21st Century Schools Consultation Report

YSGOL GYMRAEG CWM GWYDDON



Proposal : **Relocate Ysgol Gymraeg Cwm Gwyddon to a new purpose built Welsh medium provision school to be situated on the vacant site of the former Cwmcarn High School**

Formal Consultation Period : 14th September 2020 – 26th October 2020

This report is published in line with the requirements of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and the School Organisation Code 2018.

CAERPHILLY COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL
CYNGOR BWRDEISTREF SIROL CAERFFILI

Ysgolion a Cholegau yr 21ain Ganrif
21st Century Schools and Colleges

Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government



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Corporate Director for Education and Corporate Services

FOREWORD

"Working together to deliver the best outcomes for all our children"

Caerphilly County Borough Council has embarked upon an exciting but challenging journey of improvement and change. We have bold ambitions to provide every learner with the best life chances and we are committed to doing this through the provision of high quality teaching, learning and leadership across our school settings as part of our 'Shared Ambitions' Strategy.

We have focused on improving young people's outcomes and this is still a priority area moving forward incorporating a holistic view of education. The Council has adopted 'Improving education opportunities for all' as the first of its Wellbeing Objectives and has committed to an ambitious 21st Century Schools investment programme.

In collaboration with Welsh Government, the 21st Century Schools and Colleges Band B Programme is supporting investment in education within the County Borough. Our aspiration is the improvement of the condition of school buildings and maximising community usage.

Our current proposals support our commitment to increase school effectiveness and to narrow inequalities in achievement across groups; to understand the needs of more vulnerable children; promote the Welsh Language, and support those unable to access traditional learning pathways to ensure that all will benefit from the richness of learning and cultural opportunities. These principles help steer our decision making and prioritise projects.

As part of this proposal a consultation exercise has been carried out in line with the requirements of the School Organisation Code 2018. All stakeholders have had the opportunity to participate and make comments.

This Consultation Report has been produced to summarise the issues raised by consultees during the consultation period including Estyn's feedback. It aims to provide a balanced, transparent document to support Cabinet in deciding whether to progress with the proposal, make changes or not to progress.

I hope you find this document informative as a reflection of the activities undertaken to date and an insight into the journey we are on, shaping delivery and placing learning provision at the heart of our communities.

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Introduction

Executive Summary

Schools in Wales need to be in good condition and suitable for the delivery of education. In some cases, schools can be modernised, repaired, refurbished, extended, or partially rebuilt to meet the standards needed for contemporary teaching and learning. However, some existing schools are no longer in the right place and in such cases we might propose new schools or changes to existing schools.

Caerphilly County Borough Council aspires to continue to raise school standards and improve the quality of the learning environment to create fit-for-purpose 21st century schools and give every child in Caerphilly the best possible start in life.

Ysgol Gymraeg Cwm Gwyddon has been identified as one of the first priority projects in the 21st Century Schools Band B programme.

For proposals relating to schools, the School Organisation Code 2018, provides clear statutory guidance as to the processes that need to be adhered to. Undertaking a consultation exercise is one of the initial stages of progressing any proposal and is subject to Welsh Government scrutiny and Cabinet approval. From the 14th September 2020 until the 26th October 2020, a consultation exercise was undertaken. The purpose of the consultation was to gain views on the proposal to support and invest in the relocation of Ysgol Gymraeg Cwm Gwyddon.

This Consultation Report is the prescribed method as outlined by the School Organisation Code 2018 for reflection, review and assessment to provide Cabinet with the information to make an informed decision as to whether to proceed with the proposal to the next stage, amend the proposal taking into account further information that has come forward through the consultation process or to close this proposal with no further actions taken.

The Report is divided into several sections with the aim to:

- Outline the consultation processes undertaken
- Provide clarification in relation to the information provided and consultee engagement
- Summarise each of the issues raised by consultees
- Set out Estyn's response to the consultation in full
- Respond to issues raised by means of clarification, amendment to the proposal or rejection of the concerns, with supporting reasons

Statutory Obligations

This report is published in line with the requirements of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and the School Organisation Code 2018.

The Consultation report will be published on the Caerphilly 21st Century School website with hardcopies available on request. All information is published in Welsh and English. In addition, a child friendly summary has also been produced to ensure information is provided in an accessible format for any children and young people affected by the proposals.

Purpose of the Consultation Report

The publication of this Consultation Report discharges the Council of its duty under the School Organisation Code 2018.

The consultation period represented an opportunity for people to learn about the proposal, ask questions and make comments. Any negative responses made during the consultation period were not counted as objections to the proposal but as adverse comments.

Objections to a proposal can only be registered after the publication of a statutory notice.

The Consultation Report outlines the processes followed, provides clarity on the issues and comments received from consultees, ensures that the views of children and young people affected by the proposal are expressed and ultimately, provides Cabinet with the necessary information to take one of the following decisions:

- Proceed with the proposal
- Make changes to the proposal
- Not to proceed with the proposal

Full details of the decision making process and the stages of the proposal as outlined in the School Organisation Code 2018 have been published as part of the initial Consultation Document and is publicly available via the Council's website with hardcopies made available on request.

What is the 21st Century Schools and Colleges Programme?

The 21st Century Schools and Colleges programme is a major, long-term, strategic capital investment programme. It is jointly funded by the Welsh Government and local authorities and aims to create a generation of 21st century schools in Wales.

The first part of the programme (Band A) ran from 2014 to March 2019.

Caerphilly has benefited greatly from investments in the initial "Band A" 21st Century Schools programme with approximately £56.5 million invested in schools for both educational and community use.

Band A funding in Caerphilly was used to deliver :



Image of Islwyn High School

Project Name	Band A Investment
✓ Islwyn High School	£22.6m
✓ Ysgol Gymraeg Cwm Rhymni, Y Gwyndy Campus	£19.2m
✓ Idris Davies School 3-18	£8m
✓ Newbridge School extension	£2.6m
✓ Blackwood Comprehensive improvements	£2m
✓ Blackwood Comprehensive 3G pitch	£865k
✓ Trinity Fields School improvements	£1.3m

The second part of this funding (Band B) started in April 2019, with the priority areas being:

- Reduce the number of poor condition schools
- Ensure that we have the right size schools in the right location
- Provide enough places to deliver Welsh and English medium education
- Ensure the effective and efficient use of the educational estate

Further information is available on the 21st Century Schools webpages



Proposal

What are we proposing to do?

We are proposing to:

- **Relocate Ysgol Gymraeg Cwm Gwyddon to a new purpose built Welsh medium provision school to be situated on the vacant site of the former Cwmcarn High School (*Cwmcarn, NP11 7NG*) with an anticipated occupation date of September 2023**

- It is proposed that the new building will incorporate a primary facility with Childcare, Special Resource Base (SRB), Nursery, Rising Threes and main school classrooms, main assembly hall, food technology space, a library and IT space

- The identified site will have sufficient accommodation to facilitate a new building that will provide accommodation for approximately 420 pupils plus 60 nursery places and 16 SRB places and ensure equality of access by promoting and supporting the development and delivery of inclusive education through delivery of the full curriculum to pupils in a modern, safe and inspiring learning environment

- The new building will provide a stimulating teaching and learning environment with 21st Century facilities including improved ICT facilities. The design will becentered on the learning, self-esteem and well-being of all pupils and improve lifelong learning opportunities for members of the community to strengthen and safeguard the promotion of the Welsh language, culture and heritage across Caerphilly East

- The new building will improve the outside learning space offering external play areas, a tarmacadam MUGA area and access to a grass pitch. The usage of sporting facilities will also be considered for the community at suitable times in keeping with the curriculum timetable

- The proposed project will take into account the desire to encourage and facilitate community use of the asset. The design process will seek to include measures to enable safe 'zoning' of parts of the new school building, including the hall and a multi-functional classroom compliant space which could be adapted for community use.

What is driving this proposal?

Proposals have been prioritised based on a number of factors including building condition, pupil projection and local and national drivers, however, the delivery of the curriculum and the Educational agenda remains at the core.

