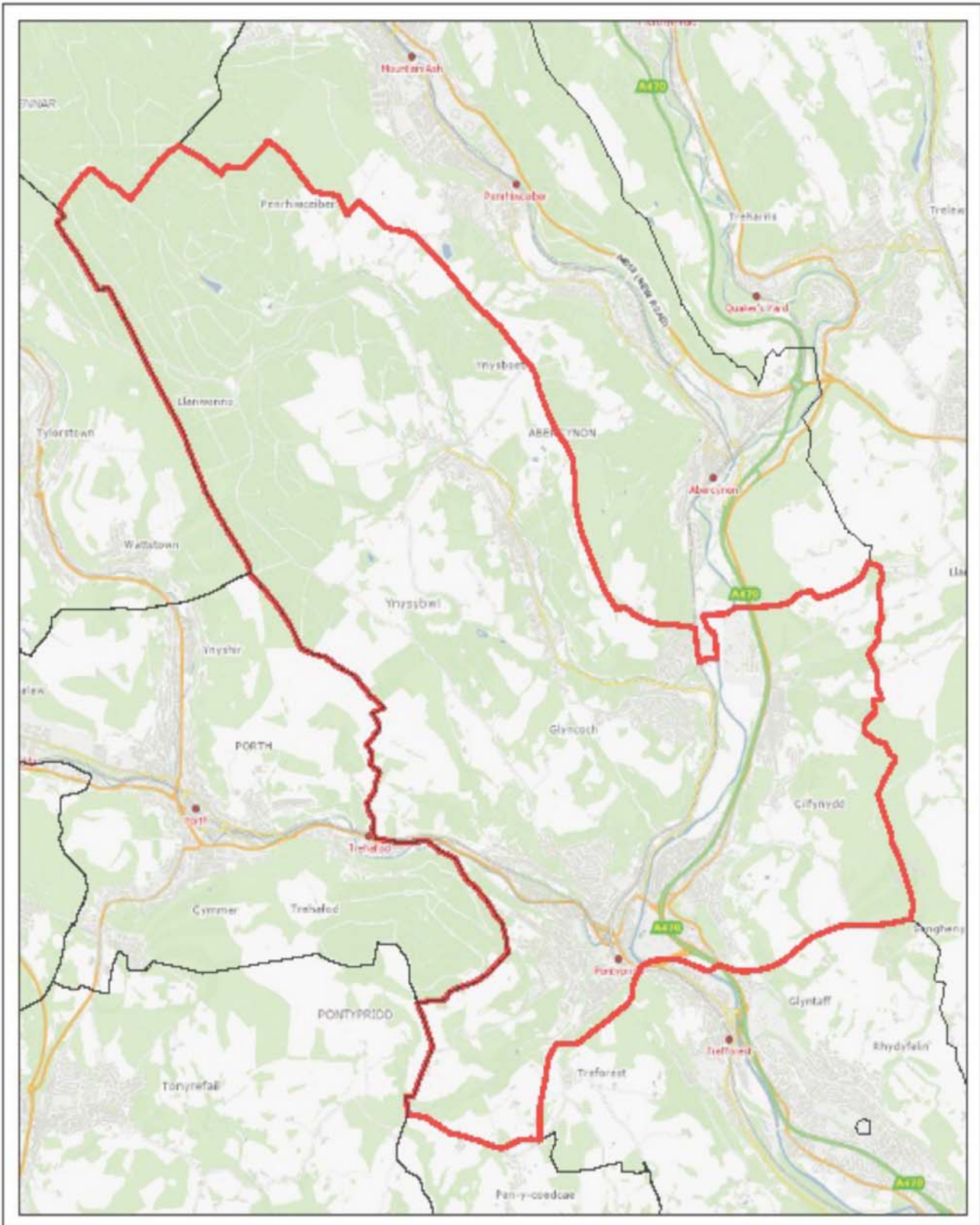
Catchment Area of the New Pontypridd 3-16 School


The catchment area of the New Pontypridd 3-16 School will be as follows:

- Admission for 3-11 pupils – the existing catchment area of Cilfynydd Primary School.
- Admission for 11-16 pupils – the existing Pontypridd High School catchment area, with the addition of the following areas that are currently part of the catchment area of Hawthorn High School:
 - The Graig area of Pontypridd, that is currently in the catchment area of Maesycloed Primary School;
 - The catchment area of Coedpenmaen Primary School.

