



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

18th JULY 2019

21ST CENTURY SCHOOLS PROGRAMME - PROPOSALS TO REORGANISE PRIMARY SCHOOLS, SECONDARY SCHOOLS AND SIXTH FORM PROVISION IN THE GREATER PONTYPRIDD AREA

REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE IN DISCUSSION WITH THE CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION (COUNCILLOR MRS J ROSSER)

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1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 The purpose of the report is to advise Members of the outcome of the recent publication of four Statutory Notices in respect of proposals to reorganise primary schools, secondary schools and sixth form provision in the greater Pontypridd area. The four Statutory Notices relate to:

- The alteration of the age range of pupils that may be admitted to Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School, from 11 – 19 years to 11 – 16 years, resulting in the removal of the sixth form provision by September 2022;
- The closure of Pontypridd High School and Cilfynydd Primary School and the creation of a new 3 – 16 ‘all through’ school on the site of the current Pontypridd High School by September 2022. There will be no sixth form provision at this school;
- The closure of Hawthorn High School and Hawthorn Primary School and the creation of a new 3 – 16 ‘all through’ school on the site of the current Hawthorn High and Hawthorn Primary Schools by September 2022, with the Local Authority designated ALN specialist class located in Hawthorn High School, as well as the current pupils receiving education through the medium of English at Heol y Celyn Primary School transferring to the new school. There will be no sixth form provision at this school;
- The closure of Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Pont Sion Norton and Heol y Celyn Primary School and the opening of a new Welsh medium Primary School on the site of the current Heol y Celyn Primary School by September 2022.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Cabinet:

- 2.1 Note the information contained within the attached Objection Report in Appendix A, which includes a summary of the 435 objections received during the statutory notice period, and the comments provided in response to the objections and Appendices B-D being the Community, Equality and Welsh Language Impact Assessments.
- 2.2 Agree to implement the proposals as published in three of the Statutory Notices which would:
 - 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 by September 2022. There will be no sixth form provision at this school;
 - Close Hawthorn High School and Hawthorn Primary School and create a new 3 – 16 ‘all through’ school on the site of the current Hawthorn High and Hawthorn Primary Schools by September 2022, with the Local Authority designated ALN specialist class located in Hawthorn High School, as well as the current pupils receiving education through the medium of English at Heol y Celyn Primary School, transferring to the new school. There will be no sixth form provision at this school;
 - Close Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Pont Sion Norton and Heol y Celyn Primary School and open a new Welsh medium primary school on the site of the current Heol y Celyn Primary School by September 2022.
- 2.3 Agree the associated catchment changes detailed in the explanatory notes to the Statutory Notices - such catchment changes becoming effective from 1st September 2022. This excludes the proposed change to the catchment area of Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School as agreed by Cabinet on 21st March 2019 which was not included within the Statutory Notices.
- 2.4 Note that as previously reported, the School Organisation Code makes provision for local authorities to determine their own statutory proposals, with the exception of the proposal relating to Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School. The Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School proposal relates only to the removal of the sixth form, the implementation (or non-implementation) of which will not prevent or undermine the effective implementation of the other proposals. In accordance with the School Organisation Code this has been referred to Welsh Ministers for determination.

- 2.5 Note that, subject to a decision to proceed with any of the proposals, a separate report on funding arrangements would be presented to Council in due course which would also be subject to approval by Welsh Government.
- 2.6 Note that, subject to a decision to proceed with the proposal to construct a new Welsh medium primary, a separate report to establish a new ALN learning support class at the new Welsh medium school would be presented in due course.

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To implement the proposals in accordance with the process outlined in Welsh Government legislative guidance (the School Organisation Code).
- 3.2 Recommendations are aligned with the 21st Century Schools and Education Programme funding criteria. The priorities for this investment are:
- Addressing growth in demand for Welsh medium education;
 - Reducing surplus capacity and inefficiency in the system;
 - Expansion of schools in areas of increased demand for educational services;
 - Addressing condition of educational assets;
 - Making assets available for community use where demand exists, to optimise the infrastructure and resources for public services;
 - Addressing specific demand for places in Faith Based provision.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 Members will recall that, at the meeting of the Cabinet held on 3rd October 2018, approval was given to begin a process to formally consult on proposals to reorganise primary schools, secondary schools and sixth form provision in the greater Pontypridd area.
- 4.2 Following the conclusion of the consultation period, and at a subsequent meeting of the Cabinet held on 21st March 2019, a decision was taken to progress to the next phase of the statutory process and to publish four Statutory Notices.
- 4.3 The rationale for the proposals for change as consulted upon were well documented in the consultation document which was circulated widely in line with the requirements of the School Organisation Code. The rationale for the proposals were multi-faceted and were based on a number of factors, which are detailed in turn for consideration.

Sixth Form Changes

- 4.4 There are too many small and unviable sixth forms in the County Borough and a rationalisation would ensure that the needs of learners would be more effectively met if a larger sixth form provision was established. Diminishing retention rates of learners remaining in sixth form education continues to evidence that the majority of learners are not remaining in school to pursue Key Stage 5 studies. The most recent data sets suggest that the number of learners returning to year 12 in September 2018/19 were as follows:

	<u>Number of pupils at the end of Year 11</u>	<u>Number of pupils returning to year 12</u>
Bryncelynnog Comp	172	77
Cardinal Newman	119	43
Hawthorn High	112	40
Pontypridd High	153	49

- 4.5 Since the publication of the consultation report in October 2018, further All Wales Core Data Sets have been published for 2017/18. Details relating to key stage 5 outcomes are detailed below and clearly illustrate that Bryncelynnog has consistently strong performance data across both measures as detailed below. The data illustrates that whilst progress has been made over time for most of the schools, there is still scope for significantly improving outcomes, and ensuring that performance exceeds local and national averages in all schools.

School Name	3 A* – A Grades			3 A*- C Grades		
	2016	2017	2018	2016	2017	2018
Bryncelynnog Comp School	8.6	18.9	21.8	46.6	52.8	63.6
Pontypridd High School	5.9	5.6	7.5	27.5	42.6	50.7
Hawthorn High School	0.0	2.1	14.3	14.3	41.7	61.2
Cardinal Newman R.C.	2.7	4.4	4.8	21.3	58.8	57.1
RCT LA	4.0	5.5	10.2	29.0	45.1	54.3
Wales	6.7	10.5	13.4	38.3	54.7	57.9

- 4.6 Data relating to the Average Wider Point Scores is not referenced here as it is no longer utilised as an assessment criteria comparator. This decision was taken by the Welsh Government as so many different types of qualifications are used within this measure that it is not possible to fairly compare the performance of schools.
- 4.7 The FE Colleges Learner Outcomes Report was published by Welsh Government on 7th February 2019. It evidences further progress by Coleg Y Cymoedd across a wide range of curriculum areas including A

Levels. The data shows that the A-level performance at Coleg Y Cymoedd continues to improve with 74.8% of pupils achieving A*-C grades for A Levels.

- 4.8 Effective financial management continues to be an issue for three out of the four secondary schools, Cardinal Newman, Hawthorn High and Pontypridd High, and all have budget deficit recovery plans in place to rectify the budget position. The cumulative deficit for the three schools was £1.2M in 2017/18 and this has increased to £1.5M in 2018/19. All schools are required to make difficult staffing decisions to address this deficit, which will inevitably further impact on the capacity of the schools concerned to provide an extensive curriculum offer in post 16.
- 4.9 It is evident that the unsustainable nature of the sixth form provision in these schools is a significant challenge as low retention rates inevitably result in costly small class sizes which are heavily subsidised by resources intended for Key Stage 3 and 4 learners. This funding equates to on average £700 per pupil in Pontypridd and Hawthorn High School and escalates to £800 in Cardinal Newman. In essence, the decision to maintain unviable sixth form provisions in these schools is to the educational detriment of learners in key stages 3 and 4.
- 4.10 The alternative post 16 provisions at Bryncelynog Comprehensive and Coleg Y Cymoedd will offer students a broader curriculum choice for both traditional A Level and vocational subjects, will have the pupil numbers required to maintain financial viability, and will provide an opportunity for students to learn in a modern, accessible, 21st Century schools' environment. In addition, the Council's Home to School Transport policy will ensure that access to post 16 education is equitable across the County Borough and available to all who choose it.

Creation of 3-16 all-through schools

- 4.11 There remains to be significant challenges relating to surplus places in the Greater Pontypridd area and a total of 785 secondary surplus places alone are projected for 2023. In essence, the Council is funding one secondary school too many in the Greater Pontypridd area.
- 4.12 The condition, location and topography of the primary school buildings and sites included in these proposals are a limiting factor on the development of the curriculum and therefore have an adverse impact on further improvements in educational standards. The cumulative backlog maintenance figure for these four primary schools alone totals over £2.2M.
- 4.13 Investment in the school buildings and the external environments will ensure that learners have access to flexible environments fit for the 21st Century with external areas which will enable delivery of the new

curriculum. Furthermore, the new schools will be wholly inclusive and fully compliant with the Equality Act 2010, and will create modern spaces, both internally and externally, that will benefit not just the learners but also the wider community.

- 4.14 Establishing 3-16 all-through schools have countless benefits which include:
- access to a shared ethos across the 3-16 phase and consistent policies, procedures and protocols;
 - coherent and consistent approaches to teaching and learning across phases and stages will ensure greater continuity in learning which will be further strengthened by access to common approaches to assessment and tracking of learners' progress across the 3-16 phase;
 - enhanced flexibility to curriculum provision and delivery; and,
 - opportunities for learners to access a broader range of specialist accommodation, facilities and learning resources.

The visibility of all ages in an all-through context, where teachers know their pupils and their families well, reinforces the concept of a learning journey and a sense of authentic progression where best practice can be shared and collective opportunities for professional learning provided.

Welsh Medium Proposals

- 4.15 The construction of a new Welsh medium provision in this area affords the opportunity to create a fully accessible Welsh medium 21st Century school. The additional 93 Welsh medium spaces will contribute towards the Council's strategy aimed at enhancing Welsh Medium provision across the County Borough, and the Welsh Government's Cymraeg 2050: A Million Welsh Speakers target in Rhondda Cynon Taf. A Cabinet report detailing the 'Development of Welsh Medium Education Places' was considered by Cabinet in April 2019, and this proposal forms an important strand of the strategic approach adopted by Rhondda Cynon Taf to enhance the number of Welsh speakers and places in Welsh medium schools.
- 4.16 Following the recent consultation on the Welsh Government's draft Welsh in Education Strategic Plans Regulations (Wales) 2019 guidance which advocates an increase in Welsh medium education provision for all learners, including those with Additional Learning Needs (ALN), and in accordance with the ALN and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018, RCT will consult on establishing a Welsh medium Foundation Phase and Key Stage 2 ALN provision in the new school.
- 4.17 The Council's Home to School Transport Strategy exceeds the Welsh Government's statutory obligations, and as such ensures that access to

Welsh medium education is equitable across the County Borough and available to all who choose it.

- 4.18 The majority of pupils attending YGG Pont Sion Norton will be unaffected as nearly 70% of pupils currently attending the school do so utilising school transport. In fact, there will be daily net reduction in the travel distances for the majority of pupils who already access YGG Pont Sion Norton via school transport by nearly 1 mile. It is acknowledged that for some pupils who currently attend YGG Pont Sion Norton there will be an increase in the distance travelled to the new school.
- 4.19 The information outlined in paragraphs 4.12 and 4.13 is also relevant here.
- 4.20 If agreed, these proposals will result in an investment of £37.4m in building new school buildings and making significant improvements to existing learning environments to ensure learners have access to high quality 21st Century educational settings.
- 4.21 There is clearly a need to continue to significantly invest in the Council's educational assets, to provide equity so that all RCT pupils can benefit from 21st Century learning environments; to support an enriched curriculum; to facilitate broader pupil choice and enhanced pastoral support. The investment aims to create environments that meet individual needs and promotes learner retention, achievement and progression.

5. THE STATUTORY PROCESS

- 5.1 The four Statutory Notices for this proposal are outlined in paragraph 1.1 above.
- 5.2 The four statutory notices were published on 30th April 2019, with the period for receipt of objections ending on 31st May 2019. Objections to the statutory notices were received during this period and all have been reviewed by Cabinet Members. In accordance with the School Organisation Code the appended Objection Report includes a summary of the statutory objections received and the Local Authority's response to them.
- 5.3 A total of 435 objections were received during the 31 day objection period. To provide context, the number of directly affected consultees that received information on the proposals was over 3,300, this number does not include the associated schools. Further detail in relation to the breakdown of objections is included in the appended report. To note no MPs or local AMs, directly representing the areas affected by the

proposals, registered an objection. Only one objection was received from a regional AM.

- 5.4 348 of the 435 objections received were generated by a website which facilitated a prewritten objection to be sent directly to the Council's 'schoolplanning' mailbox.
- 5.5 The Objection Report will be published on the Council website within 7 days of the confirmation of the decision. If the proposals are agreed, the Council must also publish a Decision Notice that formally outlines the reasons for the implementation of these proposals at this time.

6. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Equality, Community and Welsh Language Impact Assessments were prepared in respect of the proposals and were published on the Council's website together with the Consultation Document that outlines the proposals in detail.
- 6.2 These documents have been revisited for the purpose of this report. Copies of the three Impact Assessments are attached at Appendices B-D to this report for Members consideration.
- 6.3 Cabinet Members will of course be fully aware and mindful of the general equality duty introduced by the Equality Act 2010 (the "Equality Act") and the specific public sector equality duties applicable to the Council as a local authority in Wales.
- 6.4 In accordance with the Equality Act, the Council (and consequently Cabinet) when exercising its functions has a general duty to have due regard to the need to:
 - eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act;
 - advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not; and
 - foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- 6.5 The duty covers the following eight protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. Public authorities also need to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination against someone because of their marriage or civil partnership status.
- 6.6 The Equality Act outlines that having due regard for advancing equality involves:

- removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics;
- taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people; or
- encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

6.7 In addition to the general duty the Council must:

- assess the likely impact of proposed policies and practices on its ability to comply with the general duty;
- assess the impact of any policy which is being reviewed and of any proposed revision;
- publish reports of the assessments where they show a substantial impact (or likely impact) on an authority's ability to meet the general duty; and
- monitor the impact of policies and practices on its ability to meet that duty.

6.8 Members will be aware that the Welsh language has official status in Wales which means that the Welsh language should not be treated less favourably than the English language in Wales. The Equality Impact Assessment considers the potential impact of the proposals on the Welsh language. Members should also have regard to the Council's [Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2017-2020](#).

7 CONSULTATION

7.1 The consultation process in respect of this proposal has been undertaken under the arrangements outlined in the Welsh Government's School Organisation Code, which was introduced on the 1st October 2013 and recently updated in November 2018.

7.2 Consultation took place between 15th October 2018 and 31st January 2019 and full details of this process were published in a Consultation Report, which was presented at the meeting of Cabinet held on 21st March 2019 and subsequently published on the Council website.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 If the proposals proceed, it is proposed that £37.4 million be invested in building new and refurbishing / remodelling existing buildings to ensure the pupils have high quality, viable and sustainable 21st Century learning environments capable of facilitating the effective implementation of the new curriculum for Wales. This will be funded by the 21st Century Schools and Education Programme, which includes a

contribution of up to 65% from Welsh Government. The Council's share of the capital costs will be met through prudential borrowing.

- 8.2 As outlined in paragraph 2.5, this funding is subject to approval by the Welsh Government following the submission of the relevant Business Cases.
- 8.3 Any revenue and capital costs that accrue in completing the consultation and preparing financial business cases for Welsh Government approval will be met from within existing budgets.
- 8.4 There will be financial benefits from the sale of assets, economies of scale from managing all through-schools and sharing resources, specialist staff and professional learning opportunities. Revenue savings realised will predominately be premises related as there will be a reduction in the number of buildings that have to be maintained. In addition, the majority of the backlog maintenance costs of over £4m will be removed. Any savings realised from delivering these proposals will be ring-fenced and reinvested in the Council's educational asset portfolio.

9 LINKS TO THE CORPORATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT

- 9.1 The Council's Corporate Plan commits to "Continue to invest in improving school buildings, to ensure the County Borough's pupils have the learning environment fit for the 21st Century."
- 9.2 The proposals considered in the report contribute to all 7 well-being goals within the Future Generation (Wales) Act 2015 and due regard has been made to the Five Ways of Working, as contained within the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. This is evidenced below:
 - A prosperous Wales
Improving educational outcomes and educational provision are priorities for every project delivered within the 21st Century Schools Programme, contributing to the development of a skilled and well-educated workforce.
 - A resilient Wales
Newly constructed schools are built to BREEAM excellent standards and include features such as photovoltaic cells, rain water harvesting systems, and a biodiverse forest schools' area, contributing to a healthier natural environment.

- A healthier Wales
The 21st Century Schools Programme delivers modern and multi-use sports provision and flexible external facilities that not only benefit the school but also the wider community. The benefits of which have a positive effect on health and well-being.
- A more equal Wales
All of our new 21st Century Schools are wholly inclusive and fully accessible. All pupils and parents have the opportunity to choose the school of their choice, be it English medium, Welsh medium or a faith provision. In addition, RCT's home to school transport, which exceeds the Welsh Government's statutory requirements, ensures that all pupils have equitable access to any school regardless of social, economic or geographical factors.
- A Wales of cohesive communities
Community facilities are included within our new schools so that schools can provide an additional role within its community and act as a catalyst for creating a local community focus. Facilities include dedicated community rooms, childcare settings, as well as sports facilities that can be used out of hours thus increasing the connectedness of learners and non-learners from different communities.
- A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language
RCT's WESP sets out the Council's vision and objectives to increase the number of Welsh learners; improve the quality of the provision and the educational outcomes; and ensure there is suitably trained and qualified educational workforce. This Plan is a key policy and informs the 21st Century Schools and Education Programme. The proposals will increase the availability of Welsh medium school places in Rhondda Cynon Taf.
- A globally responsible Wales
The larger 21st Century Schools projects are procured using the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU). This is the publication in which all tenders from the public sector which are valued above a certain financial threshold according to EU legislation, must be published, advertising opportunities on a global scale.

9.3 An assessment of the proposals on The Well-being and Future Generations Act five ways of working follows:

<p><u>Long Term</u> (The importance of balancing short term needs with the need to safeguard the ability to also meet long term needs)</p>	<p>How does your project / activity balance short-term need with the long-term and planning for the future?</p>
	<p>Maintaining the existing provision of educational premises within Rhondda Cynon Taf places enormous strain on the Council resources. It is recognised that there is an opportunity through the 21st Century Schools funding to manage these pressures more efficiently in future years.</p> <p>The long term vision for RCT education is to provide all learners with the best opportunity possible to achieve their full potential through the means of education by providing access to the very best learning opportunities with modern, flexible, accessible facilities appropriate for delivering the new curriculum.</p> <p>Improved learning environments will act as a stimulus to creating a better future for through delivering brand new 21st Century Schools facilities for our young pupils through all phases of their educational journeys from foundation phase through to delivering a more efficient and effective post-16 provision. It offers choice and an improved curriculum of opportunities.</p>
	<p>How does your project / activity put resources into preventing problems occurring or getting worse?</p>
<p><u>Prevention</u> (How acting to prevent problems occurring or getting worse may help public bodies meet their objectives)</p>	<p>The Council recognises the challenges of providing everyone with the facilities and opportunities to receive an excellent education in 21st Century facilities. These proposals will enhance and improve the educational environments for all 3-19 year olds affected.</p>
	<p>How does your project / activity deliver economic, social, environmental and cultural outcomes together?</p>
<p><u>Integration</u> (Considering how the public body's well-being objectives may impact upon each of the wellbeing goals, on their objectives, or on the objectives of other public bodies)</p>	<p>The Council recognises the importance of the Welsh language as a vital element to achieve and reinforce social and cultural benefits. These proposals will deliver more Welsh medium places in the Pontypridd area, opportunities for wider community collaboration and participation, a more sustainable and accessible educational building meeting BREEAM targets all providing a more integrated and improved learning experience.</p>
	<p>How does your project / activity involve working together with partners (internal and external) to deliver well-being objectives?</p>
<p><u>Collaboration</u> (Acting in collaboration with any other person (or different parts of the body itself) that could help the body meet its well-being objectives)</p>	<p>As a part of this school organisation programme the Council has already consulted with thousands of learners, staff, and parents and carers, throughout the Pontypridd area. If these proposals are to go ahead then this collaboration will continue when further consultation</p>

	will be undertaken to ensure that all stakeholders have an opportunity to shape the 21 st Century Schools' provision to ensure benefits and well-being opportunities are maximised.
<u>Involvement</u> (The importance of involving people with an interest in achieving the well-being goals, and ensuring that those people reflect the diversity of the area which the body serves)	<p>How does your project / facility involve stakeholders with an interest in achieving the well-being goals? How do those stakeholders reflect the diversity of the area?</p> <p>Consultation meetings were held with the student councils of all of the schools directly affected by the proposals, as well as with staff and governors, and open evenings were held in various locations throughout the area which were open to the public. All comments that were submitted during the consultation process were considered by Cabinet.</p> <p>Moving forward, engagement with learners, staff and RCT residents will continue and input and information gleaned from these sessions will shape the new school facilities. In addition information gathered will influence and inform our future projects so all consultation undertaken shapes the legacy of the 21st Century Schools Programme.</p>

10 CONCLUSION

10.1 The Council is responsible for delivering high educational standards and efficient primary, secondary and sixth form education provision that serves our local communities. This is achieved by ensuring that the right schools, are the right size, are in the right location and are fit for the 21st Century learner.

10.2 Following a robust and comprehensive school reorganisation consultation process in respect of the proposals in the Greater Pontypridd area, the evidence clearly suggests that the rationale for implementing proposals for change as outlined in the Consultation Document and summarised in this and previous reports remains entirely appropriate and valid. The evidence clearly suggests that:

- The sixth form provisions in the three secondary schools remains financially and educationally unviable.
 - There is unnecessary duplication of sixth form provision across schools and colleges.
 - Class sizes are too small and resources intended for learners in key stages 3 and 4 are being utilised to subsidise unsustainable sixth form provisions in settings.
 - The poor retention rates at post 16 is having a detrimental impact financially and educationally.
 - The cumulative deficit position of Cardinal Newman RC School, Hawthorn High School and Pontypridd High School is in excess of £1.5M.

- The creation of the new 3-16 all-through schools will deliver 21st Century School learning environments that will:
 - provide buildings that are fully accessible and which meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010,
 - remove surplus places,
 - create financially sustainable provisions,
 - improve transition,
 - enable greater continuity in teaching and learning opportunities across all key stages, and
 - provide opportunities for developing a wholly inclusive community facility.

- The creation of a new, larger, Welsh medium primary school will:
 - deliver a fully accessible, modern and flexible 21st Century School environment,
 - support the Equality Act 2010 and the inclusion of learners with additional learning needs,
 - provide external spaces to facilitate the delivery of the new curriculum,
 - increase the number of Welsh medium school places in the Pontypridd area in line with Welsh Government legislation and strategy, and
 - provide opportunities for developing a wholly inclusive community facility.

10.3 Members are asked to:

- i. Formally approve the following proposals as consulted upon and agree to:
 - 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 by September 2022. There will be no sixth form provision at this school;
 - Close Hawthorn High School and Hawthorn Primary School and create a new 3 – 16 ‘all through’ School on the site of the current Hawthorn High and Hawthorn Primary Schools by September 2022, with the Local Authority designated ALN specialist class located in Hawthorn High School, as well as the current pupils receiving education through the medium of English at Heol y Celyn Primary School transferring to the new school. There will be no sixth form provision at this school;
 - Close Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Pont Sion Norton and Heol y Celyn Primary School and open a new Welsh medium Primary School on the site of the current Heol y Celyn Primary School by September 2022.

- ii. Agree the associated catchment changes detailed in the explanatory notes to the Statutory Notices - such catchment changes becoming effective from 1st September 2022.
- iii. Note that the Objection Report plus the relevant statutory objections relating to the proposed alteration of the age range of pupils that may be admitted to Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School, from 11 – 19 years to 11 – 16 years, resulting in the removal of the sixth form provision from this school, has been forwarded to Welsh Government Ministers for determination.

Other Information:-

Relevant Scrutiny Committee: Children and Young People

Background Papers

The paper included as an appendix to the report is:

- **The Objection Report**

Contact Officer

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LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

18th JULY 2019

21ST CENTURY SCHOOLS PROGRAMME - PROPOSALS TO REORGANISE PRIMARY SCHOOLS, SECONDARY SCHOOLS AND SIXTH FORM PROVISION IN THE GREATER PONTYPRIDD AREA

Item:

Background Papers

Cabinet – 3rd October 2018.

Officer to contact:

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

OBJECTION REPORT

PROPOSAL: REORGANISATION OF PRIMARY SCHOOLS, SECONDARY SCHOOLS AND SIXTH FORM PROVISION IN THE PONTYPRIDD AREA

1. Purpose of the Objection Report

This report is prepared in accordance with the Welsh Government's School Organisation Code, statutory document 006/2013. Its purpose is to:

- Inform the outcome of the publication of the statutory notices published for these proposals, which were published on April 30th 2019 for a period of a minimum of 28 days; and
- Include a summary of the statutory objections received and the Local Authority's response to them.

In accordance with the School Organisation Code, Statutory Notice 1 requires determination by the Welsh Government Ministers. In line with statutory obligations all information pertaining to this was submitted to the Welsh Ministers for approval within 35 days of the end of the objection period.

2. The Statutory Notices

The Statutory Notices to progress this proposal, which were published on April 30th 2019 are reproduced below:

Statutory Notice 1

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Education Directorate, Ty Trevithick, Abercynon CF45 4UQ

Notice is given in accordance with section 42 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and the School Organisation Code that Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council (RCTCBC), having consulted such persons as required, proposes to make a regulated alteration to Cardinal Newman R.C. Comprehensive School, Dynea Road, Rhydyfelin, Pontypridd, CF37 5DP so that the age range of the pupils it can admit is amended from 11-19 years to 11–16 years and that the Sixth Form provision be removed.

Post-16 students from Cardinal Newman R.C. Comprehensive School will have the option of attending another school's sixth form provision of their choice, or the local college, Coleg y Cymoedd, Nantgarw, Heol y Coleg, Nantgarw CF15 7QY 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 Sixth Form College, Ty Gwyn Road, Penylan, Cardiff CF23 5QD.

RCTCBC undertook a period of consultation before deciding to publish this proposal. A consultation report containing a summary of the issues raised by consultees, the proposer's responses and the views of Estyn is available on the Council's website at <https://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/EN/GetInvolved/Consultations/SchoolConsultations/SchoolsConsultations.aspx>

It is proposed to implement the proposals on 1st September 2022.

The capacity of Cardinal Newman R.C. Comprehensive School after this proposal is implemented will be 900 pupil places. 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. From September 2022 the proposed admission number for the school will be 180 for pupils age 11 (Year 7).

Pupils will be provided with transport in accordance with the Council's Transport Policy. At present, RCTCBC provides free transport for pupils who attend their relevant Secondary school if they reside beyond 2 miles walking distance to that school. The relevant school is the catchment school or the nearest suitable school. This distance criterion is also applied to transport provision for post-16 students at present. RCTCBC will provide free transportation to the nearest provision that offers the chosen post-16 selection of courses for RCT-resident students, providing that they meet the initial qualifying distance criteria of residing more than 2 miles from that provision.

Within a period of 28 days of the date on which this proposal is published, that is to say by May 31st 2019 any person may object to the proposals.

Objections should be sent to the Director of Education and Inclusion Services, 21st Century Schools, Ty Trevithick, Abercynon, Mountain Ash CF45 4UQ, e-mail schoolplanning@rctcbc.gov.uk.

RCTCBC will publish a summary of any such objections made (and not withdrawn in writing) within the objection period, together with their observations thereon, within the period of 28 days after the end of the objection period.

RCTCBC will submit the proposal to the Welsh Ministers for determination.

Gaynor Davies

Signed: _____

Gaynor Davies

Director of Education and Inclusion Services

For Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council

Date: April 30th 2019

Explanatory Note of the Proposals

RCTCBC has recently undertaken a comprehensive consultation exercise in respect of the proposed reorganisation of school provision in the Pontypridd area of the County Borough as part of its proposals under the 21st Century Schools Programme.

RCTCBC's Cabinet has agreed to publish the following statutory notices:-

- The alteration of the age range of pupils that may be admitted to Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School, from 11–19 years to 11–16 years, resulting in the removal of the sixth form provision;
- The closure of Pontypridd High School and Cilfynydd Primary School and the creation of a new 3 – 16 'all through' School on the site of the current Pontypridd High School. There will be no sixth form provision at this school;
- The closure of Hawthorn High School and Hawthorn Primary School and the creation of a new 3 – 16 'all through' School on the site of the current Hawthorn High and Hawthorn Primary Schools, with the Local Authority designated ALN specialist class located in Hawthorn High School, as well as the current pupils receiving education through the medium of English at Heol Y Celyn Primary School transferring to the new school. There will be no sixth form provision at this school;
- The closure of Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Pont Sion Norton and Heol Y Celyn Primary School and the opening of a new Welsh Medium Community Primary School on the site of the current Heol Y Celyn Primary School.

To reduce any disruption to learners, 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 their new sixth form.

Statutory Notice 2

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Education Directorate, Ty Trevithick, Abercynon CF45 4UQ

Notice is given in accordance with sections 41 and 43 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and the School Organisation Code that Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council (RCTCBC), having consulted such persons as required, propose to:

1. Discontinue the following schools currently maintained by RCTCBC:

- Hawthorn High School, School Lane, Hawthorn, Pontypridd CF37 5AL
- Hawthorn Primary School, School Lane, Hawthorn, Pontypridd CF37 5AL

2. Establish a new English Medium Community 'all through' School, to be maintained by RCTCBC at School Lane, Hawthorn, on the sites of Hawthorn Primary School and Hawthorn High School, for boys and girls aged 3-16 years.