The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011, the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and the Legislation (Wales) Act 2019, provide a series of standards and places a statutory duty on the Council to assess the demand for Welsh medium education in the area. One of the key standards is a requirement to develop a 5 year Welsh language strategy, with the aim of increasing the number of Welsh speakers and which will enable us to facilitate the use of the Welsh Language within the county borough.

The Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) sets out Caerphilly's commitment to the Promotion of Welsh language and the provision of quality, attractive educational facilities. Within the WESP we are striving to stimulate demand for Welsh medium education, which we know is more sustainable for families if education provision is expanded in line with childcare available.

We identified a need to invest in Ysgol Gymraeg Cwm Gwyddon, meeting the increasing demand for education through the medium of Welsh and developing shared and co-located facilities. It is this aspiration that is driving this proposal.



Options Appraisal

The planning and development of effective school organisation proposals is crucial to the Welsh Government's goal of transforming education in Wales and providing better educational outcomes with a commitment to increase school effectiveness, and narrow inequalities in achievement between advantaged and disadvantaged areas, groups and individuals.

An options appraisal provides the opportunity to help councils make an informed and evidence based decision on how to deliver services. It does this by considering the relative advantages

and disadvantages of a number of different delivery model options (including the current way in which the service is delivered).

The methodology helps decision makers to consider the:

- Desirability - the degree to which each option meets the strategic objectives and priorities of stakeholders
- Viability - the degree to which each option is financially viable and sustainable
- Feasibility - the degree to which each option can be implemented

As part of outlining the current proposal, an options appraisal was undertaken.

The options appraisal stage allowed for a number of different delivery model options to be explored and evaluated against a set of agreed criteria, leading to the selection of the preferred option.

The following options were considered and scored: -

Option	Description
Option 1	Do Nothing
Option 2	Refurbish existing school which has already met the 60-year life expectancy
Option 3	Build new school same size school on the existing site
Option 4	Build a new school, same size school on a new site with childcare
Option 5	Build a new, larger school on a new site with nursery, childcare and Special Resource Base

The process utilised was outlined in detail in the Consultation Document and resulted in

Option 5 being identified as the preferred option, namely, **build a new, larger school on a new site with nursery, childcare and Special Resource Base**

Through the appraisal process a final recommendation about the preferred delivery model was carried forward to the Consultation period with the view to engage with key stakeholders and identify priorities from their perspective. This stage was an important part of the process, to raise important questions at an early stage and assist in developing proposals in greater detail to consider:

- are there better ways to achieve your objectives?
- are there better ways to use the resources available?
- is this the best way to achieve the desired outcomes?

Benefits and Disbenefits

There are common challenges faced by all Local Authorities when adopting new proposals. The vast majority of Council policies are delivered through projects and programmes of various forms. It is therefore vital that projects are delivered successfully in order to realise their intended benefits for citizens.

Evidence shows that the best way to ensure successful delivery is by setting up projects correctly in the first place. The most common causes of failure, among others are a lack of clear objectives, insufficient resources and over-ambitious cost and schedule that impact on the level and amount of benefit that can be realised and can be avoided if tackled in a project's early stages.

As part of the development of the proposal, a number of benefits and disbenefits were identified as outlined in the Consultation Document. The consultation process was an opportunity to consult with relevant stakeholders to understand what they see as positive outcomes and what negative consequences may be delivered.

An Equality and Welsh Language Impact Assessment and a Community Impact Assessment was carried out to initiate discussion and invite comments as to whether the principles for the proposal are supported.

All comments have been recorded and will be made available for Cabinet as a separate annex to this Consultation Report.



The Consultation Process

Consultation Process

The consultation process has followed the Welsh Government guidelines as set out in the School Organisation Code 2018.

As the proposal relates to a 'regulated alteration' to a Maintained school under Section 42 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013, the proposals have been published on the Council's website.

Implications of COVID19

Due to the implications of COVID-19 at the time this consultation was due to take place and after taking advice from Welsh Government, this consultation process refrained from undertaking any face-to-face consultation sessions to support social distancing and maintain safe working practices for all.

It should be noted that there is no obligation to consult face-to-face and therefore a written paper consultation exercise was undertaken to discharge the Council of its duty under the School Organisation Code 2018.

However, a number of alternative methods were utilised for engagement including use of social media, face-time technology and the opportunity to pose questions to form part of a 'Frequently Asked Questions' Document.

Stakeholder Engagement

Consultees were advised of the proposal and availability of the consultation documentation whenit went live on the 14th September 2020 via letter/email and were therefore invited to take part in the statutory consultation:
The School Organisation Code 2018, prescribes those individuals/groups considered key consultees in the consultation process. The list below presents the consultees engaged with relevant to proposals of this nature for the Caerphilly Borough.

- Parents, prospective parents, guardians and carers of all pupils of schools directly affected by the proposal
- Headteacher, staff and governors of schools directly affected by the proposal
- Pupils/Pupil Councils of schools directly affected by the proposal
- Directors of Education of all bordering LAs – Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Cardiff, Merthyr Tydfil, Newport, Powys, Rhondda Cynon Taf, Torfaen
- Catholic Diocesan Board of Education
- Church in Wales Diocesan Board
- Local Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE)
- Governing body of other schools which the proposer considers are likely to be affected by the proposal
- Local CCBC Members
- All Assembly Members and Members of Parliament representing the area served by the schools directly affected by the proposal
- Welsh Ministers
- ESTYN
- Teaching Associations
- Support Staff Associations
- South East Wales Consortium (EAS)
- South East Wales Transport Alliance (SEWTA)
- Gwent and South Wales Police and Crime Commissioners
- Local Town and Community Councils
- Menter Iaith
- Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership
- Parent Network
- Welsh Education Forum

In the case of proposals affecting Welsh Language provision, the Welsh Language Commissioner is also considered a consultee and was contacted in relation to this proposal.

The schools identified as being affected by the proposal are listed below:

School	Reason
Ysgol Gymraeg Cwm Derwen	Proximity - Nearest alternative community Welsh Medium school in Borough Impact on projected numbers, demand and learner travel as a result of the proposal requires consideration.

Abercarn Primary	English Medium Primary School Proximity of 1.8 miles from current site Impact on projected numbers and demand as a result of the proposal requires consideration.
Cwmcarn Primary	English Medium Primary School Proximity of 0.7 miles from current site Impact on projected numbers and demand as a result of the proposal requires consideration.
Waunfawr Primary	English Medium Primary School Proximity of 1.5 miles from current site Impact on projected numbers and demand as a result of the proposal requires consideration.

In addition to advising those we were obliged to under the stakeholder criteria, the following were also contacted and advised of our proposals in writing:

- All Headteachers in the Borough

Consultation Information

The School Organisation Code 2018 states that when undertaking a consultation process in connection with a school proposal, the Council must publish information to enable transparent, balanced and open decision making.

The consultation document must be published on a school day and consultees must be given at least 42 days to respond to the document, with at least 20 of these being school days as defined by Section 579 of the Education Act 1996. The consultation period opened on Monday 14th September 2020 (a school day) and concluded at midnight on Monday 26th October 2020.

As part of this proposal, the following documentation was produced:

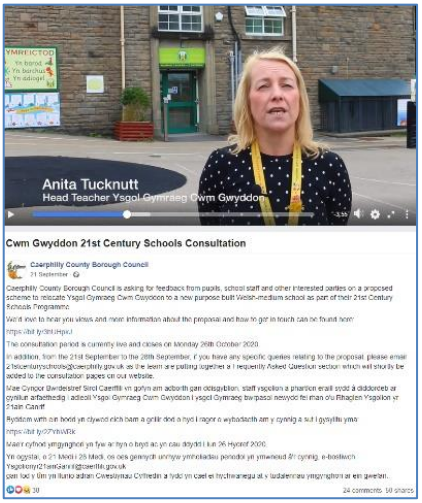
- Consultation Notification Letter
- Consultation Document
- Child Friendly Consultation Summary
- Consultation Video
- Artist's Impression of proposed new school
- Consultation Response Form (Online)
- Consultation Response Form (Printable PDF)
- Equalities and Welsh Language Impact Assessment



A child friendly consultation summary and video was produced to support the consultation process with pupils of the affected schools and present information in a manner relevant to their likely understanding, allowing them to participate in the consultation process and reach an informed opinion. In addition to this documentation, the 21st Century Schools Team and local teaching staff provided assistance to children and young people who wished to submit a consultation response in their preferred format and language, especially relevant as the children attend a Welsh medium school.