The criteria for admission to schools in Rhondda Cynon Taf, in the case of oversubscription is outlined in detail on page 44 of this document. As no areas are being removed from this catchment area there is no requirement to put in place any protection for siblings of existing pupils, although the protection to be put in place for those pupils who were formerly in the Hawthorn catchment, but will transfer to the Pontypridd High catchment as a result of these proposals should be noted.

Pupils aged over 16 will transfer to the catchment area of Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School for sixth form provision. They may of course attend Coleg y Cymoedd, or another school sixth form centre of their choice, but free transportation will only be provided to either Bryncelynnog, or Coleg Y Cymoedd or the nearest centre that offers the selection of subject choices that they choose, providing that they reside more than 2 miles from this provision.



 <p>RHONDDA CYNON TAF</p>	<p>Drawing Title</p> <p>Proposed Pontypridd High</p>	<p>Date</p>	<p>Scale</p>
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SECTION 5

The closure of YGG, Pont Sion Norton and the Welsh Medium stream of Heol y Celyn Primary School, and the creation of a new, Welsh Medium Community Primary school to replace both provisions.

Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council proposes to:

- Improve and increase Welsh medium provision by building a new school that will replace the provision of YGG, Pont Sion Norton and the Welsh Medium stream of Heol y Celyn Primary School (currently a dual language school).

To achieve this, the proposal is to construct a new, purpose built school building that will be constructed on the current site of Heol-Y-Celyn Primary School, Rhydyfelin, Pontypridd. The planned investment in this new school is £10.7 million. YGG Pont Sion Norton is a Welsh Medium Community Primary School located near Cilfynydd, Pontypridd, in poor condition buildings that are difficult to access. Heol-Y-Celyn Primary School is a dual language school and it is proposed that the pupils educated through the medium of Welsh in this school shall transfer to the new school, along with the pupils attending YGG, Pont Sion Norton; Heol-Y-Celyn Primary will subsequently close and the pupils educated through the medium of English will transfer to the new proposed 3 – 16 school at Hawthorn, details of this proposal are outlined earlier in Section 3 of this document.

What are the reasons for the proposed changes?

YGG Pont Sion Norton is a Welsh Medium Community School located at the rear of Pont Sion Norton Road, Pontypridd. The school site consists of three separate traditional stone Victorian buildings with slate roofs, built on a steeply sloping site, constructed in 1893. The school is built on a steep hillside, all of the external play areas are sloping which makes playing of ball games, for example, extremely difficult; the external areas are all tarmac yards and the school does not have access to any grassed playing fields or garden areas.

Access to the school site is via flights of stone steps and the school does not have the necessary facilities to enable any persons who use wheelchairs to access the school. There is no dedicated car parking on the site; staff and visitors have to park in a lane that serves the rear of the residential properties in Pont Sion Norton Road. School buses are unable to drive up to the school site and have to pick up and drop off pupils on the busy main road below the school.

The school has received considerable investment in recent years to repair and improve the learning environment but is still only currently categorised as a grade C according to the Welsh Government's Property Condition data in respect of building condition.

The school is currently operating at 96% of its published capacity and pupil numbers are not forecast to reduce in the next few years. There is no scope to extend the existing school buildings should demand for Welsh Medium places rise and the nature of the site would make provision of temporary accommodation very difficult to achieve. Of more concern is the inaccessibility of the school to children and adults who may have mobility problems, it is simply not possible to undertake any reasonable adjustments to improve access at the current site. Even with further major capital investment at this school it would not be possible to create a 21st Century learning environment for all children.

If the proposal to close, and relocate the provision of YGG Pont Sion Norton to the current Heol-Y-Celyn Primary School site in a new building is agreed, then the current YGG Pont Sion Norton school site will become surplus to requirements.

Based on the results of the Welsh Government commissioned building survey of all schools YGG Pont Sion Norton is graded a C for condition and a B for suitability, where A is the highest and D is the lowest performing building respectively. The current figure for the maintenance work that would be desirable to undertake at this school is £136,000.

The new school building will create a teaching and learning environment that will be fit for the purpose to provide education in the 21st Century, as opposed to a building that was constructed for 19th Century requirements. The new proposed site is flat and the building will be fully accessible to all, meeting all of the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. The new site will also incorporate extensive outdoor play facilities that are lacking at the current location. It will also include those pupils currently educated through the medium of Welsh at Heol-Y-Celyn Primary School, which is currently a dual language school. The new school will be a larger, and thus more educationally and financially viable Welsh Medium school where all pupils will receive their education fully immersed in the Welsh language.