RCTCBC undertook a period of consultation before deciding to publish this proposal. A consultation report containing a summary of the issues raised by consultees, the proposer's responses and the views of Estyn is available on the Council's website at <https://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/EN/GetInvolved/Consultations/SchoolConsultations/SchoolsConsultations.aspx>

It is proposed to implement the proposals on 1st September 2022.

RCTCBC will be the admissions authority for the new 'all through' community school, and the admission arrangements will make no provision for pupil banding.

It is proposed that pupils currently attending the two schools listed above should transfer to the new Hawthorn 'all through' School, on 1st September 2022, subject to parental preference. It is also proposed that those pupils currently attending the English Medium stream of Heol Y Celyn Primary School should transfer to the new Hawthorn 'all through' School, on 1st September 2022, subject to parental preference.

This school is proposed to be an English Medium Community 'all through' School (3-16) with a proposed total capacity of 1,260 pupils. Building adaptations and other modifications will be undertaken prior to this date to ensure the accommodation is suitable for the pupils of the age ranges indicated.

The proposed capacity of the Primary Department of the new 'all through' school shall be 540 pupils, including nursery. The admission number is proposed to be 67 for pupils age 4 (Reception Class). The proposed capacity of the Secondary Department shall be 720 pupils and the admission number is proposed to be 77 for pupils age 11 (Year 7) so that the secondary department will in effect be able to accommodate 144 pupils per year group.

Pupils will be provided with transport in accordance with the Council's Transport Policy. At present, the Council provides free transport for pupils who attend their relevant Primary, Infant or Junior School, if they reside beyond 1 ½ miles walking distance to that school; this distance is 2 miles for pupils attending Secondary schools. The relevant school is the catchment school or the nearest suitable school.

Within a period of 28 days after the publication of these proposals, that is to say by May 31st 2019 any person may object to the proposals.

Objections should be sent to the Director of Education and Inclusion Services, 21st Century Schools, Ty Trevithick, Abercynon, Mountain Ash CF45 4UQ, e-mail schoolplanning@rctcbc.gov.uk.

RCTCBC will publish a summary of any such objections made (and not withdrawn in writing) within the objection period, together with their observations thereon, within the period of 28 days after the end of the objection period.

Gaynor Davies

Signed: _____

Gaynor Davies

Director of Education and Inclusion Services

For Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council

Date: April 30th 2019

Explanatory Note of the Proposals

RCTCBC has recently undertaken a comprehensive consultation exercise in respect of the proposed reorganisation of school provision in the Pontypridd area of the County Borough as part of its proposals under the 21st Century Schools Programme.

RCTCBC's Cabinet has agreed to publish the following statutory notices:-

- The alteration of the age range of pupils that may be admitted to Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School, from 11–19 years to 11–16 years, resulting in the removal of the sixth form provision;
- The closure of Pontypridd High School and Cilfynydd Primary School and the creation of a new 3 – 16 'all through' School on the site of the current Pontypridd High School. There will be no sixth form provision at this school;
- The closure of Hawthorn High School and Hawthorn Primary School and the creation of a new 3 – 16 'all through' School on the site of the current Hawthorn High and Hawthorn Primary Schools, with the Local Authority designated ALN specialist class located in Hawthorn High School, as well as the current pupils receiving education through the medium of English at Heol Y Celyn Primary School transferring to the new school. There will be no sixth form provision at this school;
- The closure of Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Pont Sion Norton and Heol Y Celyn Primary School and the opening of a new Welsh Medium Community Primary School on the site of the current Heol Y Celyn Primary School.

The dedicated ALN class (KS3) already in operation at Hawthorn High School will transfer to the new 3-16 'all through' school at Hawthorn.

To reduce any disruption to learners, 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 their new Sixth Form.

From September 2022 for the purposes of primary education provision (3-11) the catchment area of the New Hawthorn 'all-through' school will be the combined existing catchment areas of Hawthorn Primary School and Heol Y Celyn Primary School (English Medium stream).

From September 2022 for the purposes of secondary education provision (11-16) the Graig area of Pontypridd that is currently in the catchment area of Maesycoed Primary School and

Hawthorn High School will be added to the catchment area of the new 3-16 school on the site of the Pontypridd 'all-through' school. This change formed part of the consultation.

From September 2022 for the purposes of secondary education provision (11-16) the catchment area of Coedpenmaen Primary School that is currently in the catchment area of Hawthorn High School will be added to the catchment area of the new 3-16 school on the site of the Pontypridd 'all-through' school. This change formed part of the consultation.

For the purpose of applying admissions criteria, any child living in the areas to be transferred from the current Hawthorn catchment area who has an older sibling still attending Hawthorn High in the July prior to the opening of the new school (i.e. September 2022) will have their application considered as if they still resided in the Hawthorn catchment area. This protection will continue until all older siblings have left the school but excludes any siblings in Years 12 and 13 at July 2022.

The catchment areas of both Pontypridd and Hawthorn High Schools for post-16 provision will be amended to place these areas in the sixth form catchment area of Bryncelynog Comprehensive School, Beddau. The post-16 facilities of Bryncelynog will be improved and upgraded. This change formed part of the consultation. Pupils may attend Coleg y Cymoedd, or another school Sixth Form centre of their choice, but free transportation will only be provided to either Bryncelynog, 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.

Statutory Notice 3

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Education Directorate, Ty Trevithick, Abercynon CF45 4UQ

Notice is given in accordance with sections 41 and 43 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and the School Organisation Code that Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council (RCTCBC), having consulted such persons as required, propose to:

1. Discontinue the following schools currently maintained by RCTCBC:

- Pontypridd High School, Albion Community Campus, Cilfynydd, Pontypridd CF37 4SF
- Cilfynydd Primary School, Ann Street, Cilfynydd, Pontypridd CF37 4EN

2. Establish a new English Medium Community 'all-through' School, to be maintained by RCTCBC at Albion Community Campus, Cilfynydd, on the site of Pontypridd High School, for boys and girls aged 3-16 years.

RCTCBC undertook a period of consultation before deciding to publish this proposal.

A consultation report containing a summary of the issues raised by consultees, the proposer's responses and the views of Estyn is available on the Council's website at

<https://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/EN/GetInvolved/Consultations/SchoolConsultations/SchoolsConsultations.aspx>

It is proposed to implement the proposals on 1st September 2022.

RCTCBC will be the admissions authority for the new 'all through' community school and the admission arrangements will make no provision for pupil banding.

It is proposed that pupils currently attending the two schools listed above should transfer to the new Pontypridd 'all-through' School, on 1st September 2022, subject to parental preference. This school is proposed to be an English Medium Community 'all-through' School (3-16) with a proposed total capacity of 1,200 pupils. Building adaptations and other modifications will be undertaken prior to this date to ensure the accommodation is suitable for the pupils of the age ranges indicated.

The proposed capacity of the Primary Department of the new 'all-through' School shall be 210 pupils, including nursery. The admission number is proposed to be 26 for pupils age 4 (Reception Class). The proposed capacity of the Secondary Department shall be 990 pupils and the admission number is proposed to be 172 for pupils age 11 (Year 7) so that the secondary department will in effect be able to accommodate 198 pupils per year group.

Pupils will be provided with transport in accordance with the Council's Transport Policy. At present, the Council provides free transport for pupils who attend their relevant Primary, Infant or Junior School, if they reside beyond 1 ½ miles walking distance to that school; this distance is 2 miles for pupils attending Secondary schools. The relevant school is the catchment school or the nearest school.

Within a period of 28 days after the publication of these proposals, that is to say by May 31st 2019 any person may object to the proposals.

Objections should be sent to the Director of Education and Inclusion Services, 21st Century Schools, Ty Trevithick, Abercynon, Mountain Ash CF45 4UQ, e-mail schoolplanning@rctcbc.gov.uk.

RCTCBC will publish a summary of any such objections made (and not withdrawn in writing) within the objection period, together with their observations thereon, within the period of 28 days after the end of the objection period.

Gaynor Davies

Signed: _____

Gaynor Davies

Director of Education and Inclusion Services

For Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council

Date: April 30th 2019

Explanatory Note of the Proposals

RCTCBC has recently undertaken a comprehensive consultation exercise in respect of the proposed reorganisation of school provision in the Pontypridd area of the County Borough as part of its proposals under the 21st Century Schools Programme.

RCTCBC's Cabinet has agreed to publish the following statutory notices:-

- The alteration of the age range of pupils that may be admitted to Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School, from 11–19 years to 11–16 years, resulting in the removal of the sixth form provision;
- The closure of Pontypridd High School and Cilfynydd Primary School and the creation of a new 3 – 16 'all through' School on the site of the current Pontypridd High School. There will be no sixth form provision at this school;
- The closure of Hawthorn High School and Hawthorn Primary School and the creation of a new 3 – 16 'all through' School on the site of the current Hawthorn High and Hawthorn Primary Schools, with the Local Authority designated ALN specialist class located in Hawthorn High School, as well as the current pupils receiving education through the medium of English at Heol Y Celyn Primary School transferring to the new school. There will be no sixth form provision at this school;
- The closure of Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Pont Sion Norton and Heol Y Celyn Primary School and the opening of a new Welsh Medium Community Primary School on the site of the current Heol Y Celyn Primary School.

To reduce any disruption to learners, 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 their new Sixth Form.

From September 2022 for the purposes of primary education provision (3-11) the catchment area of the New Pontypridd 'all-through' School will be the existing catchment area of Cilfynydd Primary School.

From September 2022 for the purposes of secondary education provision (11-16) the Graig area of Pontypridd that is currently in the catchment area of Maesycoed Primary School and Hawthorn High School will be added to the catchment area of the new 3-16 school on the site of the Pontypridd 'all-through' school. This change formed part of the consultation.

From September 2022 for the purposes of secondary education provision (11-16), the catchment area of Coedpenmaen Primary School that is currently in the catchment area of Hawthorn High School will be added to the catchment area of the new 3-16 school on the site of the Pontypridd 'all-through' school. This change formed part of the consultation.

The catchment areas of both Pontypridd and Hawthorn High Schools for post-16 provision will be amended to place these areas in the sixth form catchment area of Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School, Beddau. The post -16 facilities of Bryncelynnog will be improved and upgraded. This change formed part of the consultation. Pupils may 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.

Statutory Notice 4

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Education Directorate, Ty Trevithick, Abercynon CF45 4UQ

Notice is given in accordance with sections 41 and 43 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and the School Organisation Code that Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council (RCTCBC), having consulted such persons as required, propose to:

1. Discontinue the following schools currently maintained by RCTCBC:
 - Heol Y Celyn Primary School, Holly Street, Rhydyfelin, Pontypridd CF37 5DB
 - Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Pont Sion Norton, Heol Pont Sion Norton, Pontypridd CF37 4ND
2. Establish a new Welsh Medium Community Primary School, to be maintained by RCTCBC in a new school building to be constructed for this purpose, to be located on the site of the current Heol Y Celyn Primary School, Holly Street, Rhydyfelin, Pontypridd for boys and girls aged 3-11 years.

RCTCBC undertook a period of consultation before deciding to publish these proposals. A consultation report containing a summary of the issues raised by consultees, the proposer's responses and the views of Estyn is available on the Council's website at <https://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/EN/GetInvolved/Consultations/SchoolConsultations/SchoolsConsultations.aspx>

It is proposed to implement the proposals on 1st September 2022.

It is proposed that a new school building be constructed to accommodate the children who will attend the new school, on the site of the current Heol Y Celyn Primary School, Holly Street, Rhydyfelin. It is proposed that pupils currently attending Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Pont Sion Norton and those pupils currently attending the Welsh Medium stream of Heol Y Celyn Primary School should transfer to the new Welsh Medium Community Primary School in Rhydyfelin on 1st September 2022, subject to parental preference.

The proposed new school will be a Welsh Medium Community Primary School.

RCTCBC will be the admissions authority and there will be no arrangements for pupil banding.

The proposed capacity of the new Welsh Medium Community Primary school shall be 540 pupil places, including nursery.

The admission number for pupils aged 4 to the Reception Class at the new school in the first school year in which the proposals have been implemented is proposed to be 67.

Pupils will be provided with transport in accordance with RCTCBC's Transport Policy. At present, RCTCBC provides free transport for pupils who attend their relevant Primary, Infant or Junior School, if they reside beyond 1.5 miles walking distance to that school. The relevant school is the catchment school or the nearest suitable school.

It is proposed that those pupils currently attending the English Medium stream of Heol Y Celyn Primary School should transfer to the new 3-16 'all through' School at Hawthorn on 1st September 2022, subject to parental preference. (The proposed 3-16 'all-through' school at Hawthorn is the subject of another statutory notice).

Within a period of 28 days of the date on which these proposals were published, that is to say by May 31st 2019 any person may object to the proposals.

Objections should be sent to the Director of Education and Inclusion Services, 21st Century Schools, Ty Trevithick, Abercynon, Mountain Ash CF45 4UQ, e-mail schoolplanning@rctcbc.gov.uk.

RCTCBC will publish a summary of any such objections made (and not withdrawn in writing) within the objection period, together with their observations thereon, within 7 days of the determination of the proposal.

Gaynor Davies

Signed: _____

Gaynor Davies

Director of Education and Inclusion Services

For Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council

Date: April 30th 2019

Explanatory Note of the Proposals

RCTCBC has recently undertaken a comprehensive consultation exercise in respect of the proposed reorganisation of school provision in the Pontypridd area of the County Borough as part of its proposals under the 21st Century Schools Programme.

RCTCBC's Cabinet has agreed to publish the following statutory notices:-

- The alteration of the age range of pupils that may be admitted to Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School, from 11–19 years to 11–16 years, resulting in the removal of the sixth form provision;

- The closure of Pontypridd High School and Cilfynydd Primary School and the creation of a new 3 – 16 ‘all through’ School on the site of the current Pontypridd High School. There will be no sixth form provision at this school;
- The closure of Hawthorn High School and Hawthorn Primary School and the creation of a new 3 – 16 ‘all through’ School on the site of the current Hawthorn High and Hawthorn Primary Schools, with the Local Authority designated ALN specialist class located in Hawthorn High School, as well as the current pupils receiving education through the medium of English at Heol Y Celyn Primary School transferring to the new school. There will be no sixth form provision at this school;
- The closure of Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Pont Sion Norton and Heol Y Celyn Primary School and the opening of a new Welsh Medium Community Primary School on the site of the current Heol Y Celyn Primary School.

3. Details of Objections Received

During the Statutory Notice period, a total of 435 objections were received by the closing date of May 31st 2019 and consisted of 432 objections and 3 petitions. A further 10 objections were received after the deadline and in line with the statutory process these will not be considered. The objections received related to the various proposals as detailed within the Consultation Document, and the subsequent Statutory Notices published on April 30th 2019.

A small number of the objections received made reference to proposal 5 which was a proposal included within the Consultation Document. This proposal falls outside of the scope of this Objection Period. No Statutory Notice is required for catchment area changes, and any changes are carried out in accordance with the Welsh Government’s School Admissions Code.

The Statutory Notices are as follows:

- Statutory Notice 1: The alteration of the age range of pupils that may be admitted to Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School, from 11–19 years to 11–16 years, resulting in the removal of the sixth form provision.
- Statutory Notice 2: The closure of Hawthorn High School and Hawthorn Primary School and the creation of a new 3 – 16 ‘all through’ School on the site of the current Hawthorn High and Hawthorn Primary Schools, with the Local Authority designated ALN specialist class located in Hawthorn High School, as well as the current pupils receiving education through the medium of English at Heol Y Celyn Primary School transferring to the new school. There will be no sixth form provision at this school.
- Statutory Notice 3: The closure of Pontypridd High School and Cilfynydd Primary School and the creation of a new 3 – 16 ‘all through’ School on the site of the current Pontypridd High School. There will be no sixth form provision at this school.

- Statutory Notice 4: The closure of Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Pont Sion Norton and Heol Y Celyn Primary School and the opening of a new Welsh Medium Community Primary School on the site of the current Heol Y Celyn Primary School.
- Proposal 5: Catchment area changes
Carried out in accordance with the Welsh Government’s School Admissions Code. No Statutory Notice required.

A number of objections received were ambiguous in that they did not specify which Statutory Notice was being objected to. A summary of these have been included in Section 4 within the ‘General Objections’ section.

Two of the three petitions submitted had been organised by a group called ‘Our Children First - Ein Plant Gyntaf’. There was no information provided on the petition to specify which Statutory Notice was being objected to so it is assumed that the petition was objecting to all 4 Statutory Notices. The third petition was solely objecting to Statutory Notice 3.

A website created by the ‘Our Children First - Ein Plant Gyntaf’ group provided a link so that objections to the Statutory Notices could be submitted directly to the Council’s ‘SchoolPlanning’ mailbox. The website included a prewritten objection template and visitors to the website simply had to enter their name, email address, and click submit to register an objection. None of the official consultation documentation was available on the website, or any information included on the website advising where further information on the proposals could be found. The template provided objected to all four of the Statutory Notices and to the proposed changes to the catchment areas. Out of the 435 objections received 348 had been generated via this website. Copies of both the Welsh and English versions of this email are attached at appendix A. It should be noted for transparency purposes, where more than one objection had been submitted by the same person, with the same comments, with the same contact details, only one objection has been registered and is included in these figures.

Each Statutory Notice was objected to 348 times via an email generated through this website. The table below provides a breakdown of the number of objections each Statutory Notice received in addition to the generated email.

<u>Statutory Notices</u>	<u>Objection via website</u>	<u>Petition</u>	<u>Additional objections</u>	<u>Total</u>
1: The changes to sixth form provision	348	2	17	367
2: Create a new 3-16 all-through school for Hawthorn	348	2	23	373
3: Create a new 3-16 all-through	348	3	38	389

school for Pontypridd				
4: Create new Welsh Medium provision	348	2	50	400

Where we have received objections with further information attached to support the objections, we have included a summary of the specified objection within the summary table and included the supporting information as an appendix for information.

It is perhaps significant to highlight that the total number of objections received is relatively small when considering the number of potential consultees associated with the schools at the heart of the proposals. To put this into context, there are over 3,300 pupils attending the 7 schools, which suggests that the opposition to the Statutory Notices is from a relatively small group.

In accordance with the School Organisation Code a summary of the statutory objections are included below within this report. They have been grouped in the following table by proposal, and where appropriate also grouped thematically. It should also be noted that Cabinet Members have been given the opportunity to undertake a thorough and robust review of all objections received during the Objection Period prior to the meeting of Cabinet on July 18th 2019. This ensures that due consideration has been given to all the arguments presented in respect of the proposals and the salient factors as set out in the Code.

4. Summary of the Objections and Responses

Objections detailed in the report reflect the language used in the submission. The following table reflects this.

<p><u>Hysbysiad Statudol 1 - Tynnu'r chweched dosbarth o Ysgol Cardinal Newman.</u> <u>(mae gwrthwynebiadau i Hysbysiadau arall wedi eu cynnwys yn yr adran hon ar gyfer cyflawnder)</u></p> <p><u>Statutory Notice 1 - The removal of the sixth form from Cardinal Newman.</u> <u>(sixth form objections relating to the other Notices have been included in this section for completeness)</u></p> <p>If the objective of the Council is to increase the number of our young people continuing in education post-16, I fail to see how moving sixth form provision further away from those young people helps.</p> <p>The proposed substitute provision at Coleg y Cymoedd and Bryncelynnog is too remote for many learners and, in the former case, falls outside the oversight of the local education authority. Many children, such as my eldest daughter who is diagnosed with</p>
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ASD, benefit from being able to remain in a familiar, local environment with academic and pastoral staff who know them.

Response: The objectives of the sixth form proposals are clearly set out in the Consultation Document and increasing participation is just one of the outcomes that are noted within this document. Other benefits include, raising standards, increasing curriculum choice, providing equality of provision and delivering an efficient and sustainable sixth form provision. The proposals aim to deliver each of these objectives and the case for change defined within the Consultation Document is clear. Poor retention rates in current sixth form provisions suggest that the majority of learners in the Pontypridd area are already opting for post-16 education in settings other than school and alternative post-16 pathways.

RCT's Home to School Transport Policy exceeds the Welsh Government's statutory obligations and it has been confirmed that all learners currently residing within the catchment areas for Hawthorn and Pontypridd High School will qualify for free transport to Bryncelynnog should they wish to continue their post-16 education in school. This policy also provides free transport to Coleg Y Cymoedd and St David's College for those students who meet the specified criteria.

Meaningful and positive transition is an integral part of ensuring that pupils settle into their new school settings with little disruption to their well-being and education. This is supported by providing effective pastoral and academic support and structured opportunities for learners to become familiar with the new school environment and staff. For learners with additional learning needs, person centred plans will be central to ensuring their successful transition into a new school setting. This will require careful planning and liaison with the young person, families, school staff and external agencies where appropriate.

Advice and support will be provided by the Local Authority to all the schools involved to ensure that the transition process is as smooth and seamless as possible.

The proposals aim to provide opportunities for learners to access a wider and more diverse curriculum within a 21st Century learning environment. This will ensure that learners with the most diverse needs are able to pursue the most appropriate pathway suitable to their needs.

I also have concerns over the extent to which Rhondda Cynon Taff Council can hold Coleg Y Cymoedd, a likely beneficiary of these plans, to account for the service they provide.

Response: The relationship between the College and the Council is stronger than ever with opportunities for collaboration between both parties being developed in many new areas. The Chief Executive of the Council and the Cabinet Member for Education are governors on the College Board. The Council will continue to ensure that they have an effective working relationship with Coleg Y Cymoedd. The College, schools and Local Authority are all accountable for the outcomes achieved by the learners in their care and are subject to inspection by Estyn.

To note, all schools and further education institutions will be subject to the same performance indicators from 2019/20.

It should also be noted that Pontypridd High School and Hawthorn High School already have a joint sixth form that works well across both schools. Basing these at the same site would remove the need for transport between the two schools, but retain a provision in Pontypridd. We therefore urge the Council to retain.

Response: The rationale for the changes to sixth form provision is specified within the Consultation Document. The Council is aware of the consortia arrangements between both schools but despite these arrangements being in place for a number of years, concerns in relation to outcomes, pupil retention rates, small class sizes and the financial unviability of both provisions persist. The rationale specified in the consultation documents remains unchanged and valid.

Merging the sixth form provision across these two schools would not provide an efficient and effective model for delivering sixth form provision as the numbers would still be too small due to the low post-16 retention rates in these settings. There is currently too much duplication in provision in this area and the proposal offers an opportunity to make more efficient use of existing resources, to redirect much needed resources to learners in key stages 3 and 4 and to provide an extensive key stage 5 offer which provides greater choice for learners.

We have deliberately chosen Cardinal Newman as the school we wish for our children to complete the WHOLE of their high school education. Cardinal Newman has shown consistently that an excellent level of education can be achieved with little financial investment/support. Cardinal Newman also has a very special ethos which will be very difficult or even impossible to instil elsewhere (as if that were not the case then other schools in the area would already be following the same principles). We also feel that these proposals are taking away the right for our children to fulfil their post-16 education at a school that has been classified as 'Green/Excellent'.

Response: The decision to propose the removal of the sixth form at Cardinal Newman is set out within the Consultation Document. The case for change is multi-faceted and it is acknowledged that Cardinal Newman is a good school. The sixth form retention rates at the school are low which has had a detrimental impact upon the school budget, which is in a significant deficit. The school is not able to sustain a sixth form provision based on existing numbers.

The success of Cardinal Newman and the ethos that exists within the school community is not in question. Retaining sixth form provision in this setting is not viable as it is heavily reliant on resources intended for learners in key stages 3 and 4. The financial challenges faced by the school due to the reducing post-16 retention rates are such that the curriculum offer will have to be significantly reduced which will inevitably have a further negative impact on curriculum choice and pupil numbers. The proposals offer an option to attend St David's College, which is another good educational setting that offers strong pastoral support, a positive Catholic ethos and good outcomes for its learners.

We understand that an option to attend St David's college for existing Catholic pupils will be made available, however can it be guaranteed that sufficient capacity will exist? It is

our belief that the college is already at capacity and therefore cannot see how this is a feasible option.

Response: The Principal of St David's College has confirmed that there will be sufficient capacity.

Even if space is guaranteed we understand that pupils will need to find their own way to Cardiff should a 'suitable' school be nearer?, Firstly I think it should be the parents who decide what is 'suitable'; and the logistics could possibly prevent our children going to the school we wish them to.

Response: Free transport will be provided for those who meet RCT's Home to School Transport criteria. Pupils that do not live in RCT will have to contact their own Council's School Transport Department for further information on criteria and eligibility. Parental choice is at the heart of the School Admissions Code and should a faith education be deemed as 'suitable' then transport will be provided in accordance with the above.

Cardinal Newman has been discriminated against as a faith school as they are the only school not to receive funding with the sixth form closure.

Response: Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School is a voluntary aided school and is governed and managed by the Roman Catholic Church. It is the responsibility of the Roman Catholic Diocese to apply to Welsh Government for capital funding to improve the quality of the buildings. However, despite this, RCTCBC has made significant investments into the school to ensure that the buildings are suitably maintained.

Welsh Government has a capital funding allocation available at favourable terms for church schools, where 85% of the capital investment requirements are met by Welsh Government. The Council is supporting the Diocese to develop a business case to secure 21st Century Schools funding for investment in this school and will work in partnership with them to present a strong case for improvement.

It discriminates against people of faith and these children are being treated unfairly by making them travel to Cardiff to complete their education.

In relation to Cardinal Newman it is unacceptable that this administration should choose to be so dismissive of the further education needs of the students there – it borders on flippant to suggest that they should just go to Cardiff if they wish to continue being educated in a faith school. Surely there is a duty of care, or at the very least some sense of responsibility that extends beyond this.

Pupils who travel from Merthyr Tydfil and other areas will also be stopped from their right to follow an education that confirms with their religious beliefs. You are not just taking away this education from local children but from a much wider community as it is the only catholic school covering a very large catchment area.

The closure of Cardinal Newman's sixth form will have a detrimental effect on the Catholic community. Many will choose not to send their children there for secondary school, this could be seen as trying to remove catholic faith schools from RCT.

Response: School Organisation and School Admissions are administered through Statutory Codes and are requirements of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013. The Council has ensured that all procedures are in line with this Code and that due diligence has been undertaken so that no pupil is unfairly disadvantaged or discriminated against. This consultation has been carried out in accordance with this Code and the Diocese has been fully consulted with throughout this process.

The Local Authority has every confidence that Cardinal Newman will continue to attract high numbers of learners for key stages 3 and 4 as it is a good school. Despite drawing learners from other County Boroughs, the retention rates for post-16 are still low in comparison and this is a contributory factor in the provision not being sustainable or financially viable. A new approach to post-16 education is now needed which offers choice for learners.

To note, the January 2019 PLASC records only 3 pupils from Merthyr attending the sixth form in Cardinal Newman.

Cardinal Newman's school meeting was after the initial consultation. It was not the wishes of the Archdiocese to close and parents' wishes and concerns were not considered.

Response: This is not the case. The meetings held at Cardinal Newman with pupils, staff and governors, were held on November 22nd 2018; and in addition, the open evening at the school was held on January 15th 2019. The consultation period ended on January 31st 2019. No formal response from the Diocesan was received in relation to the proposals during the consultation period; and no objection to the Statutory Notice has been received.

The consultation document fails to recognise that attempts have been made by Cardinal Newman to move their sixth form to Coleg y Cymoedd, but then had to restart their own sixth form due to problems. We would ask the Council to examine this in further detail, and learn lessons from this experience.

Similarly to above in relation to Cardinal Newman, representations have also been made to us in relation to the fact that different consortium models with Coleg y Cymoedd, Nantgarw have been initiated and then abandoned, with the individual schools choosing to return to teaching their own pupils, following doubts having been raised about student support.

Response: The decision to end the collaboration between Cardinal Newman and Coleg Y Cymoedd for post-16 education was a decision taken by the Diocese. Any suggestions that this decision was made as a result of any problems or lack of support for pupils at the College is speculation. The main issue was that the provision in the College was provided by teachers employed by 3 different organisations. Coleg Y Cymoedd now employ all its teachers and is responsible for the day to day management of the workforce which has seen a significant improvement in the quality of learning, as evidenced by the College's A-Level results in 2018.

Feedback received from learners in the College and the Estyn Inspection suggest that student support services are good.

Many students and parents have contacted us to raise concerns about the plans to remove the sixth form from Pontypridd High School, Hawthorn High School and Cardinal Newman and base all at Bryncelynog High School. Given that Bryncelynog is already partnered with Y Pant for sixth form provision, many are questioning how merging five sixth forms will work in practice.

Response: Bryncelynog Comprehensive does currently collaborate successfully with Y Pant for a number of subjects in a consortia arrangement. However, the current proposals do not suggest the merger of 5 sixth forms. Y Pant do not form a part of these proposals.

The sixth form pupil retention rates at the 4 schools that are included within the proposals are low, as are the post-16 pupil projections. However, cumulatively they will provide the numbers needed to deliver a sustainable and viable sixth form, both educationally and financially, providing greater options for learners by enabling a greater breadth of subject choice. Through the planned investment the proposal will offer learners a more diverse curriculum and enhanced opportunities in a 21st Century School environment.

Though the status quo is not sustainable, this public consultation could have been an opportunity to have a frank discussion over a series of different options for post-16 education in Pontypridd, instead it was focused around just one option, which the Cabinet adopted, without exploring a range of alternatives.

That on the basis of the information presented the rationale for proposing Bryncelynog Comprehensive School and Coleg y Cymoedd as post-16 centres of excellence from September 2022 remains unclear.