All documentation was published in Welsh and English, complying with the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards. Information was also available in other languages and formats on request, however, no such requests were received as part of this process.

Hardcopies of the documentation were issued to the schools directly affected by the proposal including the child friendly summary for discussion with the pupils.



In addition to notifying the consultees in writing of the proposal, distribution of information was supported via the school text messaging service direct to parents and staff.

The Council's Social media channels were also utilised. Messages relating to the consultation were released in phases over the first 3 weeks of the consultation to maintain public awareness and provide as far a 'social media reach' as possible.

Social media reach is a media analytics metric that refers to the number of users who have come across a particular content on a social platform such as Facebook, YouTube or Twitter.

Week 1	YouTube Video Released	CaerphillyCBCTV	684 subscribers
Week 2	Facebook Message	@CaerphillyCBC	28,188 followers
Week 3	Twitter Message	@CaerphillyCBC	19.3k followers

Response Methods

As outlined in the Consultation Document, anyone wishing to comment in relation to the proposal could do so in writing by:

- Completing the online response form on the Council's website
- Completing a response pro forma and posting it to the 21st Century School Team at Caerphilly
- Emailing comments to the 21st Century Schools Team at Caerphilly

The response forms were designed in such a way as to capture the relevant information required to discharge the Council's obligations required under the School Organisation Code for undertaking a consultation linked to the regulated alteration of a maintained school.

This consultation was undertaken to capture the views of consultees in relation to the proposal to relocate the school. These views have been incorporated into this document, which will be published and considered by Cabinet when determining whether to proceed to Statutory notice stage. A separate Planning Application Process will be undertaken in respect of this proposal. The separate statutory processes were outlined in the consultation document and any adverse comments received as part of this process have been recorded as such.



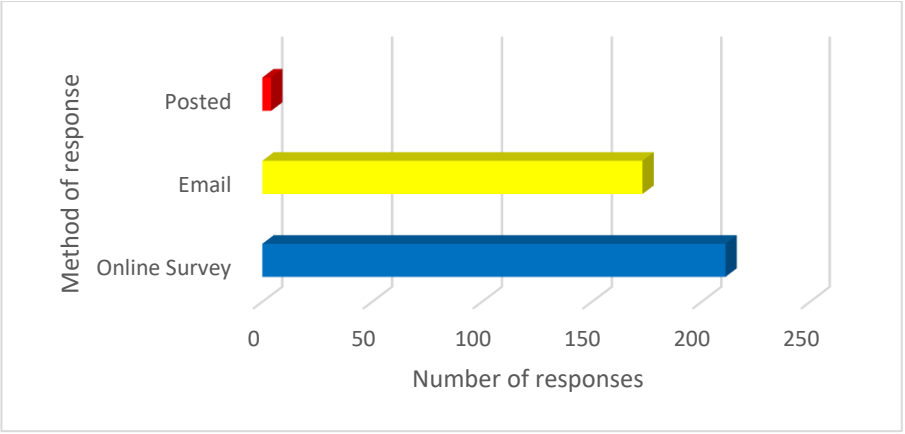
Consultation Responses

Consultation Responses

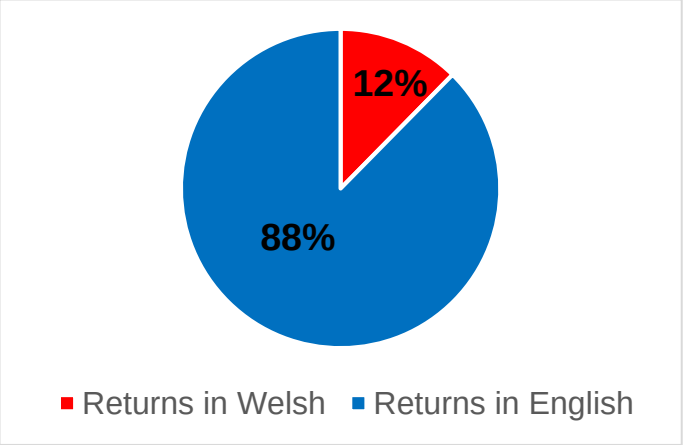
Overall a total of 388 responses were received during the consultation process.

Of the prescribed methods for providing a response during the consultation period:

- 211 responses received via Online Survey
- 173 responses received via email
- 4 responses received via post



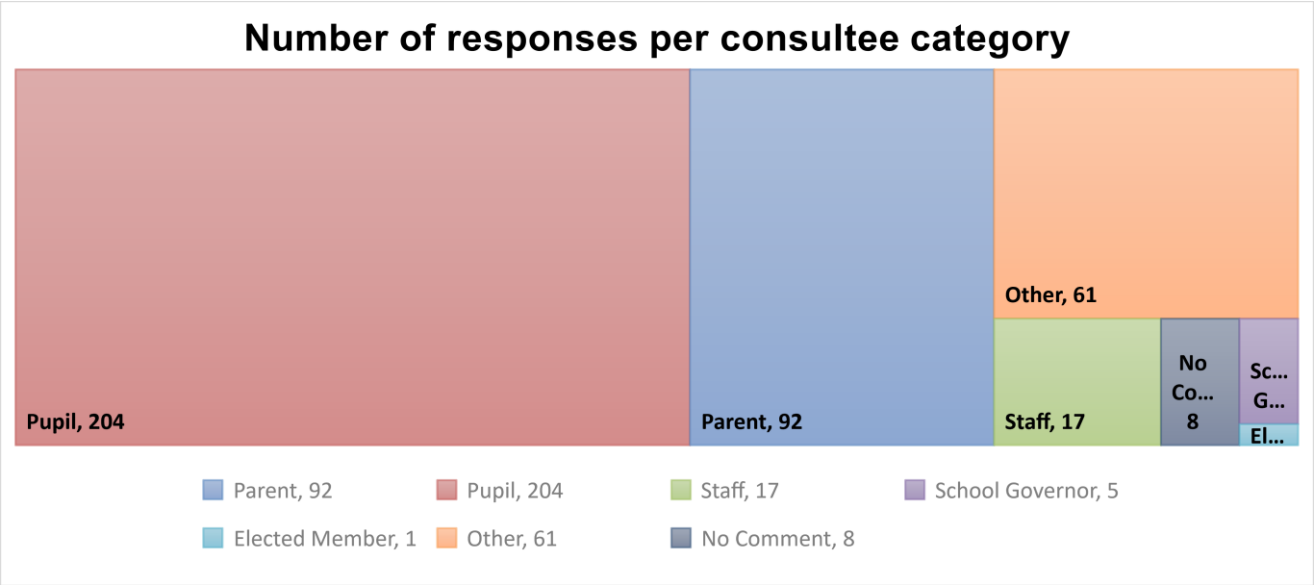
48 responses (12%) were returned in the medium of Welsh with the remaining 340 responses (88%) in English.



The 21st Century Schools Team received no requests for the documentation to be provided in any other format or language.

QUESTION 1

The consultees were asked to identify a category that best described them in relation to the proposal for the school affected. The options provided were selected to demonstrate that the key consultee groups as outlined in the School Organisation Code had been engaged with.





53% Pupils	24% Parents	4% Staff Members	1% School Governors	0.2% Elected Members	18% Other

For those selecting ‘other’, the opportunity was given to elaborate further as they felt appropriate.

QUESTION 2

As part of the consultation process, consultees were asked to provide basic contact information, including their name, address and email. This psychographic data was collected in order to help paint a picture of the consultee and enable the 21st Century Schools team to understand trends in response data and response groupings that would assist in compiling this Consultation Report.