Background to the proposal

Information on the Schools

The pupil numbers in YGG Pont Sion Norton and the Welsh Language Department of Heol-Y-Celyn Primary School over the past four years are shown below and are obtained from the statutory pupil level annual school census (PLASC) which must be undertaken in January each year. The numbers shown exclude nursery age pupils, as we are required to exclude these from the table by the Welsh Government's statutory School Organisation Code, however we have shown the nursery numbers separately. The capacity of the Welsh Department of Heol-Y-Celyn is calculated as 31% of the total, this being the same percentage of the total number of pupils that attend the Welsh Department of the school.

School	Type of School	Age Range	School Capacity	Jan 2014	Jan 2015	Jan 2016	Jan 2017	Jan 2018	% Surplus Jan 2018
YGG Pont Sion Norton	Primary	3 - 11	267	222	231	244	250	256	4.1
Heol-Y-Celyn Welsh medium pupils	Primary	3 - 11	120	125	111	111	96	98	18.3

Nursery numbers (total numbers of pupils attending)

School	Jan 2014	Jan 2015	Jan 2016	Jan 2017	Jan 2018
YGG Pont Sion Norton	36	43	37	43	39
Heol-Y-Celyn Welsh medium pupils	26	22	15	21	11

Pupil projections

Over the next five years the pupil projections for the school, 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 and average birth rates. It is important to note that this cannot take account of any unforeseen deviations in local trends.

School	School capacity (excluding nursery)	Jan 2019	Jan 2020	Jan 2021	Jan 2022	Jan 2023	% surplus in Jan 2023
YGG Pont Sion Norton	267	253	247	239	235	226	15.4
Heol-Y-Celyn Welsh medium pupils	120	95	87	80	81	73	39.1

Proposed new school site and building

Plans for the new school on the Heol-Y-Celyn school site are still at a formative stage, but it is planned that the accommodation will be in a new building on the site at Holly Street, Rhydyfelin, with separate outdoor play facilities. It will have at least 16 classrooms of approximately 60 square metres, able to accommodate 30 pupils per class, plus a Nursery unit with facilities to cater for up to 60 pupils. The proposed capacity of the new school will be 480 plus 60 Nursery places. The expected cost of the new building will be £10.7 m.

The school will be constructed to cater for the pupils currently attending YGG Pont Sion Norton and the pupils educated through the medium of Welsh at Heol-Y-Celyn Primary School.

Quality and standards

As part of a national programme of school inspection, Estyn inspects all schools in Wales. A comparison between the quality and diversity of education provided at the three schools detailed above during their last inspections is as follows.

School	Date Inspected	Judgement – Current Performance	Judgement – Prospects for Improvement
YGG, Pont Sion Norton	September 2014	Adequate	Good
Heol-Y-Celyn Primary	June 2014	Adequate	Adequate

As a result of receiving one 'adequate' rating, YGG Pont Sion Norton was placed in the category of requiring monitoring by Estyn following inspection. Following further Estyn inspection, the school was deemed to have made sufficient improvement and was removed from the list of schools requiring Estyn monitoring in April, 2016.

Heol-Y-Celyn Primary School was re-inspected in November 2015 and found not to have sufficiently improved; it was, as a consequence, placed by Estyn in the category of requiring significant improvement. Following further inspection in January 2017, the school was deemed to have made sufficient progress and was duly removed from the list of schools requiring Estyn monitoring.

Since 2014, schools have been categorised according to a four-point 'traffic light' system, (green, yellow, amber and red) with a 'green' school having the highest rating and a 'red' school the lowest. This National Schools Categorisation System introduced by the Welsh Government provides a systematic view of a school's performance, based on publicly available data and the school's own self-evaluation in respect of leadership, learning and teaching. The aim of this system is to determine the level of support a school requires to support it to improve.

YGG Pont Sion Norton is currently categorised as a yellow school. This defines it as 'effective, already doing well, know the areas needed to improve, and by identifying the right support and taking action have the potential to do even better'.

Heol-Y-Celyn Primary School is also currently categorised as a yellow school, having previously been red and then amber.