Response: No proposals have been adopted. The decision by Cabinet was to progress with the School Organisation Code statutory protocol and publish the Statutory Notices and commence the Objection Period.

The criteria for the school organisation review, the educational case, and the benefits for all proposals put forward for consideration were included within the Consultation Document, as were alternative options for all proposals.

Estyn's response in this regard is *'The proposer has given a clear rationale for the proposed expected benefits when compared with the status quo in relation to improvement in educational provision and the effective and efficient use of resources. They also explain clearly how the proposal fits with the local authority's broader plan for the review of school provision as part of its 21st Century Schools programme. The local authority has provided sufficient evidence to show that the plan is likely to at least maintain the standard of education in the local area.'*

Issues relating to the unviability of sixth form provision in this area have been the focus of discussions with the headteachers concerned for many years. Despite numerous discussions and collaborative approaches, difficulties persist and radical changes are now needed.

The proposals offer an opportunity to significantly invest in the development of a post-16 centre of excellence in Bryncelynog School. The decision to select this school is based on

a number of factors including the outcome data, budget position and retention rates. The school is a green school and is considered to be best placed to deliver on these exciting proposals for change.

The consultation process has presented information about PHS (and the PSF) which is inaccurate, unfair and misleading.

Response: This was raised during the consultation stage and responded to within the Consultation Report. This response is still valid. The data and information contained within the Consultation Document is factual, accurate and formed the basis for the case for change for the reorganisation proposals. The format adopted by the Council for presenting school reorganisation proposals for change is consistent and standardised and these proposals are aligned with this approach. Data included in the consultation report is based on All Wales Core Datasets and references to benchmarking data is included for key stage 4 datasets.

For key stage 5 data sets, the FSM profile is very different to that of key stage 4 and despite representations made by the school in relation to the key stage 5 outcomes, it is the Local Authority's view that key stage 5 outcomes are in need of further improvement. For clarity, the performance of Pontypridd High School in relation to the percentage of learners achieving 3A*-A and 3A*-C was below the all Wales average for 4 consecutive years (2015-2018). When considering local averages for the same period, the percentage of learners achieving 3A*-A was above the local average from 2015-17, and below the local average in 2018; and, Pontypridd High was below the local average for the last 4 consecutive years for the percentage of learners achieving 3A* – C grades.

It is acknowledged that results in the school were more favourable on the Level 3 and Average Wider Points Score (AWPS). In terms of the Average Wider Points Score, this measure is no longer utilised as an assessment criteria comparator by the Welsh Government as the measure includes such a wide variety of level 3 qualifications that includes academic A-level courses along with vocational and other courses. This decision was taken by the Welsh Government as so many different types of qualifications are used within this measure it is not possible to fairly compare the performance of schools.

Comparisons across schools in relation to the outcomes at key stage 5 are entirely appropriate as the fsm profile of schools are very different from key stage 4 to post-16.

It is important to note that the rationale for these proposals are multi-faceted and not solely based on outcome measures. Collectively, the key stage 5 datasets, post-16 retention rates, small class sizes, surplus spaces and the deficit position in Pontypridd High School all highlight that there is strong evidence to suggest that the post-16 provision is not efficient or sustainable. Due to the low retention rates, the post-16 provision is heavily subsidised by resources intended for key stages 3 and 4 learners and this inevitably impacts on the quality of provision on offer for statutory school age learners. Whilst Pontypridd High School has a number of strengths, the wealth of data collated to inform the proposals for

change and the ongoing deficit position in the school clearly illustrates that the current post-16 arrangements are impacting on the resourcing of provision in all key stages.

The removal of Sixth Forms will make Pontypridd a less desirable place to live for parents and is likely to lead to falling house prices and deprivation.

Response: There is no evidence that this will be an outcome of these proposals. This has not been reported to be the case in other areas of RCT that have been through a rationalisation of post-16 education. However, issues relating to house prices should be raised with the HMRC Valuation Office.

The proposals offer a sustainable plan for improving the quality of provision in the area and considerable investment in school facilities. If the proposals proceed, £37.4m will be invested in school buildings across the County Borough so that pupils have a high quality, viable and sustainable 21st Century learning environment. The proposals offer an opportunity to improve schools in the locality and school investment elsewhere has impacted very favourably on the demand for school places and learner and parental perceptions of new provisions have been very positive.

I am concerned that local children will not get the same opportunities to attend a 6 form in their own school as children in other areas do. Making children travel a longer distance will put some children especially poorer children at a disadvantage.

I would have thought that reducing the number of young people who are NEET would be high on the agenda of RCT. How is reducing the number of providers offering courses going to improve the situation? There are growing number of young people suffering with anxiety and mental health difficulties. Many of these would opt out of education if they are forced to attend a different educational provider than one that they know well and feel comfortable in.

Instead of closing these Sixth Forms, extra effort should be made to encourage young people to carry on into further education.

I believe it represents an abnegation of responsibility on the part of RCT Council for A Level education within the town, and will have a deleterious impact on both the numbers of pupils staying on post-16 and the education of those who do, at a time when such matters must be a target for investment rather than cost-cutting. This in turn will have a concomitant impact on the numbers proceeding to higher education from the borough and the wider benefits to the local area of that process, for example at the University of South Wales campus in Treforest.

Response: Data on the number of pupils that choose to stay in Hawthorn High School, Pontypridd High School and Cardinal Newman for their sixth form provision is very low. Over 60% of all pupils in all 3 schools chose not to return to sixth form in September 2018 and opted to pursue post-16 education in settings other than schools, many of whom were eligible for free school meals.

The proposals are aimed at offering choice to learners and creating schools of a sustainable size for their catchment area by removing surplus capacity and providing educational and financial stability. This investment will improve school facilities and enhance opportunities.

The NEETS data for post-16 learners in RCT is favourable and with the vast majority of learners opting to go into further education, training and employment. Nevertheless, the majority of school leavers are not choosing to attend their local sixth form provision in the Greater Pontypridd area. There is a need to improve this offer so that more learners opt to pursue sixth form study in school settings. The proposals under consideration provide an exciting opportunity to improve and extend the local offer within a 21st Century School environment, offering choice to learners and the most appropriate pathway for their needs. It is recognised that mental health issues are an increasing challenge for our young people. Finding the right course and educational pathway is critical for engaging our most vulnerable learners. Larger school settings often provide enhanced opportunities for pursuing the most appropriate curriculum choices and qualifications, and accessing pastoral support and more specialist staff, due to the economies of scale that are afforded in larger settings. The proposals offer an opportunity to significantly invest in the future of our young people by creating new 21st Century learning environments, and greater opportunities for learners with a wide range of needs and abilities.

How many pupils from Tonypany, Porth and Ferndale are choosing to stay on now that they have to travel to Treorchy or Tonyrefail for sixth form education? Surely these figures would have formed a more relevant basis for your consultation.

Response: The data below replicates the trend for post-16 learners in the Pontypridd area, in that the majority are already opting to choose their relevant learning pathway and continue their education in a further education college.

Ferndale – Of the 97 Year 11 learners leaving school in July 18, 40 returned to sixth form and 57 went to college, employment or other.

Ysgol Nant Gwyn – Of the 102 Year 11 learners leaving school in July 18, 23 returned to sixth form and 79 went to college, employment or other.

Porth – Of the 134 Year 11 learners leaving school in July 18, 44 returned to sixth form and 90 went to college, employment or other.

Tonyrefail – Of the 157 Year 11 learners leaving school in July 18, 79 returned to sixth form and 78 went to college, employment or other.

Treorchy – Of the 250 Year 11 learners leaving school in July 18, 155 returned to sixth form and 95 went to college, employment or other.

The schools admissions data shows that over 350 students returned to Rhondda sixth forms in September 2018, sufficient for two financially and educationally sustainable sixth forms. The Rhondda schools reorganisation retained two sixth forms in Treorchy and Tonyrefail and the sixth form admissions data evidences the rationale as set out in the Consultation Document is that students are attracted to larger sixth forms, that create a great offer and are academically and financially viable.

Aspects of the consultation process have not followed the ‘School Organisation Code’ (2013)

Response: Our consultation has been conducted in accordance with Welsh Government legislation, which is outlined in their statutory code document 006/2013, the School Organisation Code.

We feel very disappointed of the proposed closure of the sixth forms in Pontypridd. We currently have two children in Pontypridd High School and we have nothing but praise for the dedication and commitment of the staff and governors.

Response: It is acknowledged that the staff and governors are dedicated and committed, and care about their learners and the education they receive. Pontypridd High School has many strengths as a school. However, the datasets used to underpin the rationale for change clearly highlight that there are significant and long standing issues relating to post-16 provision and escalating budget deficit positions in schools that have diminishing numbers of learners. It is not sustainable and viable in its current form, even with consortia arrangements in place.

We appreciate that the current situation of the sixth forms needs to change, but we don't understand why there can't be a sixth form in a town the size of Pontypridd, which would allow the children in the three schools to attend.

There is a University in Treforest but no sixth form in the immediate vicinity for the children to attend.

Response: Coleg Y Cymoedd is based on Treforest Industrial Estate within the catchment area of Hawthorn High. It offers a range of A-Level and vocational courses. Data clearly indicates that retention rates for post-16 education in schools in the Greater Pontypridd areas are relatively poor and there are insufficient numbers to justify retaining post-16 provision in the locality. Data suggests that the majority of learners are opting to attend further education, training or other opportunities. Cumulative data suggests that a viable provision could be established by removing the post-16 provisions in the identified schools and establishing a centre of excellence in Bryncelynog School. It is likely that a significant number of learners from Cardinal Newman will seek post-16 education in a faith setting.

The inclusion of the student comments from Coleg Y Cymoedd was not in line with the formal consultation process and made public comments about staff and students which were misleading, unfair, unsubstantiated, deeply upsetting and in opposition to the duty of care role that the LA assumes on behalf of our school.

Response: In relation to compliance and adhering to the statutory consultation process, the School Organisation Code lists those consultees who must be consulted with, but there is no list identified within the Code that stipulates who should not be consulted with. However, Coleg Y Cymoedd are named as a consultee in the Consultation Document.

The decision to discuss the proposals with students from the College was made following feedback from the meetings held with pupils, staff and governors at the schools affected by the proposals. It was felt prudent that all learners affected by these proposals were included, and as such learners from the College were given an opportunity to express their views so that they too could be represented within the consultation process, and their experiences of the College put on record.

The learners' comments were noted and were included solely within the appendices of the Consultation Report and were not explicitly referenced within the overarching Cabinet report. This record reflects the personal opinions of learners based on their unique personal experiences, as are all of the comments that were made and received by other stakeholders during the consultation process. This is clear from the language used and the contributions recorded in the notes of the meeting. The LA did not edit the perceptions of college learners, school councils, school staff or governing body representatives. It could be argued that some of the views articulated during other consultation events were also unsubstantiated and potentially upsetting to other parties but these comments also remained as transparency is central to consultation and an individuals' right to have their say. It is acknowledged that consultation processes can be very emotive but all views are recorded and included for transparency.

Mae diffyg cydraddoldeb o ran mynediad a gwariant ar addysg ôl-16.

There is a lack of equality of access and expenditure on post-16 education.

Sixth form pupils attract more money per head, and that without this, and the pupils themselves, job cuts would be required, possibly leaving the schools with too few high quality staff to teach GCSE's as well, to the detriment of all, as many teachers do not wish to be restricted to purely teaching up to GCSE level only.

Ymateb: Mae mynediad i addysg ôl-16 ar gael ar hyn o bryd, a bydd yn parhau i fod ar gael, i bawb sydd am barhau ar y llwybr dysgu yma.

Mae cyllid ôl-16 yn cael ei ddyrannu'n deg rhwng pob ysgol gan ddibynnu ar nifer y disgyblion ar y gofrestr yn y mis Hydref ar ôl dechrau'r flwyddyn ariannol a dechrau'r rhaglen astudio. Mae ymgodiad amddifadedd ychwanegol yn cael ei ddyrannu yn ôl y plant sy'n byw yn yr ardaloedd cynnyrch ehangach haen is. Dylid nodi bod Addysg Ôl-16 yn cael ei hariannu'n uniongyrchol gan Lywodraeth Cymru yn seiliedig ar nifer y disgyblion a'r rhaglenni astudio. Mae hyn yn sicrhau ecwiti. Dylid nodi bod modd i ysgolion pob oed ddarparu cyfleoedd dysgu a gyrfa proffesiynol ardderchog i staff a chyfleoedd o ran dysgu ar draws y cyfnodau yn yr ystod 3-16 oed. Fel arall, fyddai'r cyfleoedd yma ddim ar gael mewn ysgol gynradd neu ysgol uwchradd. Bydd cyfleoedd i ddysgu ôl-16 mewn nifer o ysgolion uwchradd a safleoedd 3-19 oed yn Rhondda Cynon Taf.

Mae pwysau anochel ar gyllidebau sy'n gysylltiedig â chyfraddau isel o ran cadw disgyblion y chweched dosbarth a dosbarthiadau â nifer isel o ddisgyblion. Rhaid rheoli diffygion cyllidebau ysgolion trwy weithredu cynlluniau adfer diffygion sydd, o bosibl, â goblygiadau ar lefelau staff a chynaliadwyedd pynciau sy'n llai poblogaidd. Mae'n anochel felly nad yw grwpiau dysgu bychain yn gynaliadwy yn y tymor canolig ac mae angen gweithredu'n gyflym ym mhob ysgol lle mae yna ddiffyg ariannol.

Response: Access to post-16 education is currently, and will remain to be, available to all who wish to continue on this learning pathway.

Post-16 funding is allocated equitably across all the schools dependant on the number of pupils on roll in the October preceding the start of the financial year and the programme of study being undertaken. An additional deprivation uplift is also allocated which is weighted to those children who live in the lower super output areas. It should also be noted that post-16 education is funded directly by Welsh Government based on the number of pupils and the programmes of study being undertaken. This ensures equity. It should be noted that all through schools can provide excellent professional learning and career opportunities for staff and opportunities for cross phase teaching across the 3-16 age range that wouldn't generally exist within primary or secondary school settings. There will continue to be opportunities for post-16 teaching within a significant number of secondary school and 3-19 settings in Rhondda Cynon Taf.

There are inescapable budget pressures associated with low retention rates in sixth form and small class sizes. Budget deficits in schools have to be managed through implementation of deficit recovery plans, which potentially have implications for staffing levels and the sustainability of less popular subjects. Inevitably, small teaching groups are not sustainable in the medium term and swift action is necessary in all the schools where significant deficit budgets are evident.

Mae yna ddiffyg archwiliad o'r effaith ar gydraddoldeb a faint fydd am gymryd llefydd oherwydd problemau trafndiaeth.

There is a lack of examination of the impact on equality and take up of places because of transport.

Ymateb: Fydd dim effaith ar gydraddoldeb o ganlyniad i gludiant ysgol neu fel arall. Mae Polisi Cludiant o'r Cartref i'r Ysgol hael RhCT yn rhagori ar rwymedigaethau statudol Llywodraeth Cymru. Cadarnhawyd y bydd disgyblion sy'n byw yn nalgylchoedd y Ddraenen Wen ac Ysgol Uwchradd Pontypridd yn gymwys am gludiant am ddim i Ysgol Gyfun Bryncelynnog os ydyn nhw am barhau â'u haddysg ôl-16 mewn ysgol. Mae gan yr Uned Cludiant Ysgol feini prawf clir a manwl sy'n sicrhau cysondeb o ran gwneud penderfyniadau.

Response: There will be no impact upon equality as a result of school transport or otherwise. RCT's Home to School Transport Policy exceeds the Welsh Government's statutory obligations and it has been confirmed that all learners who reside within the catchment areas for Hawthorn and Pontypridd High School will qualify for free transport to Bryncelynnog should they wish to continue their post-16 education in school. The School Transport Unit has clearly set and well defined criteria that ensures consistency in decision making.

Another consequence of these proposals is that many young people will have to travel further to receive their post-16 education, yet the increased congestion on our roads and the inevitable increase in vehicle emissions as a result is something that has not in my view been considered in as great a detail as should be expected. How can we even attempt to present RCT Council as a local authority that takes its obligations to the environment seriously when on one of the major decisions it makes the environment is not taken into consideration to any meaningful extent.

Response: Planning applications will be submitted specifically for the new schools, and as a part of this there will be Traffic Impact Assessments undertaken focussing on both the immediate and surrounding areas. This assessment will look at the current capacity of the highway, and also the impact of any increase in traffic flow, on not just the highway but also on pedestrian and cycling routes.

The local authority conducts regular monitoring and reviews of air quality to determine compliance with statutory Air Quality Objectives, set by national government to protect public health. Information pertaining to Air Quality and the impact on residents will be included within the Traffic Impact Assessment as mentioned above.

The criteria used by Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council to determine the eligibility to receive free school transport is based on walking distance, measured by the shortest, available walking route, with free transport being provided to secondary school learners whose home address is more than 2 miles from the nearest or catchment school. RCT's Home to School Transport Policy exceeds the Welsh Government's statutory obligations and as such it has been confirmed that all learners who currently reside within the catchment areas for Hawthorn and Pontypridd High School will qualify for free transport to Bryncelynog should they wish to continue their post-16 education in school. This equates to fewer individual car journeys and so we anticipate that there will be a net loss in the number of vehicle journeys made.

Hysbysiad Statudol 2: Cau Ysgol Gyfun Y Ddraenen Wen ac Ysgol Gynradd Y Ddraenen Wen a creu ysgol pob oed 3 – 16

Statutory Notice 2: The closure of Hawthorn High School and Hawthorn Primary School and the creation of a new 3 – 16 'all through' School

In many of the areas where schools are going to be closed the schools are a big part of the community and the closure will have a negative impact locally.

Response: A Community Impact Assessment has been undertaken and this information is still available on the Council website. There is no reason why any community links will be adversely affected by these proposals.

This is a terrible, terrible idea. It means that children will have to travel further to get to school which takes more of their time and will lead to more pollution and stress from extra travel.

Response: It is acknowledged that a number of pupils will have to travel further to school, however there are numerous benefits to these proposals including school modernisation, improved curriculum offer, improved transition and greater continuity in teaching and learning across the primary and secondary phase. These proposals also reflect significant investment in school buildings and educational facilities.

Planning applications will be submitted specifically for the new schools, and as a part of this process Traffic Impact Assessments will be undertaken focussing on both the immediate and surrounding area. This assessment will look at the current capacity of the highway, and also the impact of any increase in traffic flow, on the highway, pedestrian and cycling routes.

The local authority conducts regular monitoring and reviews of air quality to determine compliance to statutory Air Quality Objectives, which are set by national government to protect public health. Information pertaining to Air Quality and the impact upon residents will be included within the Traffic Impact Assessment as mentioned above.

The Council has deviated from due process (as stipulated by the Welsh Assembly 'School Organisation Code') with regard to the conduct of its consultation process about these proposals.

Response: Our consultation has been conducted in accordance with Welsh Government legislation, which is outlined in their statutory code document 006/2013, the School Organisation Code. The consultation has been extensive and robust.

The Council has failed to treat individuals and organisations in a fair and equitable manner (as required by the Welsh Assembly 'School organisation code') during the consultation process

Response: This consultation has been carried out in full compliance with the School Organisation Code. There is no evidence whatsoever to support this statement. All processes have been transparent.

The Council has actively striven to create a negative portrayal of standards and provision at Hawthorn High School in an attempt to mislead consultees that the proposed reorganisation will achieve more positive outcomes than might otherwise be the case.

Response: This is categorically not the case. The rationale for the removal of the sixth form at Hawthorn High and to create a 3-16 all through school is based on a number of differing factors that are detailed in the Consultation Document.

The data used within the report detailing learner outcomes, pupil numbers, class sizes, retention rates and deficit positions were accurate and factual at the time of reporting. This information has not been used to negatively portray or mislead, but to provide a sound and robust rationale to inform the proposals for change and it is perfectly reasonable to make comparisons across schools for key stage 5.

It should also be noted that outcome data is only one aspect of the rationale for change and all data is based on published datasets. All Wales Core Data Sets are reported for key stages 4 and 5, including benchmarking positions based on fsm data. The fsm profile of learners in key stage 4 and 5 are vastly different in Hawthorn High School with 28.6% and 12.96% of learners in years 11 and 13 being efsm when considering the 2017/18 key stage 4 and 5 data.

It is noted that the percentage of learners achieving 3A*-A and 3A*-C in key stage 5 over a 4 year period in Hawthorn High School was below the all Wales average and local average for 3 consecutive years (2015-17) but significant improvement was evident in 2018. A more variable profile is evident when considering the Level 3 and AWPS over the same 4 year period. In comparison, Bryncelynog Comprehensive School has performed better than both Hawthorn High School and Pontypridd High School on key stage 5 measures for 3A*-A and 3A* to C from 2015-17 and above or equal for the Level 3 measure for 2 out of the 3

years. In 2018, Bryncelynnog performed better than both Hawthorn and Pontypridd High School for the percentage of learners achieving 3A*-A and 3A*-C.

The retention rates at post-16 and the budget deficit position in the school clearly highlights that the school cannot sustain sixth form provision, even with consortia arrangements with Pontypridd High School. The majority of learners are opting to pursue post-16 provision elsewhere and the current sixth form retention rates of 36% and the large financial deficit mean that change is now needed.

The Council has failed to exercise its duty of care to employees at the school in its willingness to publish unwarranted allegations of poor performance, actively seek out criticism of the school and publicly undermine the teachers and leadership of the school in a variety of public forums.

Response: Our consultation has been conducted in accordance with Welsh Government legislation, which is outlined in their statutory code document 006/2013, the School Organisation Code. To reiterate, the data used within the report to depict results and pupils numbers is accurate and factual. It has not been used to negatively portray or mislead, but to provide a robust basis to underpin the rationale for change.

The data used is based on published datasets and the retention rates and the unacceptable deficit position highlight that the sixth form provision is clearly unviable and unsustainable. The proposals provide an opportunity to modernise school facilities, offer greater sixth form choice and the opportunity to ensure that key stage 3 and 4 learners access the appropriate level of funding required. The Council strongly refutes the claim that there have been attempts to actively seek out criticism of the school and to undermine the teachers and leadership of the school in public forums. The school has many strengths but the sixth form provision is not sustainable or viable.

It is a bad idea to have infants in the same school as teenage children because of the negative and inappropriate behaviour they will be exposed to.

Response: The safeguarding and wellbeing of children is the highest priority for the local authority. There are a number of all-through schools operating in the County Borough and this is managed with appropriate segregation of the younger and older pupils. The schools are designed so that there are separate entrances, learning environments, toilets and outdoor learning and play spaces. Nevertheless, there are opportunities for utilising older children's skills within an all through setting which can also be very rewarding for all parties.

RCT currently has two 3-19 schools, two 3-16 schools, and another 3-19 school opening in September 2019. The headteachers at all of these schools are reporting many positive benefits, including the opportunity to break down barriers across key phases and stages thus ensuring greater continuity in teaching and learning, enhanced opportunities for sharing expertise and specialist staff, and flexibility in staff deployment.

These all-through schools are managed differently depending on the leadership style of the Headteacher concerned and the ethos and culture instilled within the schools. The schools operate in unique and creative ways, but are consistent in ensuring that opportunities for

cross phase collaboratively working are achieved. All projects are closely supervised and provide opportunities for older school children to act as positive role models to younger children through peer mentoring and buddying schemes.

All through schools also provide enhanced opportunities for developing cross-phase specialisms and for developing positive relationships between staff, children, young people and their families over time.

It will be much harder for parents to raise issues have a say in their child's education when dealing with a big organisation rather than a smaller local school.

Completely against super schools, they are not in the best interests of the children and completely discourage family engagement which is proven to improve education.

Response: On the contrary, creating larger schools can build capacity within staffing structures and enable opportunities for developing more specialist wellbeing and/or family liaison posts which will clearly benefit more vulnerable children and families.

There is a lack of detail on the financial savings provided by the proposal.

Response: The financial deficit position of the three secondary schools, currently circa £1.5million, is detailed within the Consultation Document. Currently the cost of delivering a sixth form provision in three of the secondary schools is greater than the income received from the Welsh Government. Our experience of the Rhondda schools following the reorganisation, is that the financial position of the school is greatly improved once the sixth form provision has been removed. Further savings realised will predominately be premises related as there will be a reduction in the number of buildings that have to be maintained. However there will be financial benefits from the sale of assets, economies of scale from managing through-schools, sharing resources etc.

Any savings realised from delivering these proposals will be ring-fenced and reinvested in the Council's educational asset portfolio.

My children both attend Heol-y-Celyn and I have a third child on the way and we personally believe that this will affect our children. This will also disrupt our children's education due to having to move schools and starting all over again.

Awful idea with no consideration for the wellbeing of children. The upheaval for some children with hidden disabilities (ASD, ADHD etc) will be too much and may extremely detrimental to their education.

Response: Meaningful and successful transition is an integral part of ensuring that pupils settle into their new school environments with little disruption. Advice and support will be provided by the Local Authority to all schools involved to ensure that the transition processes are as smooth and seamless as possible for the pupils.

Schools' responsibilities in relation to meeting the additional learning needs of learners are very clear, and through effective person centred planning and partnership working between families and schools, any negative impact on learners with disabilities will be minimised. The substantial investment will provide improved and modern educational facilities and opportunities for all learners, including the most vulnerable.

Future consideration will also be given to establishing a Welsh medium ALN provision in the new school.

The children of Rhydyfelin who have no transport will suffer due to the fact that through the winter months they will have to walk to school in all types of weather. This will not only affect their health but also their education due to the fact that many children will become ill due to being soaking wet all day.

Response: This is the case for the majority of pupils that live within the County Borough. Walking to school is encouraged as this contributes to the health and well-being agenda. However, it is acknowledged that during the winter months appropriate wet weather clothing will be required.

The criteria used by Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council to determine the eligibility to receive free school transport is based on walking distance, measured by the shortest, available walking route, with free transport being provided to primary school learners whose home address is more than 1 ½ miles from the nearest or catchment school. The criteria for accessing school transport within the Council is above the statutory minimum.

The local authorities are clamping down on poor attendance but have not taken this in to consideration when planning to make Rhydyfelin children leave their local school if they are in the English department. Heol-y-Celyn has been a bilingual school since 1967 and all of our family has attended this school whether it has been the English or the Welsh department.

Response: All future learners living in this community will access modern school facilities that will benefit from substantial investment and improvement creating a positive 21st Century school environment. This type of environment will have a positive impact on teaching and learning, and learner wellbeing and engagement is likely to improve as a consequence.

The Council is required to produce a Welsh Education Statutory Plan ('WESP'), which sets out the Council's vision and objectives to increase the number of Welsh learners; improve the quality of the provision and the educational outcomes; ensure there is suitably trained and qualified educational workforce; and reduce the number of dual language schools within RCT. These proposals have been developed in order to assist in the delivery of these targets. These proposals will result in a much needed new Welsh Medium school and a new 3-16 school in this community. The local authority is committed to enhancing the numbers of learners accessing Welsh medium schools and to promoting the growth in Welsh language speakers.

There is currently, as the report made clear, a great number of surplus places at both Pontypridd High and Hawthorn High, however, even after these proposals there will continue to be considerable surplus capacity at both locations, leading to doubts over whether simply removing the sixth forms at these locations will actually resolve the situation of both schools running a deficit. If reducing surplus capacity is one of the key objectives of the Council, the Council should explore a range of options to see how this could best be achieved, rather than proposing just one option.

Response: The reduction in surplus places will not simply be achieved through the creation of the new all-through schools. £16.7million has been earmarked for investment in both

new all-through school sites and it is through the improvements and remodelling of the school sites and utilising the spare capacity available at the schools that the reduction will be achieved.

As stated in the consultation document the justification for the removal of the sixth forms relates to reduced demand and retention rates, improving educational standards, enhancing choice for learners and improving financial viability by developing a sustainable post-16 provision at Bryncelynnog. Current retention rates and the low numbers of post-16 learners in these settings has resulted in a significant drop in Welsh Government post-16 funding and unsustainable sixth form provisions with small class sizes and poor curriculum choice. The deficit position and restricted curriculum cannot be rectified without radical changes being made.

There's little evidence that "super schools" work for students or for teachers. By moving the children into larger schools we place more pressure on teachers, families, have to spend more time each day traveling to school, and - most importantly - we lose important one-to-one attention that is made possible with smaller classes.

The school size will be too overwhelming for many pupils, even more so for those with additional needs, learning difficulties and mental health problems- which are growing. I am concerned about the record of the current 3 to 16 schools which don't seem to be doing very well.

With respect to the 11 /16 year olds they would lose their role models in the sixth form which could reduce their determination and attitude to achieve that higher grade.

In terms of justification for your proposals you still refer to Ysgol Llanhari and to a through school in Lampeter – just as you were prior to the decision to change Rhondda schools. Are there no tales of success coming through from the Rhondda and Tonyrefail to back up your case? Or do the tales of staff leaving – as we predicted – not help?

Surely it would be prudent to hold off in any thought of such changes until the results of your experiment in the Rhondda are known?

Response: To clarify, the term 'super-school' was a term coined by the press and is not a term that has been adopted by the Council. The Council's first all-through school opened in Llanhari six years ago, and another three all-through schools opened in September 2018, with another due to open in September 2019. There are also a number of other Councils throughout Wales that have opened, are in the process of opening, or consulting on establishing all-through schools. As such it is acknowledged, as has been the case throughout the consultation process, that the data on all through schools is relatively new across Wales. However, discussions with Headteachers of these schools have highlighted the many benefits of leading an all through setting in terms of: opportunities of sharing skills and expertise across phases/stages; extended professional development and career opportunities; enhanced opportunities for developing specialist posts and accessing specialist classrooms and facilities; extended curriculum opportunities; and improved

transition. The views expressed by learners and staff also suggest that they are very happy in their new learning environments, with some describing the opening of their new school as a career defining moment. The opportunity for getting to know children/young people and parents over many years is an obvious benefit that will become more evident with the passing of time in the newly formed schools.