As information can be collected for many purposes, the Caerphilly County Borough Council’s privacy notice for consultations/surveys was referenced, which outlined the purpose and legal basis for collecting the information, data usage and data retention periods.

For the purposes of this Consultation Report, Cabinet will be provided with a separate digest of the consultation comments received. Please note that comments that are considered to be offensive or compromise anonymity have been edited or removed.

QUESTION 3

As part of our duty under the School Organisation Code 2018, consultees must be given the option to request notification as to the publication of this Consultation Report. Contact information has been collected to this end and the preferred method for communication will be notification via email if this information has been made available by the respondent.



126 out of the 388 respondents have requested notification. These individuals have been added to the notification list and will be contacted concurrently with stakeholders when this document is made publicly available through the Council’s website. Hardcopies of the documentation will be made available on request.

QUESTION 4

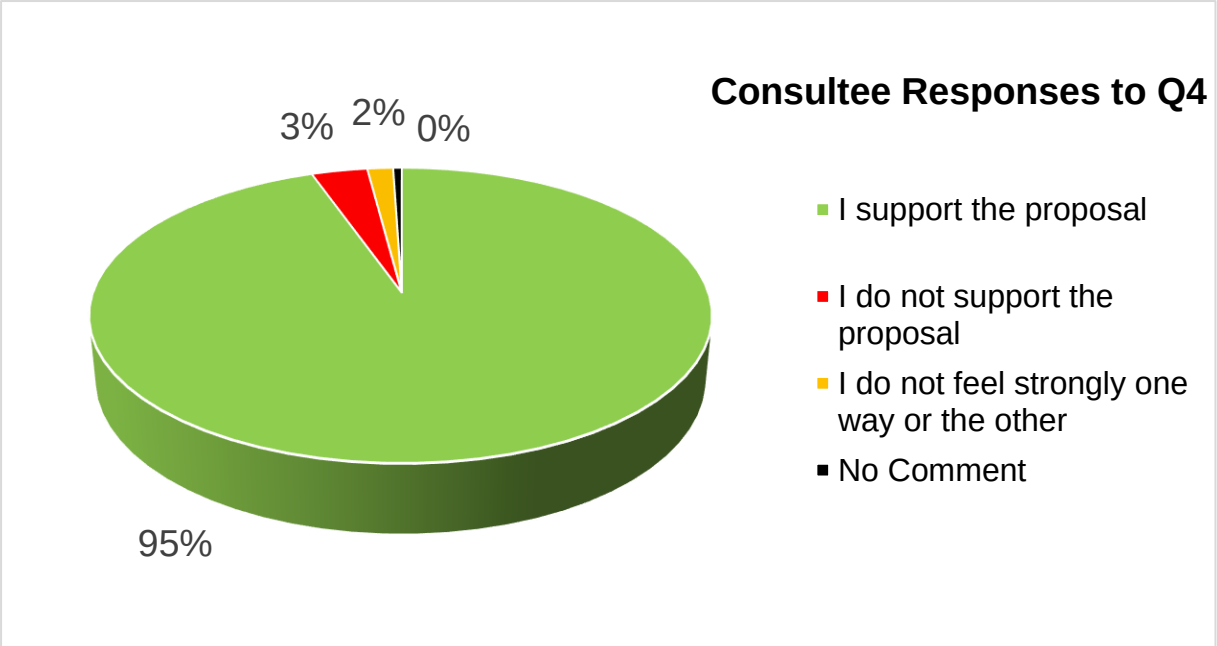
Consultees can submit their views either in favour of or against the proposals.

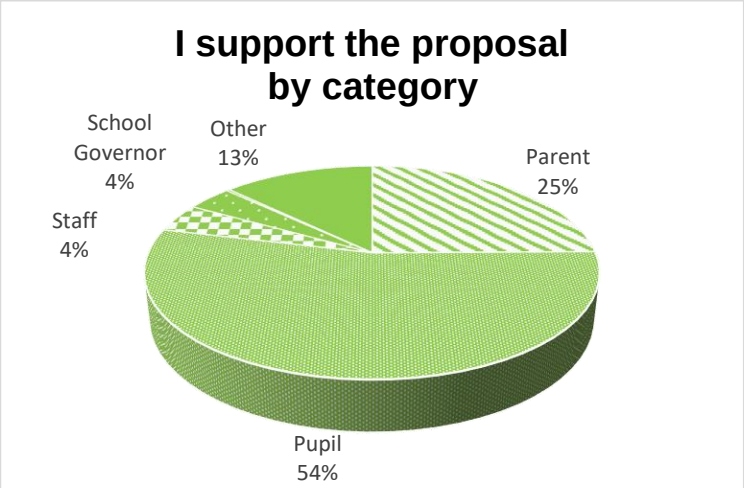
Consultees were asked to indicate which of the following statements most accurately reflected their views about the proposal. Consultees were reminded to read the consultation documentation prior to providing any responses during this consultation exercise and that unfavourable comments made during the consultation period will not be treated as objections at this stage.

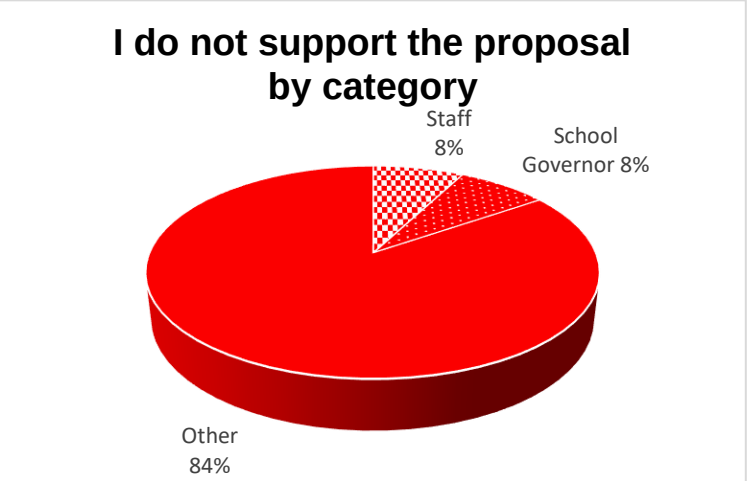
The options available were:

- I do not feel strongly one way or the other
- I support the proposal
- I do not support the proposal

Of the responses returned, 367 support the proposal, 13 do not support it, 6 didn’t feel strongly either way and 2 failed to select an option. That equates to 95% in support, 3% opposed with the remaining 2% either providing a neutral response or no comment.







It is prudent to bring to the attention of Cabinet that the commentary provided as part of Question 5 may offer additional insight into the views of the consultees and that the response provided to Question 4 should not be considered in isolation.

Question 5

This was a free text box, enabling consultees to provide additional comments on the proposal. All comments received have been read and analysed.

General themes that emerged from the consultation:

- Acknowledgement that the current Ysgol Gymraeg Cwm Gwyddon site is restrictive, developed to 'its full potential' and has 'outgrown current site'
- The proposal supports the increasing demand for Welsh Language provision in the area
- Concerns over proposed use of the large site in Cwmcarn for a Primary School only
- Concerns over safety and traffic management at current and proposed site
- Concerns over impact proposal will have on English medium provision in the area
- Preference for utilisation of the site for a new building English medium comprehensive

Question 6

In line with the Caerphilly County Borough Council's Strategic Equality Plan 2016-2020 and the Consultation and Monitoring Guidance 2016 document, a reduced version of the Equalities and Monitoring questionnaire was included as part of the consultation response to support effective planning and to ensure that a representative sample was achieved to identify any equality issues.

The option to include information relating to the consultees Gender, Age, Disability Status, Welsh Language Skills and any influencing factors relating to their response were included but not mandatory.