Primary School Standards

The tables below set out the performance of YGG Pont Sion Norton and Heol-Y-Celyn Primary School for the key measures of educational performance over the past three years and compare the schools to similar schools across Wales based on free school meals. Data for Heol-Y-Celyn is for the Welsh Department only:

Foundation Phase Outcomes						
	2015 %		2016 %		2017 %	
Subjects	YGG Pont Sion Norton	Heol-Y-Celyn Primary	YGG Pont Sion Norton	Heol-Y-Celyn Primary	YGG Pont Sion Norton	Heol-Y-Celyn Primary
Foundation Phase Indicator	87.8 (3)	94.44 (1)	80.56 (4)	81.25 (3)	94.44 (2)	80 (3)
Personal and social development wellbeing and cultural diversity	93.9 (3)	100 (1)	100 (1)	93.75 (2)	100 (1)	90 (4)
Language literacy and communication skills English	95.9 (2)	100 (1)	88.89 (3)	87.5 (2)	100 (1)	80 (3)
Mathematical development	93.9 (2)	94.44 (1)	86.11 (4)	93.75 (1)	94.44 (2)	80 (4)

The figures in brackets in the table above, compare the schools to similar schools across Wales based on free school meals. The performance is compared using benchmarked quartiles, with 1 being the highest and 4 the lowest.

Key Stage Two Outcomes						
	2015 %		2016 %		2017 %	
Subjects	YGG Pont Sion Norton	Heol-Y-Celyn Primary	YGG Pont Sion Norton	Heol-Y-Celyn Primary	YGG Pont Sion Norton	Heol-Y-Celyn Primary
English	96.55 (1)	75 (4)	100 (1)	100 (1)	92 (4)	92.31 (2)
Maths	100 (1)	83.33 (4)	100 (1)	100 (1)	92 (4)	92.31 (2)
Science	96.55 (2)	66.67 (4)	100 (1)	100 (1)	88 (4)	92.31 (2)
Core Subject Indicator (CSI)	93.1 (2)	66.67 (4)	100 (1)	100 (1)	84 (4)	92.31 (2)

The figures in brackets in the table above, compare the schools to similar schools across Wales based on free school meals. The performance is compared using benchmarked quartiles, with 1 being the highest and 4 the lowest.

The attendance of the pupils of the two 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 Pont Sion Norton	95.2%	2	94.35%	4	94.5%	No benchmark
Heol-Y-Celyn Primary	93.99%	2	93.04%	4	92.66%	No benchmark

Financial Information

There will be no savings made as a result of this proposal, as a new school will be created to replace the ones that are closing. The formula budget allocated to the school will reflect the increased floor area of the new building, the area of the grounds and the increased number of pupils on roll.

There may be some additional transport costs for pupils as a result of the relocation and because of the catchment changes also. These will not be known until these proposals are finalised and we become aware of the demographic changes to the pupils attending the school. All pupils resident within the existing YGG Pont Sion Norton catchment area will qualify for free home to school transport to the new school site as it is more than 1.5 miles from their home addresses.

Catchment area of the new school

The catchment area of the new school will comprise that of the existing YGG Pont Sion Norton, together with that of the current Welsh Medium stream of Heol-Y-Celyn Primary School.

CONSULTATION RESPONSE PRO-FORMA

In order to comply with its legal duty under the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and help the Council reach a decision on the proposal below, it would be very helpful if you could answer the following questions. Please note, any personal information given by you will not be shared and only used to provide you with feedback, should you request it. Any comments that could identify you will be anonymised in the consultation report produced. Completed questionnaires should be returned to:

Director of Education and Inclusion Services
21st Century Schools Team
Ty Trevithick
Abercynon
CF45 4UQ

or email schoolplanning@rctcbc.gov.uk

The Proposals

Proposal 1: Removal of the sixth forms of Hawthorn High, Pontypridd High and Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive, with post 16 students attending an alternative school or college that offers the choice of courses they require.

1 Do you agree with proposal 1? Yes No Not sure

Please let us know the reasons for your choice

Proposal 2: Create a new, 3 – 16 ‘all through’ school for Hawthorn

2 Do you agree with proposal 2? Yes No Not sure

Please let us know the reasons for your choice

Proposal 3: Create a new, 3 – 16 ‘all through’ school for Pontypridd

3 Do you agree with proposal 3? Yes No Not sure

Please let us know the reasons for your choice

Proposal 4: Close YGG Pont Sion Norton and relocate its pupils to a new Welsh Medium Primary School, to be constructed on the current site of Heol-Y-Celyn Primary School (which will close as part of Proposal 2). Welsh Medium pupils attending Heol y Celyn will also transfer to the new school.

4 Do you agree with proposal 4? Yes No Not sure

Please let us know the reasons for your choice

Proposal 5: Amendment of the catchment areas of Hawthorn High and Pontypridd High Schools and the 6th form catchment area of Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School, as outlined in this document.

5 Do you agree with proposal 5? Yes No Not sure

Please let us know the reasons for your choice

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

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

8 Name (optional)

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

Please forward completed questionnaires to the above address no later than Thursday, 31st January 2019

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