The Local Authority is gathering information in the form of educational outcomes and attendance data, and perception surveys are planned to evaluate the impact of the new schools. Robust monitoring procedures are in place and school improvement support is provided to ensure that the new schools continue on their school improvement journey and that support is provided where required. Early reports on the new schools are very favourable and progress is ongoing.

Reported benefits for learners include access to regular mentoring opportunities, tangible role models for the younger students and the provision of in-house work-experience opportunities for older learners. A sense of community has been established across all the new schools and this includes the wider community.

However, it can be confirmed that larger class sizes are not an outcome of the all-through school model. All class sizes will be built to accommodate up to a maximum of 30 pupils.

No due consideration been given to road safety.

Response: A planning application will be submitted specifically for the new schools, and as a part of this process a Traffic Impact Assessment will be undertaken focussing on both the immediate and surrounding area. This assessment will consider the current capacity of the highway and will assess the impact of any increase in traffic flow, including the increase in school buses on the highway, pedestrian and cycling routes.

This assessment and the associated report will contain recommendations in relation to improving the existing highway infrastructure as well as incorporating pedestrian safety measures such as traffic calming initiatives or additional pedestrian crossing points etc.

In previous school organisations the Council has invested significant sums in improving safe routes to schools in the communities. This investment has also enhanced the area for the whole community and has created opportunities for the community to walk and cycle more safely.

Hysbysiad Statudol 3: Cau Ysgol Gyfun Pontypridd ac Ysgol Gynradd Cilfynydd a creu ysgol pob oed 3 – 16

Statutory Notice 3: The closure of Pontypridd High School and Cilfynydd Primary School and the creation of a new 3 – 16 'all through' School

Another key objective of these proposals is to reduce surplus places in our school system. The proposals agreed by Cabinet do not solve this problem to any meaningful extent. One proposal is to close Cilfynydd Primary School, which has a current capacity of 188 pupils, and replace it with 180 pupil places at the 3-16 school at the Pontypridd High School site.

To close a Primary School to save just 8 surplus places seems to be totally unnecessary and one has to question whether it is value for money to do so.

The Consultation Document refers to Estyn's instruction to reduce surplus places, and states that the only reason for the inclusion of Cilfynydd Primary School in these proposals is because of its surplus places. However, the figures in the consultation document show that the surplus places for Primary-aged children would actually be increased by the proposed changes. Therefore, no valid reason has been given for the closure of Cilfynydd Primary School, and it should remain open.

Response: The reduction in surplus places will not simply be achieved through the creation of the new all-through schools. £16.7million has been earmarked for investment in both new school sites and it is through the improvements and remodelling of the school sites that the reduction in surplus capacity will be achieved.

The current capacity of Cilfynydd Primary School is 188 and the current capacity of Pontypridd High is 1,338. The new school proposed will provide a capacity of 1,200. This is a net loss of 326 school places not the 8 as mentioned above.

It is correct that this is one of the key objectives of the 21st Century Schools Programme, as is addressing the condition of educational buildings and providing 21st Century School facilities. This funding will contribute to the achievement of each priority and the all through school will provide many benefits and opportunities as curriculum reforms begin to be rolled out.

There is no good reason to close Cilfynydd Primary School. It is a school that is working well and is currently on a green in the traffic light system. The building although old is in good condition. The school also works within its financial budget.

The structure of the building of Cilfynydd Primary School is well built, strong and has no health and safety issues, instead of closing a successful school I feel that if a little money was spent to upgrade a small number of things within the school it would help, it will also cost a lot less than moving the school.

Response: The closure of this school is one element of a wider school organisation proposal. The closure of this school has not been looked at in isolation but forms part of a wider strategic school organisation programme.

It is acknowledged that the school is performing well and even though the school may be structurally sound, that does not make it a school environment that is conducive to delivering a 21st Century School curriculum and providing the pupils with a modern and flexible learning environment internally or externally. As stipulated in the Consultation Document the external space at this school is particularly prohibitive and very limiting.

The backlog maintenance for Cilfynydd Primary alone is £850,989 and the proposals provide an opportunity for developing a 3-16 school fit for the 21st Century.

I do not agree with the changes you propose and believe this will have a detrimental effect on my child's education. Furthermore I believe this is just another cost cutting exercise by rctcbc.

Response: Meaningful and successful transition is an integral part of ensuring that pupils settle into their new school environments with little disruption to their education as well as their well-being. Advice and support will be provided by the Local Authority to all schools involved to ensure that the transition process is as smooth and seamless as possible for the pupils.

It is acknowledged that within the Consultation Document it states that addressing the deficit budgets of a number of the schools are one of benefits of delivering these proposals, as are addressing the condition of educational buildings, providing 21st Century School facilities, broadening the curriculum and providing more opportunities for staff to work across phases and share expertise. This however is not a cost-cutting exercise as any savings realised from the delivery of the proposals will be reinvested within the Council's education portfolio. To note, the Council and Welsh Government has invested over £200m to date in the 21st Century Schools and Education Programme.

Concerns have been raised over the effects of moving 3-11 pupils to the Pontypridd High School site, located just metres away from the heavily polluting A470. Indeed that road very recently was deemed to be such a problem that a 50mph speed limit was implemented on it in an attempt to reduce vehicle emissions. The Highways Department of RCT Council have stated that a pollution survey would be undertaken at this location to monitor the level of pollution, yet that report will not be published until after these proposals start to be implemented. In short, it will be too late. Can we really, given all the recent publications into the effects of pollution on the health of young people, proceed with these plans before we have all the relevant data to make an informed decision?

The A470 is a very busy road. The high school children only have a 20 minute morning break and a 35 minute lunch break, less than an hour all day. Factor into this time to eat lunch and go to the toilet etc. then they are outside even less. However primary school children will have a morning play time, a dinner hour and younger ones will also have an afternoon playtime. Foundation phase especially early years spend even more time outside learning through play. This is part of their curriculum. This will mean that the youngest children will be spending the most time in a playground that is right next to the A470 breathing in all the car fumes and pollution. This is not good for children's lungs and there are known health risks.

Response: Comprehensive and detailed information was included within the Consultation Report in response to concerns that were raised during the consultation period. This information remains valid and for ease of reference is included below:

The Local Authority conducts regular monitoring of ambient outdoor air quality in the County Borough and results of this monitoring are compared against health based Air Quality Objectives. The monitoring network is regularly reviewed to determine the most relevant locations to monitor, with regards to statutory guidance, previous assessments

and local knowledge. The monitoring has demonstrated that the vast majority of the County Borough experiences good air quality, with the areas of poor air quality being highly localised. A copy of the latest Air Quality Progress Report is available on the Council website.

Within the County Borough it has been acknowledged that Nitrogen Dioxide, an air pollutant often associated with road traffic emissions, can be elevated in some discrete locations. This is dictated by the volume of traffic, proximity of buildings/people, climate, topography of the area and the surrounding built environment. It is understood that the A470 can represent a significant source of locally experienced Nitrogen Dioxide along various parts of its length, however, a number of factors may affect its manifestation and dispersion. Therefore not all communities along the length of the A470 experience similar levels of Nitrogen Dioxide or are at risk of non-compliance with an Air Quality Objective. The Local Authority has identified three discreet areas, Cilfynydd (174 properties), Nightingales Bush (11 properties) and Treforest (8 properties) where the close proximity to the A470, the environment and topography of the area, have been significant factors in the need to declare associated Air Quality Management Areas. These three Air Quality Management Areas associated with the A470 all have resident populations in built up areas within 10-15 metres from the A470.

There is statutory guidance which has been utilised by the Local Authority to plan the required monitoring network in Rhondda Cynon Taf since 1998 and it assists with establishing the likelihood of compliance to an Air Quality Objective at a specific location. The current Guidance (Local Air Quality Management Technical Guidance .TG16) implies that at locations such as Pontypridd High School, where members of the public/students would congregate beyond 20m from the used area of a major strategic road (the A470), they are likely to be compliant with Air Quality Objectives for Nitrogen Dioxide. There are other local factors, such as traffic flow, wind direction and topography of the area, which would also be taken into account when assessing air quality at this location. This area of the A470 has a relative free flow of traffic, compared to other more congested areas and the school is positioned on the windward side of the prevailing wind, with the wind commonly blowing in the direction to the opposite side of the A470 at this location. In addition the A470 is situated at a slightly higher elevation to the area occupied by Pontypridd High School, as a result it would benefit from improved dispersal in comparison to areas with a built environment in close proximity and directly adjacent or above the A470.

Therefore in line with statutory guidance and knowledge of the local area outlined above, no monitoring has been undertaken at Pontypridd High School, as it was not deemed to be at risk of breaching the relevant Air Quality Objective. However, to provide reassurance, a monitoring device has been set up at a potential worse case location on the campus since December 2018, to obtain the required air quality data, to enable the results to be compared against the annual Air Quality Objective for Nitrogen Dioxide.

Nowhere in the consultation document or in the report that went to Cabinet were there estimated figures on the costs that would be incurred by this Council to improve the safety of both the roads and walking routes near the proposed schools, even though the report acknowledged such work would be required. For example, the walking route between Cilfynydd and the Pontypridd High School site would require work to ensure that the walking route is safe for children aged 3-11, yet there were no estimated costs provided. How did the Cabinet meet its obligation of ensuring that taxpayers' money is well spent when they didn't even request the full estimated costs of these proposals?

Response: If the proposals are to proceed, then a review of this walking route will be commissioned to ensure the safety of pupils. This review will include an independent assessment of the route, and any recommendations made by the independent assessor will be implemented. No costs are available as this assessment has not yet been carried out.

Undertaking this specialist survey work can be a costly and so to ensure that taxpayers money is well spent, these assessments will be undertaken once a decision on the proposals are made.

All avenues to secure external grant monies will be explored to fund this work. The Council was successful in securing funding from the Welsh Government to deliver a number of the 'safe routes in the community' schemes that have been delivered to complement the Rhondda school organisation proposals.

The proposed closure of Cilfynydd primary will mean a huge increase in cars travelling back and fore to the high school site as the roads are too dangerous for children to cross safely. Children should be able to walk to school safely - this will not be the case for our youngest pupils.

There has been no due consideration been given to road safety.

Busy road through Cilfynydd – people travelling from North of Cilfynydd, bypass slow moving A470 by cutting through village. Primary age children expected to cross this busy road. Some pavements leading to the school are narrow and because roads are also narrow have cars approaching very close to the pavement edge – High school children have had accidents – some unrecorded.

Response: If the proposals are to proceed, then a review of this walking route will be commissioned to ensure the safety of pupils. This review will include an independent assessment of the route, and any recommendations made by the independent assessor will be implemented.

There is currently, as the report made clear, a great number of surplus places at both Pontypridd High and Hawthorn High, however, even after these proposals there will continue to be considerable surplus capacity at both locations, leading to doubts over whether simply removing the sixth forms at these locations will actually resolve the situation of both schools running a deficit. If reducing surplus capacity is one of the key

objectives of the Council, the Council should explore a range of options to see how this could best be achieved, rather than proposing just one option.

Response: Provided above. Duplicate objection.

There's little evidence that "super schools" work for students or for teachers. By moving the children into larger schools we place more pressure on teachers, families, have to spend more time each day traveling to school, and - most importantly - we lose important one-to-one attention that is made possible with smaller classes.

Response: Provided above. Duplicate objection.

It will be much harder for parents to raise issues have a say in their child's education when dealing with a big organisation rather than a smaller local school.

Response: Provided above. Duplicate objection.

Awful idea with no consideration for the wellbeing of children. The upheaval for some children with hidden disabilities (ASD, ADHD etc.) will be too much and may extremely detrimental to their education.

Response: Provided above. Duplicate objection.

With respect to the 11 /16 year olds they would lose their role models in the 6th.which could reduce their determination and attitude to achieve that higher grade.

Response: Provided above. Duplicate objection.

Young children developed not only academically but need a secure, safe environment that is proud of its heritage and nurtures its pupils. Myself and my own children attended Cilfynydd Primary School and we all benefitted from an excellent education and we are all proud of our school. Professionally I have experience of the quality of the young individuals that this school has produced.

Response: This is acknowledged. These priorities are what the Council aims to deliver through its 21st Century School Programme. The proposed new school will aim to deliver continuity in learning, teaching and the high standards achieved to date.

In many of the areas where schools are going to be closed the schools are a big part of the community and the closure will have a negative impact locally.

The school is at the heart of the village community, a village that has lost many its amenities, its library, many shops, chapels and public houses. This closure would have an impact far bigger than the closure of a building, its impact will have serious consequences which cannot be undervalued.

Response: Community Impact Assessments have been completed for all proposals, and the reports formed a part of the Consultation documentation. Estyn considers these assessments to be appropriate.

The current primary school is not used by the community. The new 3-16 all through school will remain within the community. The improvements proposed will ensure that there are facilities to further encourage community use, and will significantly enhance the opportunities for community engagement including the provision of wrap around care, additional sporting facilities to improve the health and well-being of the community, and spaces for community learning.

This is a terrible, terrible idea. It means that children will have to travel further to get to school which takes more of their time and will lead to more pollution and stress from extra travel.

Response: Provided above. Duplicate objection.

It is a bad idea to have infants in the same school as teenage children because of the negative and inappropriate behaviour they will be exposed to.

Bullying and influences from older children: The profanity which I hear from High School students, when they walk to and from school, is absolutely disgusting. It shocks me to think of primary aged children walking alongside this.

Response: Response: The safeguarding and wellbeing of children is the highest priority for the local authority. There are a number of all-through schools operating in the County Borough and this is managed with appropriate segregation of the younger and older pupils. The schools are designed so that there are separate entrances, learning environments, toilets and outdoor learning and play spaces. Nevertheless, there are opportunities for utilising older children's skills within an all through setting which can also be very rewarding for all parties.

RCT currently has two 3-19 schools, two 3-16 schools, and another 3-19 school opening in September 2019. The headteachers at all of these schools are reporting many positive benefits, including the opportunity to break down barriers across key phases and stages thus ensuring greater continuity in teaching and learning, enhanced opportunities for sharing expertise and specialist staff, and flexibility in staff deployment.

These all-through schools are managed differently depending on the leadership style of the Headteacher concerned and the ethos and culture instilled within the schools. The schools operate in unique and creative ways, but are consistent in ensuring that opportunities for cross phase collaboratively working are achieved. All projects are closely supervised and provide opportunities for older school children to act as positive role models to younger children through peer mentoring and buddying schemes.

All through schools also provide enhanced opportunities for developing cross-phase specialisms and for developing positive relationships between staff, children, young people and their families over time.

Hysbysiad Statudol 4: Cau Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Pont Sion Norton ac Ysgol Gynradd Heol Y Celyn a creu Ysgol Gynradd Gymunedol Gymraeg newydd

Statutory Notice 4: The closure of Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Pont Sion Norton and Heol Y Celyn Primary School and the opening of a new Welsh Medium Community Primary School

Thema: Problemau Ymarferol/Lleoliad

Theme: Logistical Issues/Location

We have repeatedly called for RCT to consider alternative sites for the relocation of YGG PSN. We welcome the investment into Welsh education and we agree that the current facilities at PSN are not adequate for 21st Century education. However we have strongly

urged RCT to revisit the proposals and consider a site within the current catchment area of the school. We have suggested an alternative site in Glyncoch; we submitted several Freedom of Information Requests regarding its availability and the response was that there were no current plans for this site. We have also suggested keeping the current site at PSN for a smaller number of pupils and renovating the existing site to meet 21st Century facility expectations. Thus, splitting the current number of pupils between the current site and the alternative site in Glyncoch there by providing all pupils with accessible Welsh medium education within their communities. When asked at the Consultation event at Heol y Celyn, RCT education staff admitted no alternative sites had been considered, as it was deemed 'unnecessary'. How can transporting 300 pupils out of their communities and across town to access Welsh Medium education possibly be the only option considered by RCT? Furthermore when we raised the Glyncoch site at the Cabinet meeting the Chairman stated that there were already plans for this site, which wholly contradict the FOI responses we had. There is an alarming lack of transparency and accountability to this whole process.

It's hard enough for Children in these areas to break out of the poverty cycle. Having close accessible schools which give the choice of Welsh language is a human right for these children.

Families who have sought to give their children Welsh Medium Education feel they are being discriminated against by their County Borough Council. There are nine English medium primary schools in Pontypridd. Rather than increase the current three Welsh medium sites to offer more access to Welsh education RCT CBC are removing YGG PSN from the North of Pontypridd and expecting 300 children – as young as three years old - to travel up to six miles to access Welsh medium education. How is this a fair provision?

Parents have suggested an alternative site in Glyncoch; Several Freedom of Information Requests were submitted regarding its availability and the response was that there were no current plans for this site. We have also suggested keeping the current site at Pont Sion Norton for a smaller number of pupils and renovating the existing site to meet 21st Century facility expectations as already done at Trerobart Primary School. By splitting the current number of pupils between the current site and the alternative site in Glyncoch RCTCBC would provide all pupils with accessible Welsh medium education within their communities. However, when the proposal for the Glyncoch site was raised at the Cabinet meeting the Chairman stated that there were already plans for this site. This totally contradicts the FOI responses received. There is a serious lack of transparency and accountability to this whole process.

With Nursery education not guaranteed as full time, parents from Ynysybwl, Coed y Cwm, Glyncoch and Cilfynydd are unlikely to even consider the proposed school as an option. Children in part time education are not entitled to free transport. Does this council really believe that parents/ grandparents/ carers will be able to access the new school easily if they have to travel over 24 miles daily? Without transport parents will have to rely on public transport to access the school – does this council seriously believe that this is in the best interests and well-being of our youngest children? The truth is that parents will find it difficult to access the new school especially without transport and relying on public

transport. This will mean that in all probability parents will send their children to their nearest local school – an English medium school.

Many children from North Pontypridd will be unable to access breakfast clubs or after school clubs because of travel issues and cost.

The welfare of the children - please take time to think how this move will affect our children. We are facing a precipice of mental health problems in the uk. How do you expect me to explain to an already anxious child that the school we have excitedly been introducing him to and explaining how close it is to our house will have to at some point move to another, larger school in a completely different area. Yes some of his friends will be moving as well, however, this will not stop the worry and anxiety of integrating him into another environment.

I object to Heol y Celyn being chosen as an appropriate school site for the traditional Pont Siôn Norton catchment communities.

Rwy'n gwrthwynebu bod Heol y Celyn wedi ei ddewis fel safle ysgol addas ar gyfer y cymunedau sy'n bwydo ysgol Pont Siôn Norton yn draddodiadol.

I object to logistical barriers being put in place resulting in the poorest communities having their Welsh medium education effectively withdrawn.

Rwy'n gwrthwynebu i'r rhwysyrau ymarferol sy'n cael eu gorfodi sy'n golygu y bydd ein cymunedau tlotaf yn cael eu hamddifadu o addysg Gymraeg.

I object due to the fact that at the meeting the CEO stated that wrap around care would be available for children in part time placements at the children's centre. I have noted that the Meithrin situated there does not offer wrap around care. Also, not all pupils are entitled to wrap around care and with the facility catering for children from Rhydyfelin, there is hardly likely to be sufficient space to cater for demand. There was no mention of this in published report. The proposed 60 Meithrin places is also a fallacy as in your own document it states that these places will be dual language. Thus, ensuring that nursery age children in the Rhydyfelin area will not have to travel to Hawthorn for their first years in school. This will obviously limit the number of places available for Welsh medium placements with children from North Pontypridd the most likely to suffer as they are furthest from the area.

Ymateb: Mae Trefniadaeth Ysgolion a Phroses Derbyn Disgyblion yn cael eu gweinyddu trwy Godau Statudol ac maen nhw'n ofynnol o dan Ddeddf Safonau a Threfniadaeth Ysgolion (Cymru) 2013. Rydyn ni'n gwneud yn siwr bod ein holl weithdrefnu yn unol â'r cod yma sy'n sicrhau diwydrwydd fel nad ydyn nhw'n anffafrio unrhyw ddisgybl na'n gwahaniaethu yn ei erbyn. Cafodd yr ymgynghoriad yma ei gynnal yn unol â'r cod yma. Mae cyfnod pontio ystyrlon a llwyddiannus yn rhan annatod o sicrhau bod disgyblion yn ymgartrefu yn eu hysgolion newydd gyda chyn lleied o darfu ar eu haddysg a'u lles. Bydd yr Awdurdod Lleol yn cynnig cyngor a chymorth i bob ysgol sydd wedi'i heffeithio i sicrhau bod y broses bontio mor ddi-dor â phosibl ar gyfer y disgyblion.

Mae'r Cyngor wedi derbyn nifer o Geisiadau am Wybodaeth ers i'r broses ymgynghori ddechrau, roedden nhw'n gofyn am wybodaeth am y safleoedd eraill yn ardal Pontypridd. Mewn ymateb i'r ceisiadau yma, cadarnhaodd y Cyngor y bydd adolygiadau trefnu ysgolion a dalgylchoedd pellach yn cael eu cynnal yn y dyfodol agos. Mae argaeledd y safleoedd yma

yn darparu opsiynau i hwyluso'r broses yma, felly bydd y safleoedd yma yn cael eu cadw at y diben yma.

Does dim rhwystrau ymarferol wedi'u rhoi yn eu lle mewn perthynas â'r cynigion yma. Mae bron i 70% o'r disgyblion sy'n mynd i YGG Pont Siôn Norton yn defnyddio Cludiant o'r Cartref i'r Ysgol. Byddai lleoliad yr ysgol newydd yn Rhydfelen yn golygu y bydd 100% o'r disgyblion yma sydd yn nalgylch YGG Pont Siôn Norton yn gymwys am gludiant am ddim o'r Cartref i'r Ysgol. Felly fydd dim newid i'r rhan fwyaf o ddisgyblion YGG Pont Siôn Norton o ran manteisio ar glybiau ysgol a gweithgareddau allgyrsiol. Mae'n gyffredin i ddisgyblion addysg cyfrwng Cymraeg gael eu cludo i'r ysgol ac mae modd i fanteisio ar weithgareddau cyn/ar ôl yr ysgol fod yn heriol yn yr achosion yma.

Cyfrifoldeb yr ysgolion unigol yw darpariaeth clybiau brecwast a gweithgareddau ar ôl ysgol. Er bod y gweithgareddau yma yn bwysig, dylid nodi nad yw gweithgareddau cyn ac ar ôl ysgol yn ofyniad statudol. Dydy pob ysgol sydd wedi'i heffeithio gan y cynigion ddim yn cynnig darpariaeth ar ôl ysgol ar hyn o bryd, felly bydd y cynigion yn cynnwys cynlluniau i wella darpariaeth clybiau brecwast a chlybiau ar ôl ysgol, gan gynnwys manteisio ar gyfleusterau chwarae yn yr awyr agored, neuaddau chwaraeon, mannau cymdeithasol a chaeau chwarae. Bydd gan yr ysgolion newydd gyfleusterau gwell o lawer a rhagor o gyfleoedd o ran clybiau ar ôl ysgol, a bydd modd i'r gymuned ddefnyddio'r adeiladau. Mae tystiolaeth glir o hyn yn Rhaglenni Moderneiddio Ysgolion ac Addysg yr 21ain Ganrif Band A. Bydd darpariaeth addysg anstatudol yn cael ei gwella trwy sefydlu'r ysgol newydd yma. Mae hyn yn golygu bydd cyfleoedd gwell i hwyluso cynhwysiant cymdeithasol a'i gynyddu.

Mae Cylch Meithrin Rhydfelen yn cynnig gofal cofleidiol a bydd yr ysgol newydd yn cynnig rhagor o gyfleoedd i'r ddarpariaeth yma dyfu, ac i'r Meithrin gydweithio â'r ysgol newydd. Fydd darpariaeth feithrin yn yr ysgol newydd ddim yn ddwyieithog, bydd hi'n gyfrwng Cymraeg. Mae ysgolion cynradd presennol Heol-y-celyn a Phont Siôn Norton yn cynnig darpariaeth feithrin llawn amser ond does dim rheswm i ddisgwyl newidiadau i'r ddarpariaeth yma yn yr ysgol newydd. Y corff llywodraethu sy'n gwneud penderfyniadau mewn perthynas â hyd lleoliadau meithrin.

Response: School Organisation and School Admissions are administered through Statutory Codes and are requirements of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013. We ensure that all of our procedures are in line with this Code which ensures we undertake due diligence so that no pupil is unfairly disadvantaged or discriminated against. This consultation has been carried out in accordance with this Code. Meaningful and successful transition is an integral part of ensuring that pupils settle into their new school environments with little disruption to their education as well as their well-being. Advice and support will be provided by the Local Authority to all schools involved to ensure that the transition process is as smooth and seamless as possible for the pupils.

A number of Freedom of Information requests have been submitted to the Council, since the consultation process began, which asked for information on alternative sites within the

Pontypridd area. In response to these requests, the Council confirmed that further school organisation and catchment reviews will be undertaken in the near future and so the availability of these sites provide options to facilitate this process and so these sites will be retained for this purpose.

No logistical barriers have been put in place with regard to these proposals. Nearly 70% of the pupils that currently attend YGG Pont Sion Norton currently use Home to School Transport, and the location of the new school in Rhydyfelin would enable 100% of those pupils currently within the catchment of YGG Pont Sion Norton to qualify for free Home to School transport. Therefore, for the vast majority of pupils attending YGG Pont Sion Norton access to school clubs and extra-curricular activities will remain unchanged. It is common for learners accessing Welsh Medium education to be transported to and from school and access to before/after school activities can be a challenge in these cases.

The provision of breakfast clubs and after-school activities are the responsibility of the individual schools and whilst these activities are important it should be noted that pre and post school activities are not a statutory requirement. Not all schools affected by these proposals offer after-school provisions currently, so these proposals will include plans to enhance the breakfast club and after school provision, including access to improved outdoor play facilities, sports halls, social spaces and playing fields. The new schools will have significantly improved facilities and many more opportunities for after-school clubs and community use of the buildings will be available. This is clearly evidenced from Band A 21st Century School and Education Modernisation Programmes. There will be an improvement of the non-statutory education provision delivered through the realisation of this new school, and therefore greater opportunities to facilitate and increase social inclusion.

Cylch Meithrin Rhydyfelin does offer wrap around care and the new school will offer more opportunities for this provision to grow, and more opportunities for the Meithrin to work more collaboratively with the school. The nursery provision in the new school will not be dual language, it will be Welsh medium. The current Heol Y Celyn Primary School and YGG Pont Sion Norton both offer full-time nursery provision and there is no reason to expect changes in this provision in the new school. However, decisions relating to the duration of nursery placements is a governing body consideration.

Thema: Effaith ar Gludiant, ar Deithio ac ar yr Amgylchedd

Theme: Transport, Travel and Environmental Impact

At the Cabinet meeting Cllr Geraint Hopkins stated that children from these communities (Ynysybwl, Coed y Cwm, Glyncoch) already travel by bus to PSN so it will be no different. We respectfully submit it is a backward view to say ‘they travel anyway – let them travel further’ In the current socio-environmental climate local authorities have a duty to make school transport cleaner and more sustainable.

RCT’s proposed closure and relocation of YGG Pont Sion Norton will inadvertently cause Welsh Medium education in North Pontypridd to become a privilege for the few rather than a provision for all. These proposed changes will place impossible logistical barriers

for families who rely on public transport, leaving parents no option other than choose the local school – which will be English medium. Parents are already telling us this is what they will have to do. RCT is in effect withdrawing accessible Welsh medium education from some of the poorest communities in Pontypridd.

Councillors similarly raised many concerns regarding the additional travel necessary to reach the Heol y Celyn site which RCT Education staff repeatedly denied on a specific technicality. Namely that the morning buses have to travel up the A470 to then travel south towards PSN to be on the left-hand side of the road for the children to safely dismount. This blatant avoidance of the truth raised shouts of opposition from the public gallery. The fact that parents will not be able to access to the proposed school site unless they have a car has been utterly ignored. Parents, carers and grandparents relying on public transport could face up to a two-hour round trip in the event of a sick child or a special event; 'One car families' where the parent in work needs the car will be in the same predicament. Parental engagement in children's education is essential for the wellbeing of the child yet this aspect of the relocation was deliberately overlooked at the Cabinet and Scrutiny meeting.

The proposal that travel time to and from the new school will be shorter is not true. The travel time to the new school is based on children travelling down Holly Street which means that children will disembark on the opposite side from the school. This is against the policy of ensuring children's safety by ensuring they disembark on the school side (which is the reason buses presently go up the A470), so there would have to be an addition to the route to ensure the safety of the children and so a longer journey.

Rwy'n gwrthwynebu i'r rhwystrau ymarferol sy'n cael eu gorfodi ar rieni sy'n golygu y bydd ein cymunedau tlotaf yn cael eu hamddifadu o addysg Gymraeg oherwydd na all rhieni fforddio y gost o gyrraedd eu plant yn ystod y dydd heb orfod dal hyd at 2-3 o fysus. Rwy'n gwrthwynebu na fydd y teuluoedd hyn yn gallu elwa ar ddarpariaeth gweithgareddau y tu allan i oriau ysgol fel clybiau brecwast a chlybiau ol-ysgol oherwydd na allent fforddio i gludo eu plant yno ar drafndiaeth gyhoeddus os nad oes gan y teulu gar.

I live in Glyncoch and take my children to school because of bullying by older children on the bus. I will not put them on a bus and in that position again. I take my children to school and go straight to work. Being so close allows me to do so. If you relocate so far away I will not be able to manage to get my children to school on time and I will be late for work. The area is already heavily congested and doesn't need any more traffic. Either I won't be able to continue my employment or you will be denying my children their right to education in the Welsh language locally.