From the responses received, of those that completed the Equalities monitoring section:

Are you …			
Male	63	Other	0
Female	156	Unwilling to declare	169

Age			
Under 16	39	40-65	67
16-25	8	Over 65	7
26-39	81	Unwilling to declare	186

Disability			
I am not Disabled	188	Learning Difficulties	0
Physical / Mobility Impaired	1	Visually Impaired	0
Hearing Impaired	2	Speech Impaired	0
Unwilling to declare	166		
Other	30		

Welsh Language Skills				
	A Little	Moderately	Quite Well	Fluently
Speak	71	13	8	84
Understand	62	17	10	84
Read	58	17	9	83
Write	58	12	8	81
No Welsh Language Skills	71	Unwilling to Declare	133	

Question 7

In relation to equalities implications that respondents highlighted, 8 responses indicated that their decision was influenced as per the list outlined in the consultation response form, for example:

- 'Wishing for my children to get the best out of the Welsh language and their education'
- 'As a bilingual person living in Wales, I believe the Council should provide Welsh medium education that meets the needs of 21st Century education'

Education Scrutiny Response

The Council's Education Scrutiny Committee is a consultee for any policy or service developments in relation to Education within the Borough.

A digital meeting via Microsoft teams took place on Tuesday 22nd September 2020 at 5.30pm. 13 out of 15 Councilors were in attendance.

As part of this meeting, the 21st Century Schools and Colleges Band B Programme and consultation in respect of Ysgol Gymraeg Cwm Gwyddon was discussed. All consultation documentation was made available to members as part of the agenda reports pack and officers linked to the proposal were available to take questions.

It was agreed that a vote in respect of the proposal would be taken and be officially recorded for inclusion in this Consultation Report. The Committee members voted unanimously in favour of the proposal for Ysgol Gymraeg Cwm Gwyddon.



A recording of the session is available on YouTube:

Education Scrutiny Committee Meeting

The agenda item linked to this proposal starts 18 minutes and 50 seconds in to the recording.

The Notice of the Decisions document is also available to view on the Council's website.

Estyn's Response

Under the terms of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and the School Organisation Code 2018, the Council, as the proposers, is required to send a notification with regards to the consultation to Estyn.

Estyn is the education and training inspectorate for Wales and their vision is to improve the quality of education and training and outcomes for all learners in Wales. However, Estyn is not a body which is required to act in accordance with the Code and the Act places no statutory requirements on Estyn in respect of school organisation matters. Therefore as a body being consulted, Estyn will provide their opinion only on the overall merits of school organisation proposals.

Estyn has considered the educational aspects of the proposal. The full response from Estyn in included as Annex 2 to this report. However, in summary:

"The proposer has provided an appropriate rationale for the proposal. It is to replace the current school which is on a site with buildings in a poor condition. It is also to meet the rising demand for Welsh medium education in the local authority. In addition, the proposer intends to provide a Welsh language resource for those children who require specialist provision outside of a mainstream school."

"It is Estyn's view that the proposal is likely to at least maintain the current standards of education and provision in the area. However, the proposer has not provided enough clarity regarding mitigation against the risk of the proposal generating a significant number of surplus places at the new school site."

The Council acknowledges Estyn's response and would like to provide the following clarification statement in relation to Estyn's observation relating to *'mitigating against the risk of the proposal generating a significant number of surplus places at the new school site.'* The proposal for Ysgol Gymraeg Cwm Gwyddon is to relocate the existing provision and provide additional capacity on site to accommodate up to 420 places plus additional nursery and special resource base provision. We recognise that this proposal will initially create surplus places at the school and this has been identified and considered an acceptable low level risk. The process of managing admissions over a number of years as outlined in the consultation document, whilst playing a contributing factor to surplus places initially, will ensure the impact on surrounding schools is mitigated as far as reasonably practicable. The places have been calculated to support increased demand in the area and continue to support the Council to stimulate demand for Welsh medium education to meet the aspiration of Welsh Government to achieve a challenging target of a million Welsh speakers by 2050, as outlined in Caerphilly's Welsh Education Strategic Plan.

Consultation Clarification

When analysing the consultation response comments received as part of the consultation period, a number of recurring areas of concern and those where there was a level of agreement with the proposals became evident.

To assist Cabinet in the decision making process, the following information is provided by means of response for clarification with supporting reasons.

- **Areas of widest concern**

Area of concern:	**Consultee Responses included:**
Use identified for proposed relocation site	• Size of site • Why Primary provision?
Number of mentions	8
Council's Response	
The Council acknowledges that the proposed site for re-location has a far larger footprint than the current Ysgol Gymraeg Cwm Gwyddon. The planned footprint of the new primary school will also allow for future expansion, including the potential for secondary Welsh medium education, which will also support the requirements of the Council's Welsh Education Strategic Plan and in supporting the Welsh Government's Cymraeg 2050. As demonstrated throughout the Consultation Document, the current site for Ysgol Gymraeg Cwm Gwyddon has reached its full potential. There is growing demand for Welsh medium primary provision and this proposal aims to address that issue.	

Area of concern:	Consultee Responses included:
Secondary Provision	• New English medium Build • Demand for English medium • Newbridge/Risca Comprehensive school capacity
Number of mentions	9

Council's Response

The Council is dedicated to providing educational facilities that meet the needs of our pupils and local communities.

As demonstrated by the figures below, there is no requirement identified for an additional English medium secondary provision. Both local English medium secondary schools have been identified as having adequate provision at their current locations for their catchment pupils.

School	Capacity	Number on Roll Sept 2020	% Catchment pupils on roll	% Out of Catchment	% Out of County
Newbridge	1017	991	65.59%	17.46%	16.95%
Risca	729	661	82.45%	12.56%	4.99%

In addition, as part of the 21st Century Schools Band A programme, Newbridge School received an investment of £2 million to provide an additional 9 classrooms and ancillary facilities.

Area of concern:	Consultee Responses included:
Investment in Schools	• English Medium Schools • Other Primary Schools in the area
Number of mentions	4

Council's Response

The Council is dedicated to providing all learners with quality learning opportunities. The 21st Century Schools programme is only one mechanism for infrastructure investment in our Schools. The Council continuously improves the quality of school buildings through the Capital Investment Programme. Schools are invited to submit applications annually to support improvement works. Any works that are identified via the Health and Safety team are also undertaken.

The proposal for Ysgol Gymraeg Cwm Gwyddon has been prioritised as the school at its current location has reached its capacity in relation to any further developments on the existing grounds, whereas the local English medium provisions have that opportunity moving forward should the demand be required.

Area of concern:	Consultee Responses included:
Traffic Management	• Transportation of pupils • Increased traffic flow at proposed site • Access and parking
Number of mentions	6

Council's Response

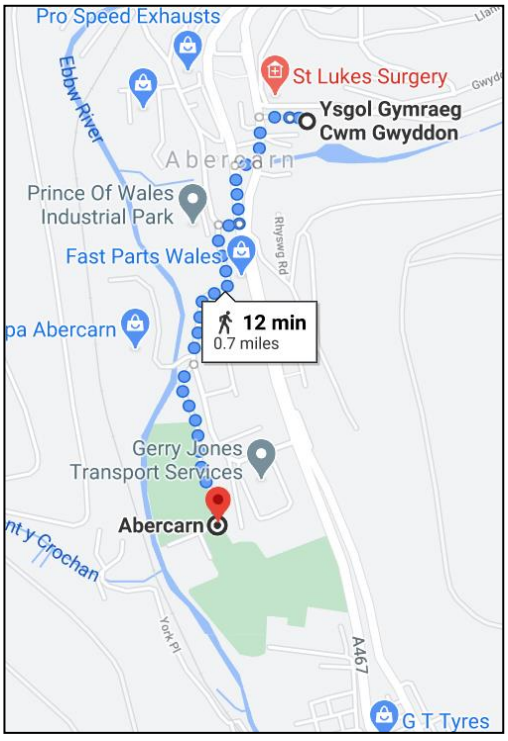
As part of any development, the Council is committed to providing safe, efficient and effective traffic management.

The site identified for the relocation of Ysgol Gymraeg Cwm Gwyddon is the former Cwmcarn High School site. The former secondary school had the capacity to accommodate in the region of 1000 pupils. The proposal for the primary provision is less than half of that figure.