Rwy'n gwrthwynebu tynnu cyfle sydd yn annodd nawr oherwydd y pellter allan o cymuned Ynysybwl yn mynd o ddrwg i wawth gan ychwanegu i'r pellter sydd yn 'obstruction' nawr i rhai rhienni; i gael ein hysgol gynradd yn Heol y Celyn sydd yn tynnu'r dewis o rhienni Ynysybwl o gael addysg trwy Gymraeg i plant y dyfodol. Warthus!

For the children of Ynysybwl this will mean a longer and more arduous school day, as the new proposed Rhydyfelin site will mean that children as young as three will need to travel to and from school through two of the most traffic congested areas in Rhondda Cynon Taff at peak times of the day.

Although the distance of the new school may not look too far on paper or in a car, when you are relying on public transport, as I am, it is a significant distance and cost. I went to a birthday party at the Ilan Centre in Rhydyfelin on Saturday which is just up from the proposed school site and it cost me £4 and took over an hour. If my child wants to take part in any after school activities, I will need to do that journey every week, and I will need to pay for her too as she will soon be over 5. If there is a parents evening, I will need to do the same journey. If I want to be involved in the PTA and support the school I will need to do that journey. If she makes friends with children who live close to the school and wants to go and play after school, I will need to do that journey. What is a fairly simple trip if you have car will actually have a huge impact on our lives without the use of one. For this reason I will choose to move her to a local school rather than continue with Welsh medium education which is a huge disappointment, especially as I have started going to a Welsh class at the school in order to support her education and Welsh is beginning to become a part of our lives.

At present the time from YGG Pont Sion Norton to communities in North Pontypridd is much shorter than time taken to get there. So, the Council's transport time argument is invalid.

I object to children as young as three being bussed up to 6 miles away from their community to access Welsh medium education.

Rwy'n gwrthwynebu fod plant mor ifanc â thair blwydd oed yn teithio ar fws hyd at chwe milltir i ffwrdd o'u cymunedau er mwyn gallu derbyn addysg Gymraeg

I am angry at the prospect of being forced to send my daughter on a bus for 30-45 minutes at the start and at the end of the school day in order for her to access Welsh medium education. How can that, in any way you dress it up, be a good thing for her?? It's absurd. We won't do it. So we will be forced to take her out of school, uproot her from friendships and move her to a local English medium school, outside our village but a walkable distance.

I object to 5 or 6 extra busses going through Pontypridd town at the busiest times of day. Are we not in a Climate Emergency?

Rwy'n gwrthwynebu bod 5 neu 6 o fysus ychwanegol yn mynd i orfod teithio drwy dref Pontypridd ar yr amseroedd prysuraf o'r dydd. Onid ydym wedi datgan Argyfwng o ran yr Hinsawdd?

Also the amount of traffic at the moment around the schools during the school run times are already bad. The a470 has also been reduced to 50mph between Pontypridd and nantgarw to try reduce the pollution so by bringing more traffic into the Rhydyfelin area is going to cause more pollution and disruption the roads and local people.

I'm a resident on Holly street Rhydyfelin, and find the prospect of increased traffic abhorrent. There is already carnage twice a day, which forces traffic into heavily pedestrianised areas other than Holly street. Increases in fumes from heavy fuel consuming buses, on an already busy bus route is madness. I fear that money and very little common sense is the reason for this decision and disagree totally with these plans.

I am writing this email to express my concerns of Heol-y-Celyn primary school being turned in to a Welsh only school. Firstly this will affect are community due to the higher

volume of traffic that is going to be in holly street, it is already a very bad road to be on during school run hours and this is with only local residents attending Heol-y-Celyn.

I would not want my young children on such a long bus ride. Although children currently do attend by bus the journey is not as long. Also the consultation didn't take into account the traffic to get to Rhydfelin at that time of day would make the bus journey even longer.

On paper it doesn't look far but with traffic I can assure you it takes forever. Children leave at 8am as it us and aren't home before 4.15 if mine went to Heol y Celyn they'd be leaving at 7.30 and home by 4.30 when they could easily build a school a lot closer.

The higher volume of traffic through the busses and car will also affect the environment due to the higher volume of emissions from the traffic.

While I've got no issues regarding the actual school becoming a Welsh only school, what does concern myself and most of the residents of Holly Street is the increased school transport and the many parents who are looking for parking spaces during the school run.

Increasing the school pupils to over 500+ will create even more issues with the above concerns unless something is done, drop off/pick up points within the school grounds, Holly Street being made one way from main gates to Dyffryn Road hill and Oak Street being made one way from Dyffryn Road hill to Beechwood Street etc

I object to RCT's decision to move forward with the 21st century schools reorganisation in Pontypridd as my children are due to start pont-sion Norton in sept this year and September next year, my older children and myself went to this welsh school , I think it's unfair for there to be so many English schools within a certain distance and our children will have to travel near enough ten miles to school and from school

I heavily object to Heol-y-Celyn being chosen as a school site for the traditional Pont Siôn Norton communities. I attended a protest march with protesters against the distance of the catchment area last month. It is far too far and secluded for any children to walk unaccompanied and on a regular basis.

It means that children will have to travel further to get to school which takes more of their time and will lead to more pollution and stress from extra travel.

Maureen Webber has stated that none of her constituents in Rhydyfelin are objecting the location of the new school or our concerns about the transport repercussions that will negatively affect the residents surrounding the proposed site, yet residents of Holly and Oak streets state that they were not consulted or informed of the likely impact of the proposals.

I object as the council have stated that there will be less distance travelled to the proposed new school site by virtue of fact that the current bus route to YGG Pont Sion Norton does not travel the shortest route so pupils are dropped off at the same side of the road as the school. Yet a Freedom Information request has revealed that no traffic survey has been completed for the proposed new school site and therefore no planned route. This survey has yet to consider the congested traffic that is around the Pontypridd area or the actual distance a bus will travel and the time of this journey is dropping the children off on the school side of the road.

No account appears to have been taken of this extra traffic. And RCT (along with other local authorities in Wales, and the Welsh Government) has a statutory obligation to

promote active travel (Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013, subsection 10(1)(a)). This does not appear to have been addressed as it is not mentioned in the Cabinet papers.

Pollution is already a major issue, impacting many schools such as Evan James. This will make it worse.

Ymateb: Mae'r wybodaeth a gafodd ei chynnwys yn yr Adroddiad Ymgynghori mewn perthynas â'r cynnydd o ran pellter teithio yn nodi 'Rydyn ni'n cydnabod efallai bod hyn yn wir ar gyfer rhai disgyblion. Serch hynny, fydd mwyafrif y disgyblion ddim yn cael eu heffeithio oherwydd bod bron i 70% o'r disgyblion sy'n mynychu Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Pont Siôn Norton ar hyn o bryd yn defnyddio'r gwasanaeth cludo disgyblion.

Bydd pellteroedd llwybrau bysiau ysgol y llwybrau newydd arfaethedig yn fyrrach na'r llwybrau bws ysgol presennol. Rydyn ni wedi cyfrifo'r llwybrau, a bydd y pellter cyffredinol cyfartalog ar gyfer y disgyblion hynny sydd eisoes yn defnyddio cludiant ysgol yn cael ei fyrhau ychydig o dros filltir y dydd.' Mae'r pellteroedd wedi'u nodi yn y tabl isod. Rydyn ni'n cydnabod bod modd i dagfeydd traffig achosi problemau i ddefnyddwyr ffyrdd ac effeithio ar gyfnodau teithio ar adegau penodol, ond dyma rywbeth sy'n anodd ei reoli.

Contract 163/01 – Terminws Ynys-y-bŵl	Milltired (am)	Milltired (pm)
YGG Pont Siôn Norton (Presennol)	10	5.5
Ysgol Gynradd Heol y Celyn (Arfaethedig)	7.1	7.3

Contract 163/02 – Ynys-y-bŵl / Coed y Cwm	Milltired (am)	Milltired (pm)
YGG Pont Siôn Norton (Presennol)	9.5	5
Ysgol Gynradd Heol- y-celyn (Arfaethedig)	6.6	6.8

Contract 163/03 – Glyn-coch	Milltired (am)	Milltired (pm)
YGG Pont Siôn Norton (Presennol)	8.3	3.8
Ysgol Gynradd Heol- y-celyn (Arfaethedig)	5.4	5.6
	Milltired (am)	Milltired (pm)
Amrywiad – Pellter ar Gyfartaledd	-2.9	1.8

Bydd y disgyblion nad ydyn nhw'n teithio i YGG Pont Siôn Norton ar fws ar hyn o bryd gan eu bod nhw'n byw o fewn pellter cerdded y dalgylch sef 1 ½ milltir, yn gymwys am Gludiant o'r Cartref i'r Ysgol am ddim i'r ysgol newydd. Y pellaf y bydd angen i'r disgyblion yma deithio i'r ysgol newydd fydd 4.5 milltir i'r ysgol ac yn ôl.

Dyma gadarnhau llwybrau'r bysys sydd ar gael, mae bws uniongyrchol i Ysgol Gynradd Heol-y-celyn o ardal Glyn-coch. O ardaloedd Ynys-y-bŵl a Chilfynydd, bydd angen newid bws yng Ngorsaf Fysiau Pontypridd. Dydy hyn ddim yn wahanol i'r sefyllfa bresennol i rieni o ardaloedd Glyn-coch ac Ynys-y-bŵl. Ar hyn o bryd, rhaid i rieni o ardaloedd Glyn-coch ac Ynys-y-bŵl y mae angen iddyn nhw gyrraedd YGG Pont Siôn Norton mewn argyfwng, newid bws yng Ngorsaf Fysiau Pontypridd. Rydyn ni'n cydnabod y bydd y newidiadau yma yn effeithio ar rieni sy'n byw yng Nghilfynydd, ond bydd y sefyllfa bresennol yn parhau o safbwynt y rheiny sy'n byw yn y cymunedau eraill wedi'u nodi yn y gwrthwynebiadau.

Anaml iawn ddylai fod angen i gasglu plant mewn argyfwng. Mewn sefyllfa o'r fath, mae gan staff ysgol ddyletswydd o ofal a chyfrifoldeb i sicrhau bod gofal a lles pob plentyn o'r pwys mwyaf. Bydd pob ysgol yn sicrhau'r gofal perthnasol ar gyfer unrhyw ddisgybl sy'n teimlo'n sâl neu sydd wedi anghofio ei ginio. Yn amlwg, os bydd plentyn yn sâl iawn, bydd angen i deuluoedd wneud trefniadau i'w gasglu, ond yn anaml iawn ddylai fod sefyllfaoedd o'r fath. O ran presenoldeb mewn clybiau brechwast/clybiau ar ôl ysgol, cyfrifoldeb y rhieni a gwarcheidwaid yw gollwng a chasglu eu plant. Mae hyn yr un peth â'r ddarpariaeth bresennol yn YGG Pont Siôn Norton a phob ysgol yn yr Awdurdod.

Mewn perthynas â'r gwrthwynebiadau sy'n gysylltiedig ag oedran ifanc disgyblion y mae disgwyl iddyn nhw deithio ar fws i'r ysgol Gymraeg newydd, dyma'r sefyllfa bresennol ledled y Fwrdeistref Sirol. Mae RhCT yn brofiadol o ran darparu cludiant diogel i ddisgyblion o 3 oed, ac mae'r gwasanaeth yn cael ei ddarparu yn unol â'r Polisi Cludiant Ysgol. Mae'r Cyngor yn cludo dros 2,000 o ddisgyblion oedran cynradd i'w hysgolion, mae dros 250 o'r rhain yn eu blwyddyn gyntaf yn yr ysgol (3-4 oed). Mae holl gontractau ysgolion cynradd yn cael eu cyflawni gan yrwyr a chynorthwyrwyr teithwyr sydd wedi'u gwirio gan y Gwasanaeth Datgelu a Gwahardd. Mae diogelwch a lles ein disgyblion o'r pwys mwyaf i ni ar bob adeg. Fydd dim newid i drefniadau 69% o ddisgyblion sy'n mynd i YGG Pont Siôn Norton ar gludiant ysgol ar hyn o bryd. Bydd effaith ar y plant sy'n byw o fewn pellter cerdded dalgylch YGG Pont Siôn Norton yn unig, ac rydyn ni'n cydnabod hyn.

Rydyn ni hefyd yn cydnabod y bydd cynnydd yn nifer y bysiau ysgol sy'n mynd i'r ysgol newydd yn Rhydfelen. Bydd cais cynllunio yn cael ei gyflwyno ar gyfer yr ysgol newydd, ac yn rhan o'r broses yma, bydd Asesiad o'r Effaith ar Draffig yn cael ei gynnal gan ganolbwyntio ar yr ardal uniongyrchol a'r ardal gyfagos. Bydd yr asesiad yma yn edrych ar y briffordd bresennol ac asesu effaith unrhyw gynnydd yn nifer y bysiau ysgol ar y briffordd ac ar lwybau i gerddwyr a beicwyr. Bydd yr adroddiad yma yn cynnwys argymhellion mewn perthynas â gwella seilwaith presennol priffordd, yn ogystal â chynnwys mesurau diogelwch i gerddwyr megis mentrau arafu traffig neu fannau croesi ychwanegol i gerddwyr, ac ati. Yn rhan o gynlluniau Ysgolion yr 21ain Ganrif eraill, mae mesurau wedi cael eu rhoi ar waith, gan gynnwys llefydd parcio ychwanegol ar y safle, manau gollwng i fysiau ar safle'r ysgol a manau troi. Byddwn ni'n sicrhau bod mesurau priodol yn cael eu rhoi ar waith mewn unrhyw ddatblygiad newydd.

Mae'r awdurdod lleol yn cynnal gwaith monitro ac adolygu ansawdd aer i wirio cydymffurfriad ag Amcanion Ansawdd Aer statudol wedi'u gosod gan lywodraeth genedlaethol i amddiffyn iechyd y cyhoedd. Bydd gwybodaeth ynglŷn ag Ansawdd Aer a'r effaith ar breswylwyr yn cael ei chynnwys yn yr Asesiad o'r Effaith ar Draffig fel sydd wedi'i nodi uchod. I'r gwrthwyneb, dylai'r problemau o ran tagfeydd yn ardal YGG Pont Siôn Norton wella.

Cafodd yr ymgynghoriad ei gynnal yn unol â deddfwriaeth Llywodraeth Cymru, sydd wedi'i hamlinellu yn ei Chod Trefniadaeth Ysgolion statudol. Rydyn ni wedi ymgynghori â'r holl bobl y mae angen ymgynghori â nhw o dan y Cod yma. Doedden ni ddim wedi ymgynghori â phreswylwyr Ysgol Gynradd bresennol Heol-y-celyn yn Rhydfelen yn rhan o'r cynigion yma gan eu bod nhw'n canolbwyntio ar drefniadaeth ysgolion yn unig, felly dydy'r ysgol ddim yn un o'r rhai statudol y mae angen ymgynghori â nhw. Serch hynny, mae'r ddogfen ymgynghori wedi cael ei chyhoeddi ar wefan y Cyngor ac mae modd i unrhyw â diddordeb weld manylion y cynnig a gwneud sylwadau fel y bo'n berthnasol.

Rhaid nodi bod y broses ymgynghori statudol sy'n cael ei chynnal yn berthnasol i gynigion y Cyngor i ad-drefnu ysgolion yn ardal Pontypridd. Dydy hi ddim yn ymgynghoriad ar adeiladu adeilad newydd. Os bydd y cynnig yn symud ymlaen, bydd ymgynghoriad pellach yn cael ei gynnal â'r gymuned leol, gan gynnwys yr hyn sy'n ofynnol o dan Ddeddf Cynllunio Gwlad a Thref, fydd yn cynnwys preswylwyr yr ysgol arfaethedig newydd. Bydd yr Asesiadau o'r Effaith ar Draffig wedi'u nodi uchod yn rhan o'r arolygon ac asesiadau y bydd angen eu cynnal yn unol â'r cais cynllunio statudol y bydd angen ei gyflwyno.

Response: The information that was included in the Consultation Report in relation to the increase in travel distances states, 'It is acknowledged that this may well be the case for some pupils, however the majority of pupils will be unaffected as nearly 70% of pupils currently attending YGG Pont Sion Norton do so utilising school transport.

The school bus route distances of the new routes proposed will be shorter than the current school bus routes travelled. The Transport Unit have calculated the routes, and the average overall distance travelled for those pupils who already use school transport will be shortened by just over 1 mile per day.' The actual distances are recorded in the table below. It is acknowledged that traffic congestion can cause issues for all road users and impact on travel times at certain times of the day, however this is something that can be difficult to control.

Contract 163/01 - Ynysybwl Terminus	AM Mileage	PM Mileage
YGG Pontsionnorton (Current)	10	5.5
Heol y Celyn Primary (Proposed)	7.1	7.3

Contract 163/02 - Ynysybwl / Coed y Cwm	AM Mileage	PM Mileage

YGG Pont Sion Norton (Current)	9.5	5
Heol y Celyn Primary (Proposed)	6.6	6.8

Contract 163/03 - Glyncoch	AM Mileage	PM Mileage
YGG Pont Sion Norton (Current)	8.3	3.8
Heol y Celyn Primary (Proposed)	5.4	5.6
	AM Mileage	PM Mileage
Average Overall Distance Variation	-2.9	1.8

Those pupils who currently do not travel to YGG Pont Sion Norton by bus, as they live within the 1 ½ mile in-catchment walking distance, will qualify for free Home to School Transport to the new school. The furthest that these pupils will have to travel to school will be 4.5 miles each way to the new school.

To confirm the available service bus routes, there is a direct bus to Heol Y Celyn from Glyncoch, but from Ynysybwl and Cilfynydd it would require a change of bus in Pontypridd Bus Station which is no different to the current situation for parents from Glyncoch and Ynysybwl. Currently parents from Glyncoch and Ynysybwl needing to attend YGG Pont Sion Norton in an emergency via public transport are currently required to change buses at Pontypridd Bus Station, as is also the case for learners who live in these areas attending secondary education in YG Garth Olwg. It is recognised that these changes will affect parents who live in Cilfynydd but for those that live in the other communities referenced in the objections the status quo will be maintained.

The need for emergency collections should be infrequent. In any event, all school staff have a duty of care and a responsibility to ensure that the care and wellbeing of all pupils is paramount. Every school will ensure that any learner who feels unwell or who has forgotten their lunch will be appropriately cared for. Clearly, if a child is very unwell then families will have to make arrangements for collections but incidents of this nature should be infrequent. For attendance at breakfast/after school clubs, it is the responsibility of parents and carers to facilitate drop offs and collections, which is the same as the current provision at YGG Pont Sion Norton and all schools within the Authority.

In relation to the objections associated with the young age of the pupils that will be expected to travel on the bus to the new Welsh school, this is currently the situation across the County Borough. RCT is experienced in providing safe transport for pupils upwards from the age of 3, and this service is provided in line with the School Transport Policy. The Council currently transports over 2,000 primary age pupils to school, of which over 250 are in their first year of school (aged 3-4). All primary school contracts are operated by drivers and passenger assistants that have been cleared by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). The safety and well-being of our pupils is paramount to us at all times.

To reiterate, for the 69% of pupils that currently attend YGG Pont Sion Norton via school transport there will be no change to their transport arrangements. It is only the children that currently live within the 1 ½ mile walking distance of YGG Pont Sion Norton that will be affected by these changes and this is acknowledged.

It is recognised that there will be an increase in the number of school buses attending the new school in Rhydyfelin. A planning application will be submitted specifically for the new school, and as a part of this process a Traffic Impact Assessment will be undertaken focussing on both the immediate and surrounding area. This assessment will look at the current capacity of the highway and also assess the impact of any increase in traffic flow, including the increase in school buses, on the highway, pedestrian and cycling routes. This report will contain recommendations in relation to improving the existing highway infrastructure as well as incorporating pedestrian safety measures such as traffic calming initiatives or additional pedestrian crossing points etc. As part of other 21st Century School schemes measures have been put in place including additional on-site parking, dedicated drop off zones for buses within the school site and turning circles. Due consideration will be given to ensuring that appropriate measures are put in place on any new development.

The local authority conducts regular monitoring and reviews of air quality to determine compliance to statutory Air Quality Objectives, set by national government to protect public health. Information pertaining to Air Quality and the impact upon residents will be included within the Traffic Impact Assessment as mentioned above. Conversely, the traffic congestion issues in and around YGG Pont Sion Norton in Cilfynydd should improve.

The consultation has been conducted in accordance with Welsh Government legislation, which is outlined in their statutory School Organisation Code. All persons who are required to be consulted with under this Code have been consulted with. Residents of the current Heol Y Celyn Primary School in Rhydyfelin were not consulted with as a part of these proposals as they solely focus on school reorganisation and as such, they are not one of the statutory consultees. However, the consultation documentation has been published on the Council website and any interested person could have viewed the details of the proposal and comment as deemed appropriate.

It must be noted that the statutory consultation process being undertaken relates to the Council's proposals to reorganise schools in the Pontypridd area and it is not a consultation on the construction of a new building. If this proposal does proceed, further consultation will be undertaken with the local community, including that required under the Town and Country Planning Act, which will include residents of the new school proposed. The Traffic Impact Assessments mentioned above will form a part of the surveys and assessments that will need to be undertaken in accordance with the statutory planning application that will need to be submitted.

Thema: Cydymffurfio a Gweithdrefnau

Theme: Compliance and Procedure

There was no meeting for parents held at YGG PSN, instead the meeting was held at the proposed site which was impossible for most parents to attend. The meeting was held between 4pm-6pm, therefore many working parents could not attend. Being two bus journeys away from our communities, parents who rely on public transport could not attend. The RCT Education representatives at the meeting could not our answer our questions regarding the added distance children would be expected to travel and had no knowledge of the extreme traffic build up that occurs around Pontypridd town centre during school run times. We were repeatedly told if we had concerns, we should make them known in the consultation questionnaire. As parents we left this meeting exasperated and angry at the lack of awareness displayed by the RCT Education staff.

125 questionnaire responses agreed with the proposal to relocate YGG Pont Sion Norton, compared to 427 official responses against. 500 signatures on a petition submitted against the proposals were not recorded in the Consultation document. 13 out of 14 members of the public allowed to speak at the Cabinet meeting spoke against the proposals, two of whom spoke specifically against the relocation of YGG Pont Sion Norton to Heol y Celyn. Yet despite this overwhelming response from the public against the proposals they were passed by the Cabinet on March 21st as if there had never been any doubt.

A voting Cabinet member, Cllr Maureen Webber, is the Chair of governors at Heol y Celyn, the school earmarked to have millions of pounds of investment - How is this democratic? We submit that she had a vested interest in the passing of the proposal and should not have been allowed to vote.

The council did not ensure that all parents received a consultation document, they were not issued through the school and therefore not all parents were able to express an opinion. This council presumes that everyone has access to a computer and the internet - this is not the case.

This council is creating a two-tier Welsh education system in North Pontypridd while children in Rhydyfelin are given more opportunities to engage in Welsh medium education irrespective of distance or financial implication.

Ynysybwl is a rural community and RCT fails to recognise this and its distance from the proposed new school.

Children should be protected by The Future Generations Act to accessible education whether English or Welsh. It is discriminatory that RCT is placing logistical barriers for children from some of the poorest communities to access Welsh medium education.

How can a Cabinet that has totally ignored all objections in previous meetings or ensured that councillors answer relevant and important questions be entrusted to oversee fairly the objections raised. This cabinet has consistently refused to take time for proper discussion, To everyone on the outside, it is obvious that this Cabinet has no intention of allowing their decisions to be altered and therefore there will be no impartiality. This Cabinet has already made it intentions clear and once again I fear that this objection period is just a 'paper exercise' to meet legal requirements. These objections should be considered by an outside body.

RCT have chosen to ignore the views of the public.

<p>There continues to be a complete failure to respect the views of those who responded to the consultation.</p>
<p>Despite the number of objections raised at cabinet meetings, council meetings, orally during other meetings, via petitions, via written submissions etc, no consideration nor serious discussions have taken place to answer the points raised.</p>
<p>Cabinet proposed the decision, yet it is the same people who scrutinised the decision to continue with the proposals and the same group of people to “consider” these objections.</p>
<p>There is a lack of transparency within RCT in regards to these proposals, no answers to questions posed despite cabinet and council giving opportunities to ask questions.</p>
<p>I object to the fact that cabinet can push through plans without consideration being given to any of the suggestions raised by the public.</p>
<p>I believe that the consultation process undertaken by RCT Council on the 21st Century Schools proposals for Pontypridd has left a great deal to be desired. Not only did fail to provide multiple options for parents to give their views on, it also failed to provide all the necessary information that you would expect to see in a consultation of this size and was set out in such a way that multiple proposals came under one question, preventing those filling-in the consultation from filling all of it in.</p>
<p>It is a great shame that this opportunity to invest £37million on improving education facilities in Pontypridd has turned into proposals that the parents and residents of Pontypridd don't want, this is clear from your own consultation. I therefore request that the Cabinet do not proceed with these proposals and instead consults again on a series of proposals for the future of education in Pontypridd, so that this £37million can be spent as effectively as it possibly can.</p>
<p>I object the proposals on the basis that RCT feel it is acceptable to risk my children’s education given that Estyn’s opinion is that at best it is hoped that the new school will achieve the same standards as YGG Pont Sion Norton – shouldn’t any proposals at least improve the outcomes for our children?</p>
<p>The decision to close YGG Pont Sion Norton and Heol y Celyn and create only one school on the Heol y Celyn site has been based on the fact that the other proposed education changes frees up this space – and that this decision therefore has clearly not been made with the welfare of our children/the education of our children/the future of the Welsh Language/the future of our children in mind.</p>
<p>RCT has set out its wellbeing objectives and in particular the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More involved and resilient communities... (The steps for this include: Build stronger partnerships with community groups; and Coordinate and improve the support it gives to communities.) • Rhondda Cynon Taf’s schools will be amongst the best in the country, and with all children achieving the best they can. • Rhondda Cynon Taf’s children and young people will receive a great start in life. <p>I would like RCT to show how your actions as part of the 21st century proposals meet these objectives and how are your actions in this case a reasonable step to meet the objectives and how have you have mitigated any negative impact you decision may have on the objectives.</p>

The Wellbeing and Future Generations Act looks at the five ways of working. How has RCT Council demonstrated how they have taken these into account?

Response: Our consultation has been conducted in accordance with Welsh Government legislation, which is outlined in their statutory code document 006/2013, the School Organisation Code. All persons who are required to be consulted with under this Code have indeed been consulted with.

Our consultation documentation has been published on the Council website and any interested person had the opportunity to view the details of the proposal and comment on it if they so wished. In addition, and in accordance with the Code, hard copies of the Consultation Document were distributed to all schools directly affected by the proposals, to distribute to parents and carers via 'pupil mail'.

There is no requirement, as specified with the Code, for proposers to hold consultation meetings, or open evenings, with consultees. This is something that the Council undertook over and above what was required statutorily in order to encourage further collaboration and to be able to speak directly to consultees. In addition to the 16 meetings that were convened at each school directly affected by the proposals, 5 public drop-in sessions were also held throughout the Pontypridd area.

The Consultation Report listed the details of the consultation responses that were submitted during the consultation period. These included the number of questionnaires that were received, as well as a breakdown in the number of the general correspondence that was also submitted. Petitions are acknowledged as a singular response and/or objection. The Report also confirmed that all responses were scrutinised by Cabinet prior to the meeting, so in addition to the summary of responses that was included within the Report, ALL consultation responses were provided to Cabinet in their entirety, prior to the Cabinet meeting.

As mentioned in one of the objections above, in terms of the numbers of consultation responses specifically in relation to Proposal 4, 125 people were 'for' the proposal, 427 people were 'against' the proposal, 333 people were 'unsure' and 1,283 chose not to respond. If we are to examine these figures in basic terms, just looking at those that chose to respond, 'for or 'against' then the split is 77:23, if those that responded with an 'unsure' are included in the calculations then less than 50% were 'against' the proposals, if all those that responded to the consultation are included in the calculations then then less than 22% of respondents were 'against' the proposals. If we were to widen the scope of the consultees in terms of how many people were directly consulted with then the figures increase to the thousands, and then the percentage of those that were against the proposals becomes even lower.

The proceedings at the Cabinet meetings were carried out in accordance with the relevant rules of procedure contained in the Council's Constitution. In accordance with the Constitution, Cabinet Members must maintain objectivity in decision making. Cabinet

Members were fully informed of the relevant issues before making their decision through the officer reports and afforded the opportunity to inspect all the Consultation responses received prior to consideration of the Consultation Report at the meeting itself. It is the Council's view that discussions relating to this proposal were open and honest and submissions made resulted in a thorough and robust debate on the proposals. The decisions of the Cabinet were reached through the democratic processes of the Council.

Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Councillors must comply with the Member's Code of Conduct, contained within Part 5 (Codes and Protocols) of the Council's Constitution.

The Member's Code of Conduct requires a Member whilst carrying out their duties, to decide if they have a personal interest in an item of Council business and if so, whether they need to disclose it. The Code sets out when a Member will have a personal interest. A Member will have a personal interest where the business being considered relates to any body to which they have been elected, appointed or nominated by the Council. Therefore a Member who has been appointed by the Council as a Local Education Authority Governor will have a personal interest if the business being considered relates to the School to which they have been appointed.

Where a Member has a personal interest in any business of the Council and they attend a meeting at which that business is being considered a Member must disclose orally to that meeting the existence and nature of that interest before or at the commencement of that consideration, or when the interest becomes apparent.

Where a Member has a personal interest in any business they will also have a prejudicial interest in that business, if the interest is one which a member of the public with knowledge of the relevant facts would reasonably regard as so significant that it is likely to prejudice their judgement of the public interest. However there are certain exemptions to this rule contained within the Code and a Member will not be regarded as having a prejudicial interest in any business where that business relates to a body to which they have been elected, appointed or nominated by the Council. Note this exemption does not apply where the business relates to the determination of any approval, consent, licence, permission or registration (in this regard the Public Services Ombudsman For Wales has stipulated in his Guidance for County Borough Councillors on the Code of Conduct that he considers these descriptions to refer to a narrow category of decisions, such as granting planning consent and licensing decisions and that a wider interpretation of approval, for example, would cover almost every aspect of the Council's business and was clearly not intended).

Therefore a Member would not be prevented from participating in a meeting (and voting) where the business related to a School to which they have been appointed by the Council as a Local Education Authority Governor, but in order to comply with the Code of Conduct should disclose the existence of the personal interest.

The reference to Cllr Webber is incorrect. Cllr Webber is a governor of Heol Y Celyn Primary School but she is not the Chair of Governors.

The 21st Century Schools and Education Programme, which is the driver behind these proposals, contributes positively to RCTs' well-being agenda as well as each of the Well-being of Future Generation Act goals on a number of levels, an example of each is included below:

A prosperous Wales

Improving educational outcomes and educational provision are the priority for every project delivered within the 21st Century Schools Programme, contributing to the development of a skilled and well-educated workforce.

A resilient Wales

Newly constructed schools are built to BREEAM excellent standards and include features such as photovoltaic cells, rain water harvesting systems, and a biodiverse forest schools' area, contributing to a healthier natural environment

A healthier Wales

21st Century Schools include modern and flexible sports facilities that not only benefit the school but also the wider community. The benefits of which have a positive effect on well-being.

A more equal Wales

All of our schools are wholly inclusive and all pupils and parents have the opportunity to choose the school of their choice, be it English medium, Welsh medium or faith provision. In addition, RCT's generous home to school transport ensures that all pupils have equitable access to any school regardless of social, economic or geographical factors.

A Wales of cohesive communities

Community facilities are included within our new schools so that schools can provide an additional role within its community and act as a catalyst to create a local community hub. Facilities include dedicated community rooms as well as sports facilities that can be used out of hours thus increasing the connectedness of learners and non-learners alike from different communities.

A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language

RCT's WESP sets out the Council's vision and objectives to increase the number of Welsh learners; improve the quality of the provision and the educational outcomes; and ensure there is suitably trained and qualified educational workforce. This Plan is a key policy and informs the 21st Century Schools Programme.

A globally responsible Wales

The larger 21st Century Schools projects are procured using the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU). This is the publication in which all tenders from the public sector which are valued above a certain financial threshold according to EU legislation, must be published, advertising opportunities on a global scale.

In addition, an assessment of the proposals on The Well-being and Future Generations Act five ways of working is below:

<p><u>Long Term</u> (The importance of balancing short term needs with the need to safeguard the ability to also meet long term needs)</p>	<p>How does your project / activity balance short-term need with the long-term and planning for the future?</p> <p>Maintaining the existing provision of educational premises within Rhondda Cynon Taf places enormous strain on the Council resources. It is recognised that there is an opportunity through the 21st Century Schools funding to manage these pressures more efficiently in future years.</p> <p>The long term vision for RCT education is to provide all learners with the best opportunity possible to achieve their full potential through the means of education by providing access to the very best learning opportunities with modern, flexible facilities appropriate for delivering the new curriculum.</p> <p>Improved learning environments will act as a stimulus to creating a better future through delivering brand new 21st Century Schools facilities for our pupils through all phases of their educational journeys from foundation phase through to delivering a more efficient and effective post-16 provision.</p>
<p><u>Prevention</u> (How acting to prevent problems occurring or getting worse may help public bodies meet their objectives)</p>	<p>How does your project / activity put resources into preventing problems occurring or getting worse?</p> <p>The Council recognises the challenges of providing everyone with the facilities and opportunities to receive an excellent education in 21st Century facilities. These proposals will enhance and improve the educational environments for all 3-19 year olds affected.</p>
<p><u>Integration</u> (Considering how the public body's well-being objectives may impact upon each of the wellbeing goals, on their objectives, or on the objectives of other public bodies)</p>	<p>How does your project / activity deliver economic, social, environmental and cultural outcomes together?</p> <p>The Council recognises the importance of the Welsh language as a vital element to achieve and reinforce social and cultural benefits. These proposals will deliver more welsh medium places in the Pontypridd area, opportunities for wider community collaboration and participation, a more sustainable educational building meeting BREEAM targets all providing a more integrated and improved learning experience.</p>
<p><u>Collaboration</u> (Acting in collaboration with any other person (or different parts of the body itself) that could help the</p>	<p>How does your project / activity involve working together with partners (internal and external) to deliver well-being objectives?</p> <p>As a part of this school organisation programme the Council has already consulted with thousands of learners, staff, and parents and carers, throughout the Pontypridd area. If</p>

body meet its well-being objectives)	these proposal are to go ahead then this collaboration will continue when further consultation will be undertaken to ensure that all stakeholders have an opportunity to shape the 21 st Century Schools provision to ensure benefits and well-being opportunities are maximised.
<u>Involvement</u> (The importance of involving people with an interest in achieving the well-being goals, and ensuring that those people reflect the diversity of the area which the body serves)	<p>How does your project / facility involve stakeholders with an interest in achieving the well-being goals? How do those stakeholders reflect the diversity of the area?</p> <p>Consultation meetings were held with the student councils of all of the schools directly affected by the proposals, as well as with staff and governors, and open evenings were held in various locations throughout the area which were open to the public. All comments that were submitted during the consultation process were considered by Cabinet.</p> <p>Moving forward, engagement with learners, staff and RCT residents will continue and input and information gleaned from these sessions will shape the new school facilities. In addition information gathered will influence and inform our future projects so all consultation undertaken shapes the legacy of the 21st Century Schools Programme.</p>

Thema: Derbyn Disgyblion

Theme: School Admissions

Heol y Celyn is very likely to hit capacity over the next few years with Rhydyfelin families now choosing this new state of the art school on their doorstep rather than walking their children to the nearest English medium provision (Hawthorn) I refer to minutes taken at the Staff and Governors meeting with Heol y Celyn which is in Appendix 3 of the Consultation Report.

Gaynor Davies for RCT replied 'Admission criteria would be applied' she went on to say that 'Catchment areas may be reviewed regularly'

This leaves us as PSN parents in no doubt that our children in the furthest communities away from Heol y Celyn will be the last priority to be given a space at the new school should the school hit capacity. Will siblings then have to be sent to different schools? If one sibling is in Heol y Celyn but another is in Abercynon these schools feed different secondary schools. There are so many unanswered questions and we feel as parents that there will be repercussions to these proposals that have not been planned for; it is the well-being of our children at stake.

There is no guarantee that there is enough space for all the children and future children from this catchment area to attend. I am concerned that there would be no Welsh school available for my children to attend.

Parents in Rhyd are going to send their children there as it's close and new so what will happen to psn children then who have to travel in??

We are concerned with the direction the Cabinet debate went with regard to proposed changes to the traditional PSN catchment areas, which have not been put forward in the

Proposal Document. Cabinet debated whether YGG Evan James and YGG Abercynon could be alternative options for parents in the PSN catchment communities. It was agreed that these schools could serve the PSN catchment and the director for transport agreed that free school transport would be available.

6 Councillors called Cabinet's decision in for Scrutiny and on April 3rd we attended the Scrutiny Meeting. Many Councillors drew attention to the lack of clarity of any proposed catchment changes for Welsh medium education in Pontypridd and despite all the previous references to YGG Abercynon as a suitable alternative Gaynor Davies repeatedly denied any planned changes to catchment areas – this does not add up.

I have heard that Abercynon will be the next possible Welsh medium Primary for us if a place is not given at the new site, but this would be unthinkable for us due to an even longer distance to travel.

Response: The planning of School Places is a local authority responsibility and the Council has a statutory duty to match supply and demand for early years, primary, secondary and post-16 provision for parents that choose to educate their children through the Medium of Welsh or English. The Council prides itself on managing school places effectively and efficiently through the successful implementation of the School Admissions.

Based on current pupil numbers if the new Welsh Medium Primary School is built, with a capacity of 480 plus 60 Nursery, there will be an increase in capacity to meet any increase in demand. Nevertheless, if in the future the demand for places from in-catchment children for the Welsh Medium Primary School exceeds the supply, the site has sufficient land to accommodate additional classroom space. This has been the approach taken at other schools within the County Borough.

For clarity the process is that if the number of applications exceeds the Published Admission Number, the Local Authority's over subscription criteria is applied, which is detailed below for information. This information is detailed within the Council's 'Starting School' book.

However it should be noted that RCT have never had to apply this criteria, or the school admissions 'tie-breaker' scenario at primary level. No pupil within RCT has ever been denied a school place at compulsory school age in their in-catchment primary school.

Oversubscription Criteria

- Priority Category 1: 'Children Looked After (children in public care) and previously 'Looked After' children.
- Priority Category 2: Children whose home is inside the school's catchment area and have an older sibling attending the school from the same address, at the date of application, who will continue to attend that school in September 2018.
- Priority Category 3: Children whose home is inside the school's catchment area who do not have an older sibling attending the school.
- Priority Category 4 : Children whose home is outside the school's catchment area and have an older sibling attending the school from the same address, at the date of application, who will continue to attend that school in September 2018.

- Priority Category 5: Children whose home is outside the school's catchment area who do not have an older sibling attending the school.

For the avoidance of all doubt the reference to 'home' in the oversubscription categories above and the 'tie breaker' refers to the actual location of the residential dwelling in which the child lives and to which Child Benefit is paid.

The Local Authority has an obligation to keep all catchment areas under review to ensure sufficient supply of school places across the County Borough. This offers choice to parents when there is surplus capacity within a school. These proposals however offer a growth in Welsh Medium places and are not reliant on surplus capacity elsewhere to meet need. The Local Authority is committed to meeting the Welsh Government's Cymraeg 2050 ambitious target of achieving 1million Welsh speakers by 2050.

Thema: Effaith ar y Gymraeg

Theme: Welsh Language Impact

This will lead to a reduction in children attending Welsh medium education from North Pontypridd.

Dyma'r tro cyntaf yn hanes addysg cyfrwng Cymraeg i gyngor ganoli darpariaeth cynradd. Mi fydd yn amddifadu cymunedau gogledd Pontypridd o addysg cyfrwng Cymraeg yn eu cymuned. Mae eisoes tystiolaeth fod teuluoedd yn cael eu gorfodi i ddewis addysg cyfrwng Saesneg i'w plant gan nad ydy'r cynlluniau hyn yn ymarferol i deuluoedd sydd yn gweithio neu deuluoedd tlawd heb geir. Mae nodi fod mwyafrif plant Pont Sion Norton yn derbyn trafndiaeth ar hyn o bryd yn dangos diffyg deallrwydd o addysg cyfrwng Cymraeg a pha mor allweddol yw gweithgarwch allgyrsiol i lwyddiant y fath addysg. Mae'r cynlluniau yn rhwystr i'r tlotaf ac i deuluoedd sy'n gweithio i fynychu gweithgarwch allgyrsiol ac felly mae'r cynlluniau yn gwahaniaethu. Mae'r cynlluniau hefyd yn mynd yn groes i bolisi Llywodraeth y Cynulliad tuag at filiwn o siaradwyr Cymraeg gan ei fod yn gosod rhwystrau tuag at fynediad at addysg Gymraeg.

In this day and age children should be entitled to an education in their own communities – they should not have to travel further than their grandparents did in 1951.

Your Welsh Language Impact Assessment is silent regarding the parents who have stated that this move will displace them from Welsh Medium provision. This silence is a fundamental error. You need to be clear on what you are putting in place to avoid such a negative impact. Just stating that the new location is less than 2 miles away is insufficient.

Mae'r cynnig hwn mynd i niweidio Cymreictod Pontypridd. Mae symud ysgol llwyddianus allan o'r Gymuned a creu rhwystrau ymarferol amhosib i rhieni yn anerbyniol ac yn mynd yn erbyn targedau y llywodraeth i ehangu y niferoedd o siaradwyr Cymraeg.

The proposed changes to Welsh Medium Provision would lead to a reduction in the number of schools providing Welsh Medium education from two and a half to two, and the removal of Welsh Medium education in north Pontypridd.

Whilst we of course welcome the new Welsh Medium school on the existing Heol-y-Celyn site, the net gain in the number of spaces is minimal in terms of what is needed to reach

the Council's own targets as set out in the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan - namely to create 6,054 additional Welsh speakers within the county by 2021.

YGG Pont Sion Norton is too important a school to lose – it has ensured the Welsh language was protected and encouraged the growth of the language in North Pontypridd. The current proposals will deny children in north Pontypridd the same opportunities as their parents and grandparents and will ultimately lead to fewer Welsh speakers.

COFIWCH YSGOL PONT SION NORTON will be written in the history books. It will tell of a fight to ensure the survival of the Welsh language in Pontypridd and its success in the communities it served. The Welsh language as a result of the proposal will now no longer be secure in our communities and we need to remind ourselves that what is precious to us can be lost forever if we don't fight for it. RCTBC need to ensure the language is safe in all communities and this means ensuring that our communities in North Pontypridd are served by a Welsh medium school in our own area.

Dylai addysg Gymraeg fod ar gael yn lleol i bob blentyn yng Nghymru. I orfodi plant 3 oed i deithio mor bell o ardal Gogledd Pontypridd yn warthus. Dw i i methu deall sut mae'r polisi hwn yn hwyluso cyrraedd tardedau pendant y llywodraeth.

I feel strongly about sending my children to Welsh school, but think they should be able to access this locally. This decision may impact whether I continue to send my children to a Welsh school. This is disappointing as I am committed to Welsh education and was under the impression that all children in Wales should be able to attend Welsh school. However I feel this option is being taken away from me as the current proposal is not practical for my family.

Bydd y nifer o blant sydd am addysg Gymraeg yng ngogledd Pontypridd yn lleihau oherwydd eich penderfyniad afresymol i'w cludo yr holl ffordd i Rhydyfelin. Mae hyn yn golygu na fydd RCT yn cyrraedd ei nod o nifer siaradwyr Cymraeg ac yn llesteirio nod y Cynulliad

We urge the Council to urgently secure the future of Welsh medium education in north Pontypridd and support the call for a Welsh medium school to be opened in the north of Pontypridd, in either Glyncoch, Ynysybwl or Cilfynydd. This is in addition to the new school at Heol-y-Celyn, and suitable properties should be identified before other plans are progressed. This would provide assurances to parents who are now considering removing their children from Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Pont Sion Norton or not enrolling them for the coming year because of the proposed closure.

We are calling for local Welsh education within the communities of Cilfynydd, Trallwn, Coed y Cwm, Glyncoch and Ynysybwl. We are urging RCT to be aspirational and forward thinking with regards to the Welsh Language and be bold to make provision which will really support the Welsh Government aim to have 1 million Welsh speakers by 2050. This will not be achieved by removing Welsh schools from communities and placing logistical barriers for families who would have considered Welsh medium education but will feel practically unable to make that choice.

We are all meant to be promoting the Welsh language, encouraging our children to use it and utilise it fully. It should be easily acceptable and the heart of every community. Schools themselves need to be encouraging the smaller village school setting, smaller numbers in classrooms etc.

It is disheartening that in 2019 we are having to campaign for equality for the Welsh Language.

It also directly contradicts the ambition of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, and fails to address the Welsh Government's aims to increase the use of the Welsh language. Many benefits of being multi-lingual are known, and to risk reducing the number of multi-lingual children and families in our area carries with it risks to meeting the seven well-being goals.

It is making Welsh language education less accessible, in direct contrast to the government's plan to increase the number of Welsh language speakers.

I feel strongly about this because I believe the right for all children to access Welsh medium education is being eroded by this decision. When the Welsh Government is aiming for a million Welsh speakers Welsh medium education should be available and a natural choice to all.

I object as the Welsh Language Impact Assessment does not consider the negative impact that the proposals will have on Welsh Language in the communities of North Pontypridd.

Estyn's response to the proposals continuously state that it "does not evaluate suitably the impact of the changes on pupils with SEN": There are already problems with SEN - this should be looked at further. We also need to look at Welsh medium SEN.

Ymateb: Cyfrifoldeb yr awdurdod lleol yw cynllunio llefydd ysgolion ac mae gan y Cyngor ddyletswydd statudol i fodloni galw am ddarpariaeth y blynyddoedd cynnar, cynradd, uwchradd ac ôl-16 ar gyfer rhieni sy'n dewis addysg cyfrwng Cymraeg neu Saesneg i'w plant.

Ym mis Ebrill 2016, derbyniodd y Cabinet adroddiad a roddodd y diweddaraf i Aelodau ynglych bodloni'r galw am lefydd cyfrwng Cymraeg yn y Fwrdeistref Sirol. Nododd yr adroddiad y sefyllfa bresennol gan gynnwys yr ysgolion yn ardal ehangach Pontypridd. Amlinellodd yr adroddiad gynlluniau'r Cyngor yn y dyfodol i gynyddu darpariaeth cyfrwng Cymraeg a gwella ansawdd y profiad addysgol trwy gyflawni gwelliannau dysgu Ysgolion yr 21ain Ganrif.

Mae'r cynnig i adeiladu ysgol fwy newydd sbon ym Mhontypridd wedi cael ei ystyried yn ofalus i sicrhau bod llefydd ychwanegol yn ategu ein hysgolion presennol yn ardal Pontypridd. Mae ysgol gynradd cyfrwng Cymraeg ym Mhontypridd yn barod, sef YGG Evan James sydd â 81 o lefydd dros ben, ac YGG Abercynon yng ngogledd Pontypridd sydd â 54 o lefydd dros ben. Does dim modd cyfiawnhau'r galw am lefydd mewn ysgol cyfrwng Cymraeg newydd yng Nglyn-coch na chynnal YGG bresennol Pont Siôn Norton yn y cymunedau yma. Mae ysgol fwy newydd yn ardal Heol-y-celyn, yn ogystal â'r ysgolion cynradd Cymraeg presennol ym Mhontypridd, sef YGG Evan James ac YGG Abercynon, yn bodloni galw yn y dyfodol o ran Pontypridd gyfan ac yn rhoi dewis i rieni. Er hynny, bydd hyn yn cael ei fonitro'n agos i sicrhau ein bod ni'n bodloni unrhyw gynnydd yn y galw trwy ymateb priodol ac ystyriol o safbwynt trefniadaeth a chynllunio ysgolion.

Mae'r Cyngor wedi ymrwymo'n llwyr i darged Cymraeg 2050 Llywodraeth Cymru ac i gynyddu ein llefydd cyfrwng Cymraeg trwy gynnal ein Rhaglen Addysg ac Ysgolion yr 21ain Ganrif. Mae ehangu ein darpariaeth y blynyddoedd cynnar yn sylweddol yn cynyddu nifer

y llefydd gwag mewn bylchau penodol i ddarparu manau mynediad ychwanegol ar gyfer addysg cyfrwng Cymraeg. I bob diben, mae hyn yn gwneud i'r iaith dyfu ac yn cynyddu'r cyfleoedd sylfaenol.

Mae'r Cyngor wedi buddsoddi'n sylweddol mewn addysg Gymraeg, ac mae wedi ymrwymo i gynyddu darpariaeth a buddsoddi miliynau mewn gwella'r amgylchedd dysgu ar gyfer disgyblion presennol a nifer y llefydd cyfrwng Cymraeg yn ein hysgolion.

Fel sydd wedi'i nodi yn yr adroddiad yma, mae'r Cyngor yn cydnabod ei bod hi'n bosibl y bydd raid i rai disgyblion wedi'u heffeithio gan y cynnig deithio'n bellach. Wedi dweud hynny, mae bron i 70% o'r plant sy'n mynd i YGG Pont Siôn Norton yn cael defnyddio cludiant am ddim i'r ysgol felly fydd dim effaith ar y rhan fwyaf o ddisgyblion. Does dim modd gwarantu darpariaeth addysg feithrin ym mhob ysgol, serch hynny bydd cyfle i ddatblygu gofal cofleidiol cyfrwng Cymraeg ar safle'r ysgol newydd.

Felly i gloi, mewn ymateb i argaeledd clybiau brecwast a chlybiau ar ôl ysgol, bydd y Cyngor yn cynghori a gwneud argymhellion i gorff llywodraethu arfaethedig newydd yr ysgol i barhau i gynnig clybiau brecwast i ddisgyblion. Dylid nodi nad yw hyn yn ofyniad statudol. Mae clwb brecwast yn YGG Pont Siôn Norton ar hyn o bryd, ond does dim clybiau ar ôl ysgol. Serch hynny, bydd y Cyngor, unwaith eto, yn annog y corff llywodraethu i ddatblygu'r cyfleoedd yma gan y bydd cyfleusterau newydd Ysgolion yr 21ain Ganrif yn ategu sefydlu darpariaeth clwb ar ôl ysgol i bob disgybl. Eto, rhaid nodi nad yw darparu clybiau ar ôl ysgol yn ofyniad statudol ond mae'r Cyngor yn cydnabod pwysigrwydd gofal cofleidiol i gefnogi teuluoedd sy'n gweithio.

Response: Planning of School Places is a local authority responsibility and the Council has a statutory duty to match supply and demand for early years, primary, secondary and post-16 provision for parents that choose to educate their children through the Medium of Welsh or English.

In April 2019, Cabinet received a report updating Members on the demand and supply of Welsh Medium Places in the County Borough. The report highlighted the current position including the schools in the greater Pontypridd area and also outlined the Council's future plans to ensure there is capacity to grow the existing Welsh Medium provision and to improve the quality of the educational experience by providing 21st Century School learning environments.

The proposal to build a brand new larger school for the Pontypridd area has been carefully considered to ensure that additional capacity supports and complements our current schools in the Pontypridd area. Pontypridd already has a Welsh Medium Primary School with surplus capacity of 81 at YGG Evan James and to the north of Pontypridd, YGG Abercynon also has surplus capacity of 54. The demand for pupil places specifically for a new Welsh Medium school in Glyncoch and maintaining the existing YGG Pont Sion Norton is not justified within these communities. A new larger school in the Heol y Celyn area, plus

the existing Welsh medium primary school in Pontypridd at YGG Evan James, and YGG Abercynon, meets future demand for the whole of Pontypridd and provides parents with choice. Nevertheless, this will be closely monitored to ensure that any growth in demand is met with an appropriate and measured response from a school organisation and planning perspective.

The Council is fully committed to the Welsh Government Cymraeg 2050 target and increasing our Welsh Medium Places through the delivery of our 21st Century Schools and Education Programme, as well as expanding our early years provision, significantly increases capacity at targeted gaps to provide additional access points for Welsh Medium Education. In effect growing the language and increasing the opportunities at 'grass roots'.

The Council has invested substantially since 2012 in Welsh medium education and is committed to increasing provision and investing millions in improving the learning environment for existing learners and the number of Welsh Medium spaces in our schools.

As already stated in this report, the Council acknowledges that some pupils affected by the proposal may have further to travel, however nearly 70% of the children attending YGG Pont Sion Norton currently have free transport to school and therefore the majority of learners will be unaffected. Full time nursery education provision in all schools is not guaranteed, however facilities will be provided to ensure there will be an opportunity to develop an on-site Welsh medium wrap around childcare service for parents within the new school.

To reiterate, in response to the availability of breakfast clubs and after school provision, the Council will advise and make recommendations to the proposed new school Governing Body to continue to offer breakfast clubs for pupils, although it should be noted that this is not a statutory requirement. There is currently a breakfast club but no after school clubs operating at YGG Pont Sion Norton. However the Council will again encourage the Governing Body to develop these opportunities as the new 21st Century School facilities will support the setup of the provision of a childcare after school club, or an activity club, for all pupils. Again, to note it is not a statutory requirement to provide after school clubs but the Council recognises the importance of childcare facilities to support working families.

Thema: Effaith ar y Gymuned

Theme: Community Impact

I am absolutely against the plans which I feel are ill conceived and being implemented in the face of strong and very reasonable objections. People are being ignored and communities are going to be devastated by these plans if they go ahead.

I live in Cilfynydd and my 4 year old daughter attends Ysgol PSN. It's absolutely disgraceful that you are even considering closing our only 2 primary schools in the village. It would tear a massive hole in our community. Young families will not move to the village and there will be even less sense of community and natural meeting points and shared communities for us to gather around.

The communities that serve YGG Pont Sion Norton have no links with Rhydyfelin and the distance will mean that children are excluded from clubs and cultural activities because of distance and cost.

It will take children out of their communities and break up friendship and peer groups, particularly if some parents take up the offer of sending their children to YGG Evan James or YGG Abercynon.

A vital positive feature of the existing education arrangements is the opportunity for the development of a community spirit. In the five years that we have lived close to Pont Sion Norton School, my wife and I have seen first-hand many, many friendships (including the friendships between school-going families and us – who do not have children of school age) develop, grow and nurture in Cilfynydd and Norton Bridge. These relationships have provided emotional, spiritual, physical, material and practical support in times of need, often grave need. It is my belief that these and similar strong relationships should be given the opportunity to develop and thrive, not be cut off because of an elitist, commuter-based approach to school access.

The benefits of a cohesive community filter through to the other well-being goals:

- they enable people to be more prosperous through gaining confidence, wider social networks and better employment opportunities**
- they enable the discussion and cohesion of people around climate and environmental concerns**
- they enable people to be healthier, particularly having better mental health, largely achieved through strong community support**
- these benefits in combination enable people to fulfil their potential, leading to greater equality**

Response: Community Impact Assessments have been completed for the proposals, and the reports formed a part of the consultation documentation which Estyn have deemed to be appropriate.

The 21st Century Schools Programme lists community benefits as one of its outcomes, and the Council aims to deliver this priority and achieve this target by providing buildings and facilities that are able to deliver shared community services. In essence, the Council aims to create the means to deliver fully integrated community hubs on our school sites. The new 21st Century Schools already delivered and operational in RCT include dedicated community rooms which can be used during the school day, as well as providing facilities which the community are able to utilise outside of the normal core school hours. These include school halls, community rooms, Multi Use Games Areas (MUGA) and 3G pitches.

In addition, the 21st Century Programme has facilitated and delivered numerous opportunities for job creation. It has enabled dozens of apprenticeships, supported pupil engagement especially in the STEM subjects, and has created a raft of work experience opportunities. This, coupled with the Welsh Government's delivery benchmark for local labour, and locally sourced business and supplies, ensures that not only are the schools a community facility once opened, but that throughout the delivery and construction

element of the projects the community benefits are embedded as a priority throughout every phase.

CYNNIG 5 – Newidiadau i Ddalgylchoedd

PROPOSAL 5 – Catchment changes

Mae'r cyd-ddibyniaeth o ran y cynigion wedi eu heffeithio gan y penderfyniad i beidio newid dalgyrch ardal Gwauncelyn.

The interdependence of proposals is affected by the decision not to change the Gwauncelyn catchment area.

Ymateb: Dydy'r penderfyniad i ddileu'r newid i ddalgyrch Ysgol Uwchradd y Ddraenen Wen, a hynny yn dilyn y cyfnod ymgynghori, ddim yn effeithio ar allu'r Cyngor i gyflawni'r cynigion trefniadaeth ysgolion a oedd yn destun ymgynghoriad.

Response: The decision to remove the catchment change to Hawthorn High School following the consultation period does not affect the Council's ability to deliver the school organisation proposals as consulted upon.

Why did RCT decide at the last minute to alter this proposal?

Response: This decision was not made at the last minute. It was made at the correct and appropriate time in accordance with the procedures carried out within the consultation period. The reasons for this change are included within the Consultation Report which is available on the Council website.

Roedd yno ddiffyg gallu i gynnig sylwadau ac atebion synwrol ar y cynigion unigol There was a lack of proper ability to comment on individual proposals.

Ymateb: Roedd y broses ymgynghori 2 ½ waith yn hwy na'r cyfnod ymgynghori arferol, sef 42 diwrnod. Trwy wneud hyn, roedd gan bobl fwy o amser i ymateb i'r cynigion mewn nifer o ffyrdd gwahanol, a hynny trwy ysgrifennu ymatebion a defnyddio'r cyfryngau cymdeithasol. Cafodd 5 noson agored gyhoeddus eu cynnal mewn lleoliadau amrywiol ac roedd ffurflen ar gael ar-lein, yn ogystal â'r ddogfen ymgynghori. Roedd copiâu papur hefyd ar gael yn ystod y noson agored. Dylid nodi y daeth dros 2,000 o ymatebion i'r ymgynghoriad i law.

Response: The consultation process exceeded that of the standard 42 days for a consultation period by 2 ½ times which allowed consultees more time to respond to the proposals in a number of different ways, via written responses and social media. 5 public open evenings were held at various locations and a pro-forma was available online, within the consultation document and also hard copies were available at the open evening. It should be noted that there were over 2,000 responses to the consultation.

Gwrthwynebiadau Cyffredinol i bob cynnig

General Objections to all proposals

Mae methiant i ystyried y cynnydd mewn traffig o ganlyniad i'r holl gynigion gan gynnwys ystyriaeth o lwybrau y bysys.

There is a failure to consider the increased traffic as a result of all proposals including consideration of bus routes.

Ymateb: Bydd ceisiadau cynllunio yn cael eu cyflwyno ar gyfer yr ysgolion newydd yn bennaf. Yn rhan o hyn bydd Aseiad o'r Effaith ar Draffig yn cael ei gynnal, gan ganolbwyntio ar yr ardal benodol a'r ardal gyfagos. Bydd yr aseiad yma yn asesu faint o gerbydau sy'n

defnyddio'r briffordd ar hyn o bryd ac effaith unrhyw gynnydd o ran traffig ar y briffordd, y llwybrau cerdded, beicio a bysiau.