The Consultation Document acknowledges the importance of the Learner Travel. The safety of children is of paramount importance and the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008 requires local authorities to assess the suitability of travel for learners between home and places of education and training.

It is also important to secure the views of children and young people in accordance with the Rights of Children and Young Persons (Wales) Measure 2011. The views and perceptions of children can inform the local authority officers who have responsibility for assessing home to school travel provision. This is why children and young people formed one of the key consultee groups as part of the consultation process.

It is anticipated that a status quo will be maintained as the relocation is less than 1 mile from the existing site.



The catchment area for the pupils remain unchanged.

Welsh medium primary school catchment areas	
	
8	Ysgol Gymraeg Cwm Gwyddon

In addition, as part of the planning and design of the new facility, safer routes and access will be established with designated pick up and drop off points. This proposal will be subject to full planning application process and a wide range of consultees will be invited to comment, including the Highways Department.

- **Areas of widest Agreement**

Area of Agreement:	**Consultee Responses included:**
The condition and suitability of the existing site occupied by Ysgol Gymraeg Cwm Gwyddon	• Current Capacity • Maximum site developed • Standards / Quality • Site accessibility • Parking / Drop Off
Number of mentions	257
Council's Response	
The Council appreciates that the consultees have acknowledged and reiterated that the current Ysgol Gymraeg Cwm Gwyddon site has reached its maximum build potential whilst maintaining high quality teaching provision.	



Image of existing Ysgol Gymraeg Cwm Gwyddon site

The capacity of the school does not lend itself for full school activities e.g. concerts / assemblies / dining facilities. The original building presents restrictions in relation to full accessibility and a split level site. The location of the existing school also provides daily challenges linked to access via a main road and restricted walkway between 2 public houses.

This proposal would address these issues.

Area of Agreement:	**Consultee Responses included:**
There is Growing Demand for Welsh medium provision	• Welsh medium demand increasing in the identified area • Parental Choice • Bilingualism
Number of mentions	90

Council's Response

The Council is heartened that the responses provided by the consultees have recognised the increasing demand for Welsh medium education in the area and also the wider benefits of enabling parental choice, bilingualism and future prospects when it comes to their children's education.

It has also been acknowledged through the responses that this proposal would provide the vehicle for addressing the growing demand for additional places at Welsh medium primary level.

Area of Agreement:	Consultee Responses included:
The need for Additional Facilities	• Outdoor facilities • Health, wellbeing and learning experiences • Community Use
Number of mentions	222

Council's Response

The consultees have identified that the additional facilities outlined in the proposal would benefit the pupils and wider community.

The consultees have also recognised that additional facilities will have benefits to education, recreation and general wellbeing which will support the Council in meeting its Wellbeing and Future Generations aspirations.

One of the key aims of the Welsh Government's 21st Century Schools and Colleges Band B programme and a pre-requisite for investment is the need to '*ensure the effective and efficient use of the educational estate for use by both schools and the wider community'*.

The Consultation document highlighted that, at present a number of community groups utilise the existing site but are limited due to the current design.



Note: The image above is used for illustrative purposes and the design is draft at this stage and subject to project approval, planning and site investigations.

The proposed project will take into account the desire to encourage and facilitate community use of the asset. To this end the design process will seek to include measures to enable safe 'zoning' of parts of the new school building. It will also strengthen and safeguard the promotion of inclusivity and wellbeing within the Community.

Reasonable Alternatives Identified

As outlined in the Consultation Document, the proposal under consideration is to relocate Ysgol Gymraeg Cwm Gwyddon. This was the preferred option as identified through the options appraisal process and scored against the critical success factors of Strategic fit, Educational fit, Accessibility, Financial fit and Environmental impact.

Through the consultation process and the comments returned, there has been an acknowledgement of the need to invest in the school.

Following the consultation period, the Council is required to carry out a further assessment for the proposal. The purpose of this further assessment is to take account of any further information that has come forward through the consultation or otherwise.

In its consultation report, the Council is required to explain its assessment of the proposal and the reasonable alternatives identified, how this assessment differs from their earlier assessment (if at all) and its assessment of any further reasonable alternatives. Finally, the Council is required to confirm whether it considers the implementation of the proposal, (wholly or partly) to be the most appropriate response to the reasons it identified for the proposal and give reasons for its conclusion including an assessment of the likely impact on Quality and Standards in Education, the community and effect on different travelling arrangements.

The following alternative options have been raised via Consultees:

Alternative Option raised by consultees	
Relocate Ysgol Gymraeg Cwm Gwyddon school to another location such as Ty Sign	
Council's Response	
The Council welcomes consultee acknowledgement that the existing Ysgol Gymraeg Cwm Gwyddon school requires investment and that the current location is no longer suitable. If Ysgol Gymraeg Cwm Gwyddon was to be located to another site as suggested, such as Ty Sign, this would mean the disruption to an existing English medium primary school that has not been identified as requiring additional accommodation, which could also impact on the quality and standards of the current education provided. The suggested site of Ty Sign primary would not lend itself to this proposal as the capacity of the school is greater than the capacity required for Ysgol Gymraeg Cwm Gwyddon, therefore creating additional surplus places. Ty Sign primary school would no longer be located in the 'heart' of the community. It would fall outside of its present catchment area resulting in potential reconfiguration, impact on a wider range of schools and additional transportation distances for their pupils. In addition, it would result in the displacement of a larger cohort requiring a larger school at greater cost to that of the proposal. Whilst the Council welcomes feedback from the consultee in this matter, it is recommended that this option is not a suitable alternative to the current proposal.	
Council's Assessment of Reasonable Alternative:	Option has been discounted

Alternative Option raised by consultees

Build an English Medium Secondary school on Cwmcarn

Variations include:

- New school to replace Cwmcarn high
- New school to accommodate Newbridge School pupils
- New school to amalgamate Newbridge and Risca

Council's Response

As identified earlier in this Consultation Report, the Council is dedicated to providing educational facilities that meet the needs of our pupils and local communities.

A number of consultees have made the suggestion that the proposed build site in relation to the relocation of Ysgol Gymraeg Cwm Gwyddon is utilised for English medium secondary provision. Whilst a number of variations on this theme have been raised, from providing a new secondary provision to replace the former Cwmcarn High School, Relocation of Newbridge School, or amalgamation of Newbridge School and Risca Comprehensive onto a single site, the merits of each option have been considered prior to this proposal taking into account the likely impact on quality and standards, community, surplus places and travelling arrangements. As outlined previously, there is no requirement identified for an additional English medium secondary provision. Both local English medium secondary schools have been identified as having adequate provision at their current locations for their catchment pupils.

In addition, there has recently been significant investment of £2 million through the 21st Century Schools and Colleges Band A programme at Newbridge School.

Whilst the Council welcomes feedback from the consultees in this matter, it is recommended that the option is not a suitable alternative to the current proposal.

Council's Assessment of Reasonable Alternative:	Option has been discounted

Alternative Option raised by consultees

Build a new co-located Welsh and English Medium Primary provision on the Cwmcarn site

Council's Response

The Council recognises that the consultees have provided this alternative option to reflect practice undertaken in other authorities. Prior to the current proposal being drawn up, consideration was given to this option but at this stage it was felt that it wasn't an option to be explored further due to the existing English medium infrastructure in the area and as outlined previously to meet the needs of the pupils and the community.

The current proposal has been framed in such a way as to minimise the impact on English medium schools whilst ensuring the identified demand for Welsh medium education is met. Co-location of existing English and Welsh medium provision would result in disruption to a wider cohort of pupils and travel arrangements. No evidence at this stage is available to comment on the impact this would have on the quality and standards of provision.