Response: Planning applications will be submitted specifically for the new schools, and as a part of this there will be a Traffic Impact Assessment undertaken focussing on both the immediate and surrounding area. This assessment will not only look at the current capacity of the highway, but also the impact of any increase in traffic flow, on not just the highway but also on pedestrian, cycling routes and bus routes.

Mae yna ddiffyg asesiad o effaith y llygredd ar blant a phobl ifanc.

There is a lack of assessment of impact of pollution on children and young people.

Ymateb: Bydd hyn yn cael ei asesu. Mae'r awdurdod lleol yn cynnal gwaith monitro ac adolygu ansawdd aer i wirio cydymffurfriad ag Amcanion Ansawdd Aer statudol wedi'u gosod gan lywodraeth genedlaethol i amddiffyn iechyd y cyhoedd. Bydd gwybodaeth ynglŷn ag Ansawdd Aer a'r effaith ar breswylwyr yn cael ei chynnwys yn yr Asesiad o'r Effaith ar Draffig fel sydd wedi'i nodi uchod.

Response: This will be assessed. The local authority conducts regular monitoring and reviews of air quality to determine compliance to statutory Air Quality Objectives, set by national government to protect public health. Information pertaining to Air Quality and the impact upon residents will be included within the Traffic Impact Assessment as mentioned above.

Mae yna ddiffyg ystyriaeth o'r cysylltiad sydd rhwng ysgolion lleol a'u cymunedau lleol

There is a lack of consideration of the links of local schools with local communities.

Ymateb: Mae Asesiadau o'r Effaith ar y Gymuned wedi cael eu cynnal ar gyfer pob cynnig, ac roedd yr adroddiadau yn rhan o'r ddogfen ymgynghori. Roedd Estyn o'r farn bod yr asesiadau yma yn briodol.

Response: Community Impact Assessments have been completed for all proposals, and the reports formed a part of the Consultation documentation. Estyn considers these assessments to be appropriate.

Mae yna fethiant i ddilyn y Cod Trefniadaeth Ysgolion

There is a failure to follow the School Organisational Code.

Ymateb: Mae'r broses yma wedi cael ei chynnal yn unol â Chod Trefniadaeth Ysgolion.

Response: This process has been carried out in full compliance with the School Organisation Code.

There continues to be a complete failure to respect the views of those who responded to the consultation.

Mae'r methiant llwyr i barchu barn y rhai a ymatebodd i'r ymgynghoriad yn parhau

I object to the manner in which the decision has been made in the face of the predominance of consultation responses that are opposed to the proposals. Your role as our elected representatives is to represent us. It is nothing short of outrageous that the

decision appears to be made in a self-serving way to suit the council's own ends, not to serve the people in the local area who elected you, and who you claim to represent.

Ymateb: Cafodd Adroddiad Ymgynghori ei lunio a oedd wedi crynhoi ymatebion i'r ymgynghoriad ac wedi ymateb iddyn nhw, a hynny yn unol â'r Cod. Cafodd yr holl ymatebion a ddaeth i law yn ystod y cyfnod ymgynghori eu rhoi i Aelodau o'r Cabinet er mwyn iddyn nhw graffu arnyn nhw cyn cyfarfod y Cabinet ar 21 Mawrth 2019.

Craffwyd ar y cynigion yma eto oherwydd codwyd amheuan ynghylch penderfyniad y Cabinet i barhau â'r gweithdrefnau statudol Trefniadaeth Ysgolion ym mis Mawrth. O ganlyniad i hyn, trafododd y Pwyllgor Trosolwg a Chraffu y cynigion ymhellach ar 9 Ebrill gan eu dadansoddi.

Response: A Consultation Report was written which summarised and responded to the consultation responses in accordance with the Code, and all responses that were received during the consultation period were given to Cabinet Members to scrutinise prior to the meeting of Cabinet on March 21st 2019.

There was further scrutiny of these proposals as the decision made by Cabinet in March to proceed with the School Organisation statutory procedures was called in, which meant that these proposals were subsequently put before Overview and Scrutiny Committee on April 9th for further discussion and analysis of the proposals.

These meetings, and all procedures pertaining to the decision making processes undertaken, were strictly carried out in accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct.

Mae ymateb Estyn i'r cynigion yn dweud yn barhaus "nad ydyw'n asesu yn briodol effaith y newidiadau ar ddisgyblion gydag AAA"

Estyn's response to the proposals continuously state that it "does not evaluate suitably the impact of the changes on pupils with SEN"

Ymateb: Mae newidiadau sylweddol yn cael eu cynllunio yng Nghymru mewn perthynas â'r ddarpariaeth statudol sydd ei hangen i fodloni anghenion disgyblion ag Anghenion Addysgol Arbennig (AAA) /Anghenion Dysgu Ychwanegol (ADY). Cafodd Deddf Anghenion Dysgu Ychwanegol a'r Tribiwnlys Addysg (Cymru) ei chyflwyno ym mis Ionawr 2018. O dan y Ddeddf, mae'n ofynnol i awdurdodau lleol adolygu trefniadau i gefnogi disgyblion ag ADY yn eu hardal ac ystyried a ydyn nhw'n ddigonol. Bydd y Ddeddf yn cael ei hategu gan reoliadau newydd a Chod Ymarfer Anghenion Dysgu Ychwanegol statudol newydd.

Hyd nes i'r Cod Ymarfer ADY ddod i rym ym mis Medi 2020, mae'n ofynnol i Awdurdodau Lleol (All) gydymffurfio â Chod Ymarfer Anghenion Addysgol Arbennig presennol Cymru (2002) a chyflawni eu dyletswyddau statudol o ran plant ag AAA. Mae'r Cod yn nodi bod gan yr All ddyletswydd i fonitro ac adolygu ei ddarpariaeth AAA yn rheolaidd ledled RhCT i sicrhau ei bod yn defnyddio ei hadnoddau mewn modd effeithiol ac effeithlon i fodloni anghenion disgyblion y mae angen darpariaeth arbenigol arnyn nhw. Mae'r Cyngor yn parhau i gynnal ei ddyletswydd ar hyn o bryd, a bydd yn parhau i wneud hyn yn y dyfodol. Mae gan RCT ystod eang o ddarpariaeth AAA mewn ysgolion prif ffrwd a bydd yn parhau i gynnal ac adolygu darpariaeth yn rheolaidd.

Response: Considerable changes are planned in Wales in relation to the statutory provision required to meet the needs of pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN) /Additional Learning Needs (ALN). The Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act (ALNET) was introduced in January 2018. The Act requires local authorities to keep under review the arrangements for supporting pupils with ALN within their area and consider whether these are sufficient. The Act will be supported by new regulations, including secondary legislation and a new statutory Additional Learning Needs Code of Practice.

Until the anticipated implementation of the new ALN Code of Practice in September 2020, Local Authorities (LAs) are required to comply with the existing Special Educational Needs (SEN) Code of Practice for Wales (2002) and fulfil their statutory duties towards children with SEN. The Code states that the LA has a duty to continuously monitor and review its specialist SEN provision across RCT to ensure that it is utilising its resources efficiently and effectively to meet the needs of pupils who require specialist provision. The Council does and will continue to uphold its duty. RCT has an extensive range of SEN provision attached to mainstream schools and will continue to regularly maintain and review provision.

Following the recent consultation on the Welsh Government's draft Welsh in Education Strategic Plans Regulations (Wales) 2019 guidance which advocates an increase in Welsh medium education provision for learners with Additional Learning Needs (ALN), and in accordance with the ALN and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018, RCT will consult on establishing a Welsh medium Foundation Phase and Key Stage 2 ALN provision in the new school.

APPENDIX A

OBJECTIONS

Copies of the mass email received.

- 1. Welsh and English versions of the emails generated via the website created by the 'Our Children First - Ein Plant Cyntaf' group**

348 received

Rydw i yn gwrthwynebu penderfyniad Cyngor RhCT i barhau gyda'r cynlluniau Ysgolion 21 Ganrif ym Mhontypridd am y rhesymau canlynol:

Cynnig 1 - Dileu'r ddarpariaeth chweched dosbarth o ysgolion uwchradd Y Ddraenen Wen, Ysgol Uwchradd Pontypridd ac Ysgol Gyfun y Cardinal Newman Eglwys Gatholig Rhufain: Mae yna ddiffyg archwilio opisynau eraill o fewn y cynnig. Mae diffyg cydraddoldeb o ran mynediad a gwariant ar addysg ôl-16. Mae yna ddiffyg archwiliad o'r effaith ar gydraddoldeb a faint fydd am gymryd llefydd oherwydd problemau trafniadaeth ac mae diffyg ystyriaeth wedi ei roi i broblemau llygredd a thraffig ychwanegol. :

Cynigion 2 a 3 – Creu ysgol newydd Pob Oed 3-16 ar gyfer y Ddraenen Wen a Phontypridd: Mae yna ddiffyg manylion yn yr arbedion ariannol sy'n cael ei gynnig. Mae diffyg prawf o'r manteision yn nhermau canlyniadau addygsol. Mae diffyg tystiolaeth i ddangos bod newidiadau tebyg wedi bod yn llwyddiannus.:

Cynnig 4- Pont Siôn Norton a Heol y Celyn: Rwy'n gwrthwynebu fod plant mor ifanc â thair oed yn cael eu bysio hyd at chwe milltir i ffwrdd o'u cymunedau er mwyn gallu cael mynediad i addysg Gymraeg. Rwy'n gwrthwynebu i 5 neu 6 o fysys ychwanegol orfod teithio drwy dref Pontypridd ar yr amser prysuraf o ran traffig. Onid ydym mewn cyfnod o Argyfwng Amgylcheddol? Rwy'n gwrthwynebu bod Heol y Celyn wedi ei ddewis fel y safle addas ar gyfer cymunedau dalgyrch traddodiadol Pont Siôn Norton. Rwy'n gwrthwynebu bod rhwystrau ymarferol wedi ei rhoi mewn lle sy'n golygu bod ein cymunedau tlotaf yn cael eu hamddifadu o ddarpariaeth addysg Gymraeg.:

Cynnig 5 - y newid i ardaloedd dalgyrch: Roedd yno ddiffyg gallu i gynnig sylwadau ac atebion synwrol ar y cynigion unigol. Mae'r cyd-ddibyniaeth o ran y cynigion wedi eu heffeithio gan y penderfyniad i beidio newid dalgyrch ardal Gwauncelyn:

Mae ymateb Estyn i'r cynigion yn dweud yn barhaus "nad ydyw'n asesu yn briodol effaith y newidiadau ar ddisgyblion gydag AAA":

Mae methiant i ystyried y cynnydd mewn traffig o ganlyniad i'r holl gynigion gan gynnwys ystyriaeth o lwybrau y bysys. :

Mae yna ddiffyg asesiad o effaith y llygredd ar blant a phobl ifanc. :

Mae yna ddiffyg ystyriaeth o'r cysylltiad sydd rhwng ysgolion lleol a'u cymunedau lleol.:

Mae yna fethiant i ddilyn y Cod Trefniadaeth Ysgolion:

Mae'r methiant llwyr i barchu barn y rhai a ymatebodd i'r ymgynghoriad yn parhau:

I object to RCT's decision to move forward with the 21st Century Schools reorganisation in Pontypridd for the following reasons:

Proposal 1 - Removal of the Sixth forms of Hawthorn High, Pontypridd High and Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive: There is a lack of examination of other options within the proposal. There is a lack of equality of access and expenditure on post 16 education. There is a lack of examination of the impact on equality and take up of places because of transport issues and, there is a lack of consideration of additional pollution and transport congestion:

Proposals 2 and 3 - Creation of new 3-16 schools for Hawthorn and Pontypridd: There is a lack of detail on the financial savings provided by the proposal. There is a lack of proof of benefit in terms of educational outcomes. There is a lack of evidence to show that similar changes have been successful:

Proposal 4- PontSionNorton and Heol y Celyn: I object to children as young as three being bussed up to 6 miles away from their communities to access Welsh medium education. I object to 5 or 6 extra busses going through Pontypridd town at the busiest times of day. Are we not in a Climate Emergency? I object to Heol y Celyn being chosen as an appropriate school site for the traditional Pont Siôn Norton catchment communities. I object to logistical barriers being put in place resulting in the poorest communities having their Welsh medium education effectively withdrawn:

Proposal 5 - amendment of catchment areas: There was a lack of proper ability to comment on individual proposals. The interdependence of proposals is affected by the decision not to change the Gwauncelyn catchment area:

Estyn's response to the proposals continuously state that it "does not evaluate suitably the impact of the changes on pupils with SEN":

There is a failure to consider the increased traffic as a result of all proposals including consideration of bus routes.:

There is a lack of assessment of impact of pollution on children and young people:

There is a lack of consideration of the links of local schools with local communities:

There is a failure to follow the School Organisational Code:

There continues to be a complete failure to respect the views of those who responded to the consultation:

Copies of the objections received with supporting information.

1. Letter from Hawthorn High Governing Body
2. Letter from Pontypridd High Governing Body
3. Letter from 'Our Children First – Ein Gyntaf Haf'

Hawthorn High School – formal objection to RCT 21st Century schools reorganisation

The Governing Body objects formally to proposals to reorganise educational provision in the Pontypridd area because it feels that the Council has:

- Deviated from due process (as stipulated by the Welsh Assembly ‘School organisation code’) with regard to the conduct of its consultation process about these proposals.
- Failed to treat individuals and organisations in a fair and equitable manner (as required by the Welsh Assembly ‘School organisation code’) during the consultation process.
- Actively striven to create a negative portrayal of standards and provision at Hawthorn High School in an attempt to mislead consultees that the proposed reorganisation will achieve more positive outcomes than might otherwise be the case.
- Failed to exercise its duty of care to employees at the school in its willingness to publish unwarranted allegations of poor performance, actively seek out criticism of the school and publicly undermine the teachers and leadership of the school in a variety of public forums.

In particular the Governing body objects to the following:

1) Allegations of poor performance at KS5

Statements made in initial report to Cabinet in October 2018:

Contextual information – ‘The educational performance of the sixth forms has been mixed with two of the secondary schools consistently *being amongst the worst performing schools in respect of A Level performance*’

Background information for the Council Cabinet – ‘The educational achievement and success at Key Stage 5 (in respect of the A Level results) of Hawthorn and Pontypridd High Schools are consistently below the Welsh averages and are amongst the lowest in RCT and Wales (my emphasis). However, Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School is an improving school and has consistently performed above the Welsh average for A level provision.’

Original school response to these allegations of poor performance:

Comparative A2 Level outcomes

****Please note that Hawthorn High eFSM % is 24.5% and Bryncelynnog 14.5% (green indicates above Welsh average performance and red below)**

		L3	AWPS	3 A*/A	3 A*/C	SCC	WBQ
2014/15	Hawthorn High	98.25	772.7	1.8	59.6		
	Bryncelynnog	98.6	670	5.6	34.7		
	RCT average	96.9	725	2.9	57.5		
	Wales average	96.9	787	7.9	67.5		
2015/16	Hawthorn High	97.62	772.3	0	61.9		
	Bryncelynnog	100	824	8.8	67.2		
	RCT average	97.0	765	4.0	65.2		
	Wales average	98.0	823	6.7	70.6		
2016/17	Hawthorn High	100	739.9	2.1	41.7		
	Bryncelynnog	94.3	787	18.9	52.8		
	RCT average	96.3	679	5.5	44.9		
	Wales average	97.1	733	10.4	54.7		
2017/18	Hawthorn High	93.9	732	14.3	61.2	96.2	73.1
	Bryncelynnog						
	RCT average	96.0	722	10.0	55	81	65
	Wales average	98.0	739	13.0	58	69	60

The comparisons being drawn are also inappropriate in that the Welsh Average is being used as a 'like for like' comparison to compare performance between HHS, PHS and BCS. This is unfair as the Welsh average entitlement of a school's population to free school meals stands at 16.5%. BCS's entitlement is 14.5%, PHS is 19.5% and HHS is 24.5%. Clearly it is unfair and inappropriate to suggest that the expectation for pupils to achieve Welsh average performance or better should be the same in all three schools.

Thorough, impartial and accurate analysis of this data reveals that the term 'consistent' and 'below' are totally inappropriate, very negative and not a true representation of the actual outcomes within the Pontypridd Sixth Form; as the chart reveals there are very similar outcomes at BCS and the Pontypridd Sixth Form between 2015 and 2017 even when we do not consider that the latter has a significantly less affluent catchment area as defined by the Welsh Assembly.

Director of Education response as presented to Cabinet 21/3/19:

P12-15

"For the post 16 provision the Welsh Government data does not compare performance of schools based on the free school meal categories. However, the Council's data

evidences that the majority of pupils eligible for free school meals do not return to the sixth forms in Pontypridd and Hawthorn High Schools. The majority opt to study at Coleg Y Cymoedd. In September 2018, only 10.7% of the Key Stage 5 cohort were eligible for free school meals in Pontypridd High School and 14.0% in Hawthorn High School - a significantly lower figure than that in Key Stage 4 in both schools. Therefore, as the free school meal comparison at Key Stage 5 between Pontypridd, Hawthorn and Bryncelynog secondary schools is not significantly different, it is not unreasonable to compare and contrast the performance of learners, particularly at Alevel.

Hawthorn and Pontypridd High Schools commented that the A-level results are misleading in the consultation document. They maintain that they have been above the Welsh average on the majority of the indicators. The data in the consultation document is based on Welsh Government data sets. Welsh Government updated the Key Stage 5 results on 12/11/18. The following table shows the most recent results published on the Welsh Government All Wales Core Data Sets and provides data relating to Level 3 outcomes, the Average Wider Points Score (AWPS) and the percentage of learners achieving 3A*/C. The results confirm that the Key Stage 5 results for both schools at 3A*/C are consistently below both the RCT and the Welsh average from 2015-2017. The AWPS for Pontypridd High School is higher than most schools. The AWPS is calculated by dividing the total number of points gained from all courses sat at Key Stage 5 and not just the number of A-levels or their equivalent. Pontypridd High School provide a large number of Key Skill courses that inflate this figure and makes comparison with any other institutions very difficult. Due to this very issue, the Welsh Government no longer uses the AWPS as an assessment criteria comparator. It should also be noted that the AWPS is not a criteria that is used by Universities in scoring a student's University application."

Governing Body position May 2019:

Key Skills courses have not been delivered/accredited in Wales for many years; this is another example of clear inaccuracies in the documentation. We note that no figure is included for Bryncelynog's post 16 cohort and also note very significantly how the Director now makes no attempt to justify her previous statement that performance post 16 in both Hawthorn high and Pontypridd High is 'amongst the worst in Wales'. This statement has, however, been placed into the public domain in the original published documentation and remains a serious allegation of poor performance which is unfounded and unwarranted. The original statement has given the public an incredibly negative impression of the standards in current sixth form provision in Pontypridd schools and, therefore, seriously hampered their ability through the consultation process to make balanced judgements as to the impact on standards of the council's proposals for Sixth Form reorganization. The publication of this unwarranted allegation of poor performance has also caused undue and unwarranted stress to teachers and senior managers at the school.

2) Allegations of poor performance at KS4:

Statements in initial report to Cabinet October 2018:

Page 12 – ‘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’

Response from school to report to Cabinet:

The following tables are included to portray the differing intakes of the three schools in question:

National Reading test 2018			
School	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9
Bryncelynog	102.5	100.0	99.0
PHS	96.2	97.0	94.2
HHS	94.1	93.5	91.7
RCT Average	98.9	97.5	96.8
RCT Year 6 average : 95.45			

National Numeracy : Procedural test 2018			
School	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9
Bryncelynog	102.6	104.0	101.8
PHS	96.2	97.0	94.2
HHS	92.7	92.3	93.2
RCT Average	98.9	97.5	96.8
RCT Year 6 average : 98.22			

National Numeracy : Reasoning test 2018			
School	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9
Bryncelynog	104.0	102.6	101.1
PHS	96.2	97.0	94.2
HHS	89.6	85.0	86.6
RCT Average	98.9	97.5	96.8
RCT Year 6 average : 94.0			

Attendance				
School	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	% Change
Pontypridd High	93.6	94.1	92.9	-0.7
Bryncelynog	94.4	93.6	92.9	-1.5
HHS	92.3	93.3	92.7	+0.4%

The Council report states that ‘the educational performance of (HHS and PHS) at KS4 is consistently in the third and fourth quartiles when compared to similar schools in Wales’ yet Bryncelynog is referred to as being an ‘improving school’

Comparative GCSE outcomes

Please note that Hawthorn High eFSM% is 24.4%, Pontypridd High eFSM % is 19.6% and Bryncelynog is 14.5% (My Local School – 2018). The Welsh average for this measure is 16.5%.

**2018 results are provisional*

HHS

Performance Indicator	2015	2016	2017	2018	RCT Ave.	Wales Ave.
L2+ %	49.3	61.8	45.9	51.7	53%	55%
BMQ	3	1	2	2		
L2 Threshold %	93.8	97.1	65.4	60.7	64%	67%
BMQ	1	1	1	2		
L1 Threshold %	96.6	100	94	92.9	95%	94%
BMQ	3	1	3	3		
Capped 8/9	362.4	373.1	341.1	329	348	350
BMQ	1	1	2	3		
Best English A* to C %	58.2	68.4	46.6	55.4	63%	63%
BMQ	3	2	4	3		
Best Maths A* to C %	54.8	64.0	63.2	67.0	62%	64%
BMQ	3	2	1	1		
Best Science A* to C %	81.5	86.8	92.5	44.6	58%	63%
BMQ	3	3	1	4		
WBQ National				48.9	50%	51%
BMQ				1		
Skills CC National			82.0	85.7	73%	73%
BMQ			1	1		

39% of indicators in the last four years have been in the third or fourth quartile

PHS

Performance Indicator	2015	2016	2017	2018	RCT Ave.	Wales Ave.
L2+ %	53.3%	61.8%	50.6%	54.0%	53%	55%
BMQ	2	1	3	3		
L2 Threshold %	92.9%	98.2%	60.2%	64.1%	64%	67%
BMQ	1	1	4	2		
L1 Threshold %	98.4%	100.0%	97.2%	98.5%	95%	94%
BMQ	2	1	4	2		
Capped 8/9	364.4	375.9	354.6	356	348	350
BMQ	1	1	2	3		
Best English A* to C %	59.2%	71.2%	56.8%	61.0%	63%	63%
BMQ	3	1	4	3		
Best Maths A* to C %	62.0%	65.9%	61.9%	65.0%	62%	64%
BMQ	1	2	2	2		

Best Science A* to C % BMQ	63.6% 4	87.6% 3	65.9% 3	54.0% 4	58%	63%
WBQ National BMQ				54% 2	50%	51%
Skills CC National BMQ			59% 3	80% 1	73%	73%

42% of indicators in the last four years have been in the third or fourth quartile

Bryncelynog

Performance Indicator	2015	2016	2017	2018	RCT Ave.	Wales Ave.
L2+ % BMQ	61.7% 2	64.9% 2	62.9% 2	66.9% 1	53%	55%
L2 Threshold % BMQ	75.4% 4	81.1% 4	73.1% 3	74.4% 2	64%	67%
L1 Threshold % BMQ	96.6% 4	98.0% 3	98.2% 3	95.9% 4	95%	94%
Capped 8/9 BMQ	333 4	333 4	375.8 2	368.7 3	348	350
Best English A* to C % BMQ	71.4% 2	74.3% 1	68.9% 3	75% 1	63%	63%
Best Maths A* to C % BMQ	69.1% 2	67.6% 3	69.5% 2	73.3% 2	62%	64%
Best Science A* to C % BMQ	95.4% 1	98.0% 1	98.8% 1	73.3% 2	58%	63%
WBQ National BMQ				tbc	50%	51%
Skills CC National BMQ			?? ??	90.7% 1	73%	73%

40% of indicators in the last four years have been in the third or fourth quartile

The educational performance at KS4 of HHS is not consistently in the third and fourth quartile when compared to similar schools. Bryncelynog has a higher percentage of its KPIs in the third and fourth quartile during the period the Council has chosen to focus on.

Bryncelynog was only removed from an ESTYN Inspection category in November 2016. Two of four recommendations were:

- “Raise standards at KS4, especially for those pupils entitled to free school meals”

- “Ensure that curriculum arrangements and learning pathways at key stage 4 enable all pupils to attain relevant level 2 qualifications”

Hawthorn High School

(quartile performance using categories included in Welsh Assembly MyLocalSchool analysis)

Welsh Assembly Indicator	2015	2016	2017
At least 5 GCSEs inc. Eng and Maths	3	1	2
At least 5 GCSEs A* - C	1	1	1
At least 5 GCSEs A* - G	3	1	3
Best 8 or 9 GCSE results	1	1	2
Best English GCSE A* to C	3	2	4
Best Maths or Numeracy GCSE A* to C	3	2	1
Numeracy GCSE A*-C			2
Maths GCSE A*- C			2
Science GCSE A* to C	3	3	1
Welsh Bacc Skills qualification			1

You will note that during the three years identified less than 34% of indicators have been in the third or fourth quartile for Hawthorn High School. **To draw the conclusion that HHS is ‘consistently in the 3rd or 4th quartile’ is therefore inaccurate and very misleading.** It would be more accurate to state the positive view that more than 66% of the time Hawthorn High has been in quartiles 1 and 2. It is very regrettable that the council has chosen to portray relative performance between schools in this fashion.

Response from Director of Education in document presented to cabinet on 21/3/19:

No reference is this time made to the original statement that performance at KS4 is ‘consistently’ in the third and fourth quartile. The following points are, however, made in response to supposed points made by others in the consultation process:

P11

- **Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School is an excellent school with improving results** Yes. The Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5 data for 2018 evidences this statement.

- **Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School is the natural choice for the sixth form centre – budget, capacity and attainment.** Yes. The school has strong and effective leadership and this is evident by many performance indicators.

Governing Body position May 2019:

The final statement by the Director above by implication suggests that she does not believe that any of the other secondary schools involved in these proposals have

‘strong and effective leadership’; to suggest that this is ‘evident’ in many performance indicators has been shown not to be the case in the analysis above (nor any presented by the Council at any stage in the consultation process).

Nothing has been done to address the glaring inaccuracies in the Council’s use and analysis of data at Key Stage 4 in its original presentation to Cabinet. No reference is made to ‘Consistently in the third and fourth quartile’ in the document presented on 21/3/19 to performance at Key Stage 4. Therefore, the public has continued to be presented with an extremely negative and unfair view of standards at the school and is not in a position to make rational judgements as to how the 21st Century proposals will affect standards of education in Pontypridd. The publication of this unwarranted allegation of poor performance has also caused undue and unwarranted stress to teachers and senior managers at the school.

3) Allegations of inefficient management of resources post 16:

Statements made in initial report to Cabinet (October 2018):

Page 34 – ‘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
BCS	162	142	150	18	20	16	8	9	8
HHS	119	118	123	17	19	19	10	13	14
CNS	195	154	78	24	20	22	13	8	11
PHS	141	134	135	20	23	20	9	15	11

School	Average A Level Class sizes		
	2015	2016	2017
BCS	8	8	6
HHS	5	5	4
CNS	6	9	7
PHS	7	6	6

School response to original report to Cabinet:

Pontypridd Sixth Form – A/S Class sizes (from January PLASC returns)

The following tables were used to evidence a true and accurate analysis of use of resources in terms of class size in the Pontypridd Sixth Form:

Subject	A/S Jan 2016			A/S Jan 2017			A/S Jan 2018		
	Year 12			Year 12			Year 12		
	PHS	HHS	Total	PHS	HHS	Total	PHS	HHS	Total
Applied Business	10	2	12	13	-	13	10	1	11
Art (PHS)	9	-	24	21	1	22	-	-	-
Art (HHS)	-	15	15	1	13	14	-	-	-
Art (shared provision)	-	-	-	-	-	-	9	5	14
Biology (PHS)	10	2	12	15	1	16	9	1	10
Biology (HHS)	-	9	9	-	11	11	-	12	12
BTEC Sport – Single	2	16	18	-	21	21	5	22	27
BTEC Sport – Double	1	16	17	-	12	12	3	16	19
Chemistry (shared provision)	5	5	10	-	-	-	12	5	17
Chemistry (PHS)	-	-	-	6	1	7	-	-	-
Computer Studies	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	2	4
Drama	4	9	13	3	5	8	-	3	3
Electronics	10	3	13	-	-	-	-	-	-
Engineering	-	-	-	-	-	-	14	10	24
English Literature	16	-	16	13	4	17	8	-	8
English Lang/Lit	1	15	16	-	15	15	-	9	9
French	1	7	8	-	7	7	-	-	-
Geography (shared provision)	7	9	16	-	-	-	-	-	-
Geography (PHS)	-	-	-	9	1	10	16	1	17
Health and Social Care	4	9	13	8	6	14	9	18	27
History (PHS)	18	2	20	24	1	25	15	-	15
History (HHS)	-	11	11	-	11	11	-	10	10
Child Development	8	-	8	8	6	14	-	-	-
Hospitality and Catering	6	-	6	7	2	9	5	7	12
Information Technology (PHS)	21	1	22	5	3	8	5	3	8
Information Technology (HHS)	-	5	5	-	-	-	-	-	-
Law	6	-	6	-	-	-	6	-	6
Mathematics (PHS)	33	2	35	30	4	34	12	2	14
Mathematics (HHS)	-	13	13	-	8	8	-	17	17
Media Studies	11	9	20	1	13	14	2	4	6
Music (shared provision)	2	2	4	3	5	8	1	2	3
Photography	2	10	12	4	6	10	2	2	4
Physical Education	11	1	12	9	-	9	6	-	6
Physics (shared provision)	6	7	13	4	6	10	5	9	14
Product Design (PHS)	-	-	-	9	-	9	-	-	-
Product Design (HHS)	-	9	9	-	14	14	-	-	-

Product Design (shared provision)	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	7	12
Psychology	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	7	8
Public Services	6	-	6	-	-	-	-	-	-
Religious Studies	9	2	11	5	6	11	-	-	-
Science BTEC	9	3	12	-	-	-	-	-	-
Sociology (PHS)	13	7	20	23	1	24	-	-	-
Sociology (shared provision)	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	3	6
Travel and Tourism	3	14	17	5	18	23	10	14	24
Welsh	10	3	13	5	1	6	9	2	11
Welsh Bacc (PHS) Class 1	9	-	9	14	-	14	8	-	8
Welsh Bacc (PHS) Class 2	16	-	16	17	-	17	10	-	10
Welsh Bacc (PHS) Class 3	20	-	20	18	-	18	14	-	14
Welsh Bacc (PHS) Class 4	27	-	27	20	-	20	17	-	17
Welsh Bacc (PHS) Class 5	-	-	-	-	-	-	19	-	19
Welsh Bacc (HHS) Class 1	-	26	26	-	28	28	-	31	31
Welsh Bacc (HHS) Class 2	-	22	22	-	26	26	-	30	30
Welsh Bacc (HHS) Class 3	-	18	18	-	13	13	-	16	16
Welsh Bacc (HHS) Class 4	-	9	9	-	-	-	-	-	-
Courses offered with 5 students or less:									
PHS			0			0			0
HHS			1			0			3
Shared			1			0			1
TOTAL			2			0			4
									<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gov and politics – online course – 1 HHS pupil Further Maths – FMSP – 1 HHS pupil
Average Class Sizes:									
PHS (PHS classes plus shared classes)			15			15			12
HHS (HHS classes plus shared classes)			14			14			14

Pontypridd Sixth Form – A2 Class sizes (from January PLASC return)

Subject	A2 Jan 2016 Year 13	A2 Jan 2017 Year 13	A2 Jan 2018 Year 13
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	PHS	HHS	Total	PHS	HHS	Total	PHS	HHS	Total
Applied Business	14	1	15	10	-	10	11	-	11
Art (PHS)	5	-	5	7	-	7	16	1	17
Art (HHS)	-	1	1	-	4	4	0	9	9
Art (shared provision)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Biology (PHS)	5	-	5	10	-	10	9	1	10
Biology (HHS)	-	8	8	-	6	6	-	5	5
BTEC Sport – Single	3	12	15	2	13	15	-	13	13
BTEC Sport - Double	2	12	14	2	13	15	-	9	9
Chemistry (PHS)	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	2	6
Chemistry (shared provision)	4	7	11	3	4	7	-	-	-
Drama	0	4	4	2	4	6	-	7	7
Electronics	6	1	7	-	3	3	-	-	-
English Lang/Lit	-	5	5	-	10	10	-	10	10
English Literature (PHS)	15	-	15	11	-	11	10	2	12
English Literature (HHS)	-	6	6	-	-	-	-	-	-
French	1	-	1	1	3	4	-	5	5
Geography	7	2	9	5	2	7	6	1	7
Health and Social Care	-	5	5	2	4	6	7	5	12
History (PHS)	12	-	12	10	-	10	22	1	23
History (HHS)	-	14	14	-	7	7	-	10	10
Child Development	-	-	-	3	-	3	6	3	9
Hospitality and Catering	4	-	4	5	0	5	6	-	6
Information Technology (PHS)	5	-	5	13	-	13	5	1	6
Information Technology (HHS)	-	3	3	-	8	8	-	-	-
Law	2	1	3	3	-	3	-	-	-
Mathematics (PHS)	11	-	11	12	2	14	13	3	16
Mathematics (HHS)	1	8	9	-	9	9	-	8	8
Media Studies	2	3	5	5	6	11	1	8	9
Music (shared provision)	4	-	4	2	1	3	3	3	6
Photography	-	3	3	1	7	8	4	6	10
Physical Education	2	-	2	6	1	7	8	-	8
Physics (HHS)	-	-	-	3	5	8	2	4	6
Physics (shared provision)	2	5	7	-	-	-	-	-	-
Product Design (PHS)	2	1	3	5	-	5	5	-	5
Product Design (HHS)	-	-	-	-	6	6	-	12	12
Psychology	-	2	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
Religious Studies	14	7	21	6	-	6	5	5	10
Science BTEC	8	2	10	5	2	7	-	-	-
Sociology (PHS)	1	5	6	11	4	15	-	-	-
Sociology (shared provision)	-	-	-	-	-	-	16	1	17
Travel and Tourism	3	3	6	2	10	12	4	11	15
Welsh	5	0	5	6	1	7	5	1	6
Welsh Bacc (PHS) Class 1	12	-	12	16	-	16	15	-	15
Welsh Bacc (PHS) Class 2	12	-	12	14	-	14	14	-	14
Welsh Bacc (PHS) Class 3	10	-	10	10	-	10	14	-	14
Welsh Bacc (PHS) Class 4	10	-	10	9	-	9	13	-	13

Welsh Bacc (HHS) Class 1	-	16	16	-	17	17	-	23	23
Welsh Bacc (HHS) Class 2	-	15	15	-	16	16	-	18	18
Welsh Bacc (HHS) Class 3	-	12	12	-	15	15	-	14	14
Courses offered with 5 students or less:									
PHS			8			5			1
HHS			9			2			2
Shared			1			1			0
TOTAL			17			8			3
Average Class Sizes:									
PHS (PHS classes plus shared classes)			8			8			11
HHS (HHS classes plus shared classes)			8			9			11

Number of A Level classes with 5 students or less

	2016	2017	2018
RCT Calculation (as presented in proposal)	28	25	n/a
Pontypridd Sixth Form actual number	17	8	3

The table above illustrates the advantages of working in partnership and how the Pontypridd Sixth Form of 245 students is more financially viable than the council's figures seem to be intended to suggest. The number of classes with less than 5 students has been reduced significantly in recent years by increasingly sharing provision between ourselves and PHS. **RCT calculations presented in the consultation document only consider each school's provision in isolation and take no account of students from both schools in each class.** As a result, the Council seem to have chosen to present figures which completely ignore the efficiencies which have been achieved for many years by working in partnership. This creates an unfairly negative picture of the Pontypridd Sixth Form.

Average A Level classes size

	2016	2017	2018
RCT Calculation (as presented in proposal)	5	5	n/a
Pontypridd Sixth Form actual number	11	14	14

The table above also shows the average A level class size which has grown over the three years, again as a result of sharing provision. RCT calculations only consider each school and take no account of students from both schools in each class.

Director of Education response as presented to Cabinet 21/3/19:

- The accuracy of the numbers in the document that relate to sixth form class sizes were questioned. These have been scrutinised and are accurate. Each school is

funded directly for the number of students enrolled on each course. Hence if there are 14 students undertaking a course in Pontypridd High School but 8 are from Hawthorn, Pontypridd High School will only receive funding for the 6 Pontypridd High School students.

Governing Body position May 2019:

The Director's comments still take no account of the joint sixth from provision and, if the Council stands by them, display a complete lack of understanding as to how a joint provision operates in terms of use of resources. Average class size is significantly larger than the Council has presented it as being and therefore, the public has continued to be presented with an extremely negative and unfair view of leadership at the school and is not in a position to make rationale judgements as to how the 21st Century proposals will affect education in Pontypridd. Again, these are unwarranted allegations of poor performance.

4) Points raised by the Director in the report to cabinet on the consultation (21/3/19) with regard to Hawthorn High School's use of SCC funds:

"Pontypridd and Hawthorn High advised that they were not happy with the use of the negative language used to describe the schools. It was not the intention to convey negativity towards any schools affected by this consultation. The language and terminology used in the consultation document are commentaries based on the interrogation of the data. It is also important to reflect when considering the performance of Pontypridd and Hawthorn High Schools that until recently both schools were two of forty secondary schools across Wales that were identified by Welsh Government as consistently underperforming and were included in the Schools Challenge Cymru Programme. Over the three years to 2017 both schools had significant additional investment which in total was in excess of £1.24m in addition to the funding allocation from the Council and had access to high quality leadership and teaching support provided directly by Welsh Government. This investment has provided the two schools with a significant advantage over similar schools in Wales. However, despite this considerable additional resource both schools remain in a significant deficit position.

Governing Body position May 2019:

It is important to recognise that Hawthorn High School was approached by the Council and invited to become part of the Schools Challenge Cymru project. Officers at the time approached the Headteacher and acknowledged that the Council did not believe that standards at the school warranted inclusion in the project but wanted the school to be involved as the financial injection would be useful. After consultation with the Chair of Governors, the school agreed to work with the Council in this regard. ***To suggest, as the Director does, that it is a failing of the school to have not used***

SCC funding to reduce the deficit position of the school is entirely inappropriate is in complete contradiction of the terms of SCC participation (as defined by the Welsh Assembly) where use of funding to counteract a deficit position was strictly prohibited. The school was one of the 'best performers' of all the SCC schools during the period of funding and it is extremely unfair and demoralising to see the Council now attempting to criticise the school's involvement and suggesting that ineffective leadership has meant that the funds were not used to reduce deficit positions at a time of extremely challenging funding for schools in Wales. Again, this unfair criticism of leadership and management in Pontypridd schools has left the public unable to make rational decisions as to the likely impact of the 21st Century proposals.

5) Points raised by the Director/AR in the report to cabinet on the consultation – 21/3/19 with regard to standards of leadership at the school:

- P23

Hawthorn is a worse school than Bryncelynnog. I don't want my child to go there. (parental comment)

Director - "We have acknowledged in our consultation document that Bryncelynnog has achieved consistently better results than some other secondary schools over the last few years. Also, in addition in the most recent School Categorisation System Bryncelynnog is categorised as a 'green' school where as Hawthorn High is 'yellow'. These school reorganisation proposals are interlinked and at the heart of the proposals is raising standards in education. Through their implementation, we intend on tackling a number of the inconsistencies that exist between the schools. The removal of the sixth forms and the creation of 3-16 schools in Hawthorn and Pontypridd, will allow the schools to reallocate much needed resources to Key Stages 3-4, instead of utilising these resources to prop up small and unsustainable sixth forms. This. Work with the new schools will continue with support from the Council to ensure that the standards of learning in the current schools will continue to improve through the transition period of the creation of the new schools and beyond.

Governing Body position May 2019:

The Director's response to the statement made by a parent from a Bryncelynnog feeder school is unprofessional and damaging to the reputation of Hawthorn High School. The suggestion that the 21st Century proposals are designed to 'tackle' 'inconsistencies' between Bryncelynnog and Hawthorn and that Bryncelynnog has 'achieved consistently better results' than Hawthorn being made in a public meeting to parents who the Council were allegedly proposing to relocate to part of the Hawthorn catchment is unacceptable. **This is clear evidence of that the Director seemed determined to portray a particular impression of relative standards at the two**

schools. The statement that the reorganisation “will allow these schools to focus on appropriately resourcing and improving educational standards throughout all key stages” clearly implies that this is not the case at present and that is insulting to leadership in those schools, unwarranted and an inappropriate remark in a public meeting.

6) Inclusion by the Director in the report to cabinet on the consultation – 21/3/19 of minutes from a consultation meeting at CYC:

Included in the documentation presented to cabinet on 21/3/19 was a set of minutes from a ‘consultation’ meeting held with a subset of students currently studying at CYC that has been presented as piece of research or quasi research, perhaps to add ‘rigour’ to underpin their recommendations. If Cabinet are to be enabled to make an informed decision on the validity of the ‘consultation’, sample size calculation, methodology, analysis and how the work was conducted within an ethical framework is the minimum requirement for inclusion. To present the results as they have been, therefore, does not allow the reader to establish the validity of the work and therefore it is potentially misleading to cabinet officials. Essentially, although the title of the report claims it to be ‘notes’, the Director of Education has undertaken a piece of research, on children, and it is not clear whether or how these children were consented to participate. As with any piece of research, care needs to be given to articulating sample size calculation to ensure that the responses are not biased and that there is no coercion or leading of participants. There are very clearly articulated procedures for undertaking research, particularly when the participants are children or vulnerable adults, and it is impossible from the notes presented, to know how a duty of care has been discharged. This consultation meeting was not listed in the original publication document which set out the consultation process even though all other meetings were. It seems to be the only meeting where officers actually attempted to actively encourage attendance by young people and the school would question, in terms of data protection, how the Council ‘tracked down’ former pupils of the three schools in Pontypridd. Governors at the school can testify that some of their own children were approached at college and asked to attend this meeting; no similar encouragement was given to pupils at the schools by officers to be in attendance and does anyone at the college or any officer have the right to access student records to establish which school a college student has come from?

An analysis of the minutes of consultation meetings shows that this meeting was the only consultation meeting at which officers attended and asked questions rather than answered them. The nature of the questions asked is extremely loaded and leading

and the number of students from each school is in no way statistically representative. As an example of how to use 'student voice' the minutes of the meeting suggest that practice was in complete contradiction of the following guidance:

Union – NAS/UWT

Principle 2 – Student voice activities must not undermine teachers' professional authority and must not compromise other fundamental rights of children and young people.

A key criterion for assessing the appropriateness and acceptability of any student voice initiative involves a consideration of the extent to which teachers' professional authority is supported or undermined. Any student voice practice that is used to make judgements about a teacher's professionalism and so has the potential to undermine teachers' professional authority is unacceptable. Unfortunately, the NASUWT has received examples of schools using student voice to question teachers' capabilities. Not only is this unacceptable employment practice, it is likely to create suspicion and resistance and undermine any benefits of student voice

Union – NUT

Whilst welcoming the Government's encouragement of pupil participation in schools' decision making processes, it is important to make a distinction between broad policy areas and decisions which would affect individuals. Any decision which would have a direct impact on particular individuals rather than on the majority or all, staff or pupils, should not be included within the topics on which consultation with children and young people might take place. As a rule of thumb, any issue which had privacy/confidentiality implications or would impact on employees' employment, salaries or conditions of service should be excluded from eligible areas for pupil involvement.

The number of pupils who have the capacity to operate maliciously and to subvert the consultative process is small. The good practice guidance should address this issue explicitly, including strategies to prevent misuse by pupils and to tackle any suspected subversion.

Estyn, for example, place great importance on student voice but they are also trained to ask open questions that do not encourage particular answers. They also ensure that very critical, often anomalous answers are not recorded in order to preserve staff confidence and prevent undermining authority.

Notes of a meeting held with students at Coleg Y Cymoedd (CYC) Monday 26th November 2018 at 10:30 am Meeting to discuss the Council's proposals to reorganise school provision in the Pontypridd area
Present Gaynor Davies (GD), Director of Education and Inclusion Services Andrea Richards (AR), Head of 21st Century Schools

Lisa Howell (LH), Senior 21st Century Schools Officer
Sophie Nicholls (SN), Graduate Officer 21st Century Schools
23 students who previously attended Pontypridd High, Hawthorn High or
Cardinal Newman.

Q. GD - What is the pastoral care like here?

A. Student – Very good. They help me with my course and are always available to support me if I am struggling with a piece of coursework. They also listen and help if I have any worries and any personal problems I'm having.

A. Student – It depends on the teachers. There were some at school that were great but some that were not. I chose to come here because I could do a BTEC here but in Pontypridd High it was an exam.

Governing Body observations: No questions were asked by officers to the pupils at our school at their own consultation meeting. Only circa. 30% of the questions that they asked were answered by officers and they were told to leave the overwhelming majority as 'post it' notes to which they never received a response (the minutes of the pupil meeting at Hawthorn evidence this). Why were pupils at CYC asked particular questions and who formulated them?

Q. GD – What about A Levels ?

A. Student – I spoke to my friends at Pontypridd High and they said that the teachers are spread too thinly as they are working with years 7-11 as well as sixth form and they don't have the time to commit and support especially if they are having problems with their coursework.

A. Student – I think a big sixth form is a brilliant idea. I went to sixth form in Hawthorn High and the support and technology there was awful.

A. Student – The consortium is a shambles. Teachers are stretched and we could tell they were stressed.

The Governing Body remain staggered that words like 'shambles' and 'awful' would be included. Are these purporting to be verbatim minutes? 'I spoke to my friends' hardly constitutes 'research'.

Q. GD – What do you think the big differences are between sixth form in school and here?

A. Student – You can express yourself how you want to here and are accepted for that.

A. Student – We are treated like adults and we are trusted more here. We can go home to study and I am doing more learning independently rather than being forced to stay in school.

Where is the opportunity for a sixth form student to counter this sort of comment?

Q. LH – Do you think the learning environment is important to you?

A. Student – Yes, Hawthorn High is a prison. There are fences all around it. There is so much freedom here to go home if we need to.

As a governing Body we worked extremely closely with the Council to ensure site security was adequate after a particularly worrying incident at Mountain Ash School. We recognized with the Council that the site was too open at the time and fencing is an important part of child protection. For the director to let this comment go unchallenged and then for someone to make the decision to include it in these minutes is incredible in that context. Staff at the school remain appalled at this and the Governing Body share their sentiment.

GD – What impact does that have on your learning?

A. Student – I know that I am responsible for my own learning and I feel more like an adult. You lose your drive to do well if you are trapped in school and there is no room for you. Not everyone learns the same.

GD – So sixth form rooms are full in school?

A. Student – Yes, rooms are full and then you are told off for wandering or you have to ask for a key to a spare room if there is one. In the college there are lots of excellent places to self study.

Q. GD – Does anyone regret coming here?

A. Student – No.

A. Student – No, I met so many friends here and I am not bullied here. In school you have to sort it out yourself and fight because teachers don't do anything.

A. Student – If you are bullied here they sort it out. Everyone is different here but we all respect each other and we are tolerant of each other.

A. Student – The PE boys in school were the favourites and they could get away with bullying.

Once again it is incredible for the council to be suggesting on the one hand that there is too much surplus capacity in Pontypridd Sixth Forms and then to legitimize a statement that 'Sixth Form rooms are full in school'. The comments about bullying are completely unacceptable and pastoral staff at the school feel that their professionalism in this regard has been undermined and their ability to apply for positions in the new structure severely hampered by the Director asking leading questions and then publishing these answers.

A. Student – There is also a huge LGBT support group here (in CyC) too. In my first lesson here my teacher said that the most important thing we can do is respect each other and that she would happily have a lengthy debate with anyone who disagreed with that. I know that maybe there aren't enough funds to create the same type of support groups in Pontypridd High, but people weren't confident enough to come out in school. Some of my friends changed their names here and staff would help here and adapt what they called them to make it suitable for them.

Is it true that nobody in HHS has 'come out' or that we do not know how to cope or support LGBT issues?

This is an appalling insinuation on the work of our staff and. if the Council believed such comments to be true, they should have referred them as safeguarding issues to the school; it is our understanding that this was not done.

Q. AR – Do you think sixth form in schools is old fashioned?

A. Student – Yes in a way because you are trapped and so many teachers left Pontypridd High because they are stressed and too busy trying to teach year 7-11 too. The 3-16 is okay but I loved meeting new people when I went to high school and made that transition. There was a lot of bullying in my primary so I was glad to meet new people.

How does this question support the promotion of a Sixth Form in any school? As the Council is actively promoting the position of Bryncelynog as a Sixth Form centre of excellence as part of these 21st Century proposals, does it make any sense for an officer to now imply that 'sixth form in schools is old fashioned'?

Governing Body position May 2019:

The Welsh Assembly school organisation code states that:

“Where meetings are arranged, proposers should ensure that they are arranged in such a way that consultees in any of the categories set out a paragraph 3.2 are treated fairly and equitably.”

The meeting at CYC stands outside the stated consultation process and has been conducted in an unfair fashion.

The difference between the conduct of the meetings for school pupils and those at the College is surely an example of a failure to treat pupils (and staff at different institutions) equitably. No notice was given re the meeting at the college and it was never listed in the original consultation document. The vast majority of questions our pupils raised at their designated meeting were answered by officers and the minutes list the vast majority that never received a response; officers came to answer questions not ask them. Members of our school community who have sons/daughters at the college have made us aware that efforts were made by the council (through college staff) to seek out pupils and encourage them to attend the meeting held at the college (this never happened at school). Staff at the schools were treated exceptionally unfairly in terms of the questions that were asked by officers at the meeting at the college in that responses overtly stated or implied criticism of their work (as did certain questions). Leading questions were provided. It is the only consultation meeting where officers went to ask questions rather than answer them and its conduct is remarkable when considered in the light of teaching union guidance on the conduct of student voice activities and ESTYN practice. The record of the meeting undermines the work of professionals in both schools, lends weight to allegations of poor performance which are unwarranted and gives no opportunity for schools/individuals to respond appropriately. The criticisms made can be traced to the work of specific teachers at the two schools and are potentially libellous. One such reference was redacted at the request of a teaching union but this was done after publication.

In the light of this guidance and the employer's duty of care to staff in its schools, **the Governing Body puts on record its strongest objections to the meeting that was convened at CYC and the manner in which it was conducted.**

7) Points raised by the Director in the report to cabinet on the consultation (21/3/19) with regard to Hawthorn High's efforts to support pupil involvement in the consultation process:

"Summary of Responses to Consultation:

Questionnaires

2,168 questionnaires were received during the consultation period. Some were sent in via email, some were received at the open evenings, some by post, by hand, and the vast majority came via the schools affected by the proposals.

Pupils at Hawthorn and Pontypridd High Schools completed a large proportion of questionnaires received. We have been made aware by staff members and pupils of these schools that the questionnaires were completed during school time and under staff supervision. These questionnaires were either delivered by, or collected directly from the schools themselves.

Both Hawthorn High School and Pontypridd High Schools wrote to parents and carers sharing their intended response to the consultation proposals. The letter encouraged parents and carers to copy the responses shared by the respective schools. These letters are included in Appendices 6 and 7 respectively.

For transparency it should be noted that the template for recording consultation responses had been altered by two of the schools and a significant proportion of responses were subsequently recorded on the modified proforma. We acknowledge that these may have been modified as it was felt that not all of the questions were personally relevant to all consultees. It is considered however that each individual proposal is an integral part of the wider strategic school management plan, and by not giving consultees the opportunity to complete the full questionnaire, they were inadvertently not given the opportunity to comment fully on all proposals as intended. It is also unclear whether or not learners were given full access to consultation information in order to make an informed decision on all proposals."

Governing Body position May 2019:

School Organisation Code Welsh Assembly (2013) states that:

“Proposers must also make suitable arrangements to consult with pupils of any affected school (or part of a school in the case of provision reserved for children with SEN) and, where possible, with children and young people who are likely to attend those schools. As a minimum, this must include consultation with the school councils of the affected schools, but should also include consultation with individual learners where this is appropriate and practicable. **Governing bodies must help facilitate this aspect of the consultation.**(our emphasis)”

The Council did not consult with pupils who are likely to attend the new school in any feeder primary schools other than Heol Y Celyn and Hawthorn.

“The information given to children and young people **must** (our emphasis) be presented in such a way that it is relevant to their age and level of likely understanding and allows them to reach an informed opinion. The agreed children and young people’s participation standards for Wales are available on the Welsh Government’s website; proposers should refer to these and act in accordance with them.”

No effort was made by the council to do this. HHS and PHS had to modify the forms themselves for use with pupils and were criticised by the Council for doing so in the consultation report.

“If consulting with individual learners, proposers should produce and distribute a version or versions of the consultation document appropriate to the age/ages of the children and young people affected. The consultation document should also clearly explain to children and young people the difference between the consultation and objection periods and how and when they can object to proposals. Where necessary, proposers should provide assistance to children and young people who wish to submit a consultation response.”

The Council has failed to meet its obligations in terms of consulting with young people and, furthermore, has taken it upon itself to criticise the two schools that attempted to do so. This is clear evidence of a lack of understanding of the Welsh Assembly’s organisation code and a failure to treat young people fairly through the consultation process.

8) Points raised by the Director in the report to cabinet on the consultation (21/3/19) with regard to changes to the proposed catchment area of the school:

The public were consulted with on the basis that the reorganisation of catchment areas would include the reallocation of Coedpenmaen Primary School (currently a Hawthorn

High School feeder school) to Pontypridd High School and of Gwauncelyn Primary School (currently a Bryncelynog feeder school) to Hawthorn High. On this basis the school and Governing Body gave its public support to this aspect of the proposals as they were originally put forward.

However, in the Director's report to Cabinet on 21/3/19 the following statement was made:

"It is recommended that the proposal set out above is maintained with the exception of the proposed change to the catchment area of Bryncelynog Comprehensive School. It is recommended that the catchment area for Gwauncelyn Primary School remains within the Bryncelynog Comprehensive School catchment area and does not transfer to the new 3-16 school for Hawthorn. Since the consultation commenced in October 2018, the large brownfield site at Llanillid, Llanharan has been purchased by two major developers and the Council has entered into site master planning with the developers, to provide pre-planning advice and guidance. For the site to be developed, a new secondary school will be required, which, will have an impact on a number of other schools as the new housing development grows. Furthermore, the Council's Local Development Plan will need to be reviewed in 2021, or an equivalent plan developed. It is therefore proposed that the secondary school catchment areas are monitored over the next 5-10 years taking into account the planned developments and the future new Local Development Plan (or equivalent) to ensure sufficient school places are available across the County Borough."

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The Welsh Assembly school organisation code states:

"Where, in the course of consultation, a new option emerges which the proposers decide to pursue, they **must** (our emphasis) consult afresh on this option before proceeding to publication."

The proposal to continue with the removal of Maes Y Coed and Coedpenaen Primary pupils from the Hawthorn catchment area but to keep Gwauncelyn pupils as part of the Bryncelynog catchment is in effect a 'new option' and the community should have been consulted 'afresh' on this new proposal. By not doing so the Council have proceeded on the basis of a consultation for Hawthorn that became outdated at the point that the Gwauncelyn amendment was decided upon. **The Governing Body formally objects to this failure to apply the Welsh Assembly organisation code to the consultation process.**

2

The Pontypridd High School



Pontypridd Schools Reorganisation

Consultation response from the Governing Body

The documents being referred to are;

Document 1	Meeting on October 3rd, 2018	'21ST CENTURY SCHOOLS PROGRAMME – Proposals to improve education provision in the greater Pontypridd area' (Report of the Chief Executive in discussion with the Cabinet member for education, Mrs J. Rosser)
	Author(s)	Andrea Richards, Head of 21st Century Schools and Julie Hadley, School Organisation Manager.
Document 2	Consultation up to January 31st, 2019	21ST CENTURY SCHOOLS - 'Consultation on the reorganisation of primary schools, secondary schools and sixth form provision in the Pontypridd area'
	Author(s)	Local Authority
Document 3	Meeting on March 21st, 2019	'21ST CENTURY SCHOOLS PROGRAMME - PROPOSALS TO REORGANISE PRIMARY SCHOOLS, SECONDARY SCHOOLS AND SIXTH FORM PROVISION IN THE GREATER PONTYPRIDD AREA' (Report of the Chief Executive in discussion with the Cabinet member for education, Mrs J. Rosser)
	Author(s)	Mrs Gaynor Davies Director of Education and Inclusion Services and Andrea Richards, Head of 21st Century Schools

Objections of The PHS Governing Body

1. That the consultation process has presented information about PHS (and the PSF) which is inaccurate, unfair and misleading
2. That on the basis of the information presented the rationale for proposing BCS and CyC as post-16 centres of excellence from September 2022 remains unclear
3. Aspects of the consultation process have not followed the 'School Organisation Code' (2013)
4. The rationale for selecting CyC as a centre of post-16 excellence remain unclear
5. The inclusion of the student comments from CyC was not in line with the formal consultation process and made public comments about staff and students which were misleading, unfair, unsubstantiated, deeply upsetting and in opposition to the duty of care role that the LA assumes on behalf of our school

The following information is included to support our current objections to the Sixth Form proposal. It is based around the 3 public documents produced by the LA as part of this consultation process.

Objection 1

The analysis of data and resulting commentary about PHS and the PSF often negative, inaccurate and misleading ?

It is our belief that the documents referred to are inherently biased towards BCS and CyC. We fully accept that the author(s) would want to promote the proposals but this objective has too often been pursued through direct, inaccurate commentary and / or 'unproven negative inference' rather than through reference to fact.

In response to this the Director comments (Document 3) that 'It was not the intention to convey negativity towards any schools affected by this consultation. The language and terminology used in the consultation document are commentaries based on the interrogation of the data.'

It may well have been the case that there was no intention to convey negativity. However, given the same strength of feeling amongst peers and colleagues we are not sure how this situation has arisen given the degree of proof reading that would have surely identified this before documents were made public.

The response refers to 'commentaries based on the interrogation of data'. To that extent there is no positive commentary at all in reference to either PHS or the PSF whilst every effort is made to speak highly of BCS and CyC. Given the nature of the post-16 proposal this may have been understandable but it clearly leads the reader to conclude negative thoughts about PHS and the PSF in comparison to those institutions.

The term 'better' in relation to BCS has arisen more than once in these documents. It seems that with all of the information produced, the word 'better' is the differentiating factor in determining the desired location of post-16 provision. However, reference to this term is entirely linked to comments about A* to C grades (in relation to BCS) which is only one aspect of a post-16 provision and there is nothing else presented to justify the decision making behind the post-16 proposal.

Supplementary Question

Why is the analysis of data and resulting commentary about PHS and the PSF often negative, inaccurate and misleading ?

In discussion with parent governors in the formal consultation meeting, the Director stated that BCS was a better school than PHS.

Can you clarify what the LA means by BCS being a 'better' school ?

If LA Officers suggest that the language and terminology used in the consultation document are commentaries based on the interrogation of the data then perhaps it is useful to look at the accuracy of that analysis. We believe there are a number of examples whereby the commentary included in the named documents are certainly not based on accurate analysis.

Example 1	Inaccurate and misleading reference to A Level standards at PHS and the PSF
Example 2	Negative inferences about standards at PHS and the PSF in relation to BCS