Whilst the Council welcomes feedback from the consultees in this matter, it is recommended that the option is not a suitable alternative to the current proposal.	
Council's Assessment of Reasonable Alternative:	Option has been discounted



Learner Voice

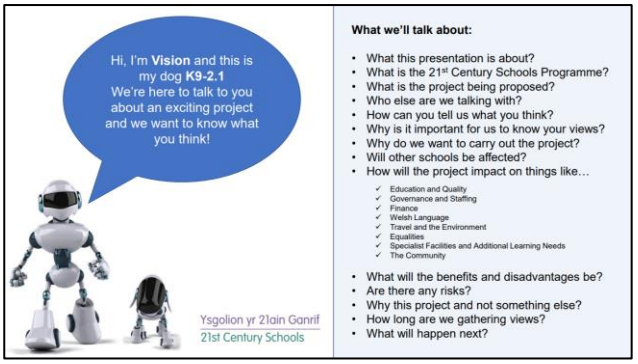
Young people have a right to act to express their views in all matters affecting them and for their views to be heard and given due weight in accordance with their age and maturity.

Everyday Summary Version – Children and Young People

The Council acknowledged that the voice of young people is about involving them as active participants in the development, delivery, management and improvement of their educational and student experience and needs to be at the heart of planning, provision and evaluation.

A summary version of the main consultation document was also prepared and published, and was targeted specifically at children and young people. This summary version was released online as part of the consultation pack and hardcopies were made available on request from the school.





Consultation Video

The Council recognises the potential of young people to enrich the decision-making processes, to share perspectives and to participate as citizens and facilitators of change.



As such, in preparing the Consultation Packs, pupils from the school contributed to the content and participated in the consultation video.

Pupil participation enabled the children to have a chance to make their voice heard and get involved in influencing decisions that affect their learning and well-being.

A recording is available on YouTube:

Cwm Gwyddon 21st Century Schools Consultation

School Council / Pupil Engagement

The 21st Century Schools Team in Caerphilly will ensure that when bringing forward any proposal, suitable arrangements are made to consult and involve pupils throughout the process.

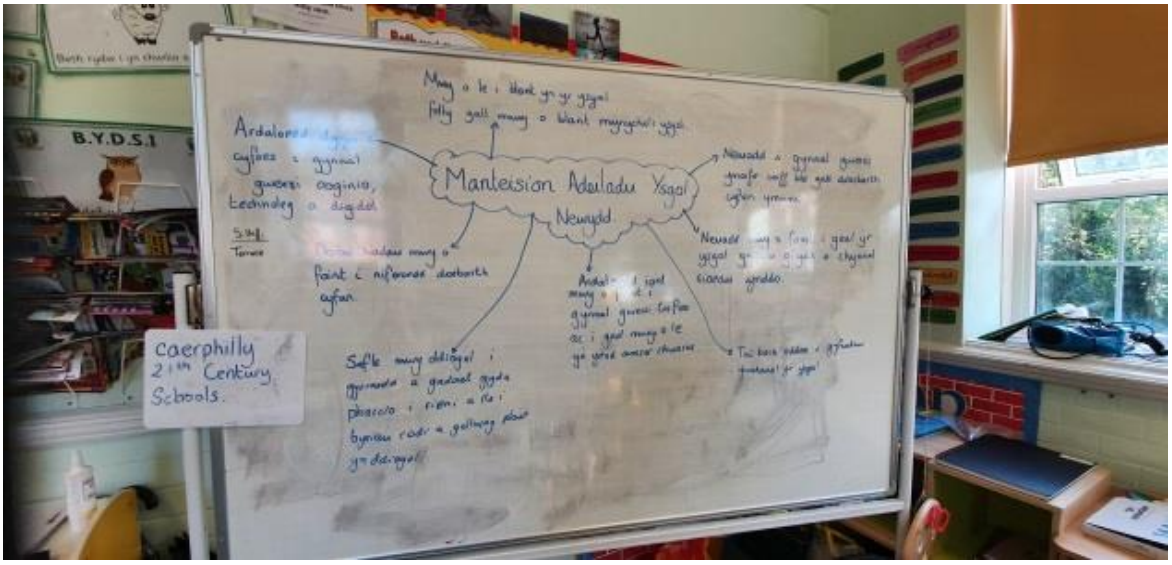
In the initial consultation document, consideration was given to hosting a virtual consultation session with representatives from the schools affected. However, through discussions with the relevant head teachers and the 21st Century Schools team, the decision was taken for the local teaching staff to engage with all year groups and not just a representative sample. Utilising the child friendly version of the consultation document and the accompanying video, children were engaged in a familiar environment, at the appropriate comprehension level and in the language of their preference. It was felt that due to the current 'bubble' situation in schools, this was the best way to ensure the fullest return possible to capture the learner voice.

Many of the children provided comments on what they would like to see in the future and how they felt about the proposal. Notes from each session were recorded and have been included as part of the consultation responses which will be made available to Cabinet. The questions raised by pupils during these sessions are outlined below:

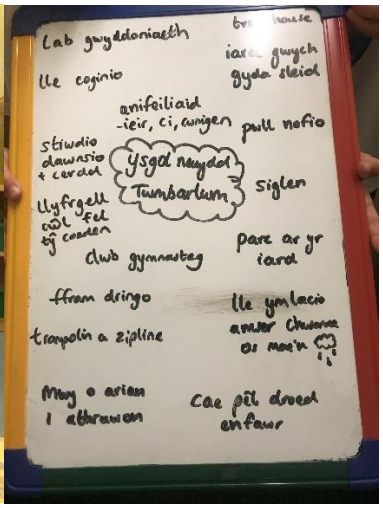
- School directly affected by Proposal

Ysgol Gymraeg Cwm Gwyddon	
Questions	**Council's Response**
When will the project be ready?	The proposal is for School to open in September 2023
What extra facilities will the school have?	the new building will incorporate a primary facility for 420 pupils, 60 nursery places and Special Resource Base. The main school will have classrooms, a main assembly hall, food technology space, a library and IT space.

Will it be called Cwm Gwyddon?	Yes, we are not proposing to change the name as part of this proposal.
Will the school uniform change?	This will be subject to a governing body decision by the school.
Will the new school have older children like the age group at Cwm Rhymni there ?	No, this proposal is to accommodate children of the same age range (3-11 years old).
Will we have to share toilets with younger children?	The design of the new school will have toilets throughout and relevant to the age range in school.
Will we have to eat our sandwiches in the classroom?	That will be the head teachers decision.
Can we have a cooking room so we can have cooking sessions and learn about healthy food like we do when we have visitors like Richard Shaw from Cooking Together Wales?	Final arrangements in relation to internal design of the new school are still to be finalised, but the proposed design currently has a Food Tech space included similar to the one we've put in at Idris Davies School.
Can we have a dance studio and music studio for us to be able to have dance lessons and take part in dancing competitions like the Urdd ?	No, this isn't part of the design, but there will be a larger fit for purpose hall available.
Will there be a designated yard for each year?	No, not for each year, but there will be in relation to keystages.
Will the new school be nearer to playing fields?	Yes, there will be playing fields in close proximity.
Will the new school have a football/rugby pitch?	There won't be one specifically for the school but you may have access to one.
Will the new school have changing rooms?	The new school will have individual class cloakrooms and the proposed design does include two small changing rooms off the Hall.
Will it be easier to park outside the school?	Yes, there will be a designated parking and drop off area.
Will we be able to come back and see the new school?	That will be for the head teacher to decide.







Images from a Consultation Session undertaken with pupils at Ysgol Gymraeg Cwm Gwyddon

- Other schools identified as being affected

The 4 other schools identified as 'affected' in relation to this proposal were, Ysgol Gymraeg Cwm Derwen, Abercarn Primary, Cwmcarn Primary and Waunfawr Primary.

The Head Teachers of these schools were contacted during the consultation period whereby the consultation proposal was discussed and the pupils, governing body and staff at the school invited to provide their responses as part of the consultation process. Where information has been submitted, responses are included as part of the separate annex available to Cabinet.



Other Considerations



"Our national mission is to raise standards, reduce the attainment gap and deliver an education system that is a source of national pride and confidence."

Kirsty Williams AM
Cabinet Secretary for Education

As Wales embarks on a renewed vision of success for all learners, we can reflect on our rich heritage and proud history for promoting access to education in Caerphilly. Our transformational reforms are taking place within a challenging environment. This includes the uncertainties associated with Brexit, the technological transformation and the divergence in the qualification systems across the home nations. These are all challenges and opportunities for the Council.

There are a number of local and national strategies that drive Educational reform and underline the rationale for the proposals being considered as part of the 21st Century Schools and Colleges Band B programme in Caerphilly.

- Welsh Language Act 1993 / Welsh Language (Wales) measure 2011
- Additional Learning Needs and Educational Tribunal (Wales) Act 2017
- The Childcare Act 2006 (Local Authority Assessment) (Wales) Regulations 2016
- Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015
- Welsh Government - Education in Wales: Our National Mission
- Welsh Government - Cymraeg 2050: Welsh Language Strategy Action Plan 2019- 2021
- Welsh Government - 21st Century Schools and Colleges Programme
- Caerphilly - 'Shared Ambitions' Education Attainment Strategy 2019 - 2022
- Caerphilly - #Team Caerphilly: Better Together Transformation Strategy
- Caerphilly - Welsh Education Strategic Plan
- Caerphilly - Welsh Language Strategy 2017-2022
- Caerphilly - Corporate Plan (including Wellbeing Objectives 2018-2023)
- Caerphilly – Education Other Than At School (EOTAS) Strategy 2020
- Caerphilly - Strategic Equality Plan 2020-2024
- Caerphilly - Communication and Engagement Strategy 2019-2022



Next Steps

Recommendation

In reviewing the proposal to take account of further information that has come forward through the consultation and in consideration of the likely impact on quality and standards in education, the community and travelling arrangements, it is the recommendation of this report that the proposal is progressed as outlined in the Consultation Document, namely:

> **Relocate Ysgol Gymraeg Cwm Gwyddon to a new purpose built Welshmedium provision school to be situated on the vacant site of the former Cwmcarn High School to include Childcare and Special Resource Base provision**

Decision Making

To deliver our reforms across the entire system, we will need a bold commitment to effective collaboration along with integration of services where appropriate. This will include Welsh Government, the teaching profession and the wider education workforce, our key partners in local authorities, diocesan authorities, regional services, Estyn and others. Successful implementation of any proposal will require effective and honest engagement between all facets of the education system and our local communities and we are committed to providing the conditions to enable this to happen.

Cabinet Members are asked to note the information contained within this Consultation Report and to seek members views as to whether to proceed, make changes to or not to proceed with the proposal in relation to the proposal to relocate and expand Ysgol Gymraeg Cwm Gwyddon.

Reporting, Notification and Publishing of Information

Should Cabinet decide to proceed with the proposal, a Statutory Notice will be published providing a 28 day notice period for objections. The School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 provides 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 and sent to the Council within the 28-day period.

Cabinet will then consider the outcome of the Statutory Notice at a future meeting and determine whether to implement the proposal having given due consideration to all the information provided.

In the event of objections, the Council will publish an objection report providing a summary of the objections and Cabinet's response to those objections within 7 days or the day of the determination of the proposal. This report will be available for all persons to view on the Council website and paper copies will be available on request.

Should Cabinet approve the proposal, a full Business Case will be submitted to the Welsh Minister for final approval and the works will commence.



Supporting Information

Annex 1 :

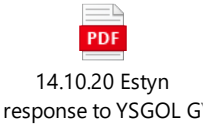
Consultation Response Form

Consultation Frequently Asked Questions

Consultation Video

Equality and Welsh Language Impact Assessment

Annex 2:



Estyn response to the proposal by Caerphilly County Borough Council to relocate Ysgol Gymraeg Cwm Gwyddon to a new purpose built Welsh medium provision school to be situated on the vacant site of the former Cwmcarn High School

This report has been prepared by Her Majesty's Inspectors of Education and Training in Wales. Under the terms of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and its associated Code, proposers are required to send consultation documents to Estyn. However, Estyn is not a body which is required to act in accordance with the Code and the Act places no statutory requirements on Estyn in respect of school organisation matters. Therefore as a body being consulted, Estyn will provide their opinion only on the overall merits of school organisation proposals.
Estyn has considered the educational aspects of the proposal and has produced the following response to the information provided by the proposer.

Introduction
This is a consultation proposal from Caerphilly County Borough Council.
The proposal is to relocate Ysgol Gymraeg Cwm Gwyddon to a new purpose built Welsh medium provision school to be situated on the vacant site of the former Cwmcarn High School. The new provision to include childcare facilities, a nursery and a specialist resource base (SRB).

Summary/ Conclusion
It is Estyn's view that the proposal is likely to at least maintain the current standards of education and provision in the area. However, the proposer has not provided enough clarity regarding

mitigation against the risk of the proposal generating a significant number of surplus places at the new school site.

Description and benefits

The proposer has provided an appropriate rationale for the proposal. It is to replace the current school which is on a site with buildings in a poor condition. It is also to meet the rising demand for Welsh medium education in the local authority. In addition, the proposer intends to provide a Welsh language resource for those children who require specialist provision outside of a mainstream school.

The proposer has reasonably considered the potential benefits of having a new build school. These include the provision of modern classrooms, IT facilities and external play areas.

The proposal aims to provide accommodation for approximately 420 pupils plus 60 nursery places and 16 SRB places. However, the projected demand for places in 2025 on the current school site is only 212 pupils excluding the nursery. This leaves a significant number of surplus places in the school. The proposer has sought to mitigate against this by including revised projections for the new site which appear to show that by 2025, the school will have 420 pupils. It is not clear how the proposer has calculated this number and it appears to be over-ambitious. The proposer has not mitigated against this risk of having a significant amount of surplus places in the school.

The proposer has suitably considered five different options and scored these against a variety of critical success factors. The option that scored the highest is the current preferred option for the local authority. The proposer appropriately determined that this proposal provided the best balance of costs, benefits and risks.

The proposer has determined that the new provision is less than one mile away from the current site. It anticipates that the likely effect of different travelling arrangements as a result of the proposal will be minimal. Some pupils may find themselves living closer to the new school site and others may be further away. It refers to Caerphilly's transport policy which provides transport to the 'relevant' school of more than a distance of 1.5 miles for primary pupils.

The proposal supports the targets in Caerphilly's WESP, specifically to develop sufficient Welsh medium places in the Islwyn East area. This proposal is linked to the Islwyn East area.

The proposer has provided suitable community impact and Welsh impact assessments as part of the proposal. The proposer considers that a number of the current activities that the school supports the community in undertaking will continue at the new venue. For groups unable to travel the additional distance, the proposer intends to provide facilities at the local library based in the community or look at supporting alternative venues where appropriate. The proposer also maintains that the proposal will strengthen and safeguard the promotion of the Welsh language, culture and heritage within the community.

Educational aspects of the proposal

The proposer has considered the school's most recent Estyn inspection report and compared this with other local schools in the area. It reasonably concludes that it does not expect the standards of provision and attainment will be adversely affected. It also suggests that the information outlined in the proposal will indicate how the school can continue to develop and build on their current excellent practice.

The school received all excellent judgements in its inspection report of March 2020. The proposer maintains that during the implementation of the proposal, the school will continue to receive ongoing advice and support from the local authority, school improvement service and any relevant stakeholders to help ensure that the school maintains effective leadership and provides high quality teaching and learning experiences for pupils. This seems to be a reasonable and assertion.

The proposer has provided an equality assessment document which appears to cover all the relevant areas including making the new premises an accessible facility which is able to cater for anyone with additional needs.

The proposer reasonably asserts that, as the proposal is to build a new school facility on an alternative location to that of the current school, there will be no disruption to pupils during the build phase. In addition, there will also be no transportation or access related issues as construction will be off the current site.

Annex 3:

Consultation Responses

A separate Annex to this report will be made available to Cabinet which will include the full details of the commentary provided by consultees during the consultation process. Any identifying information will be removed as detailed earlier in this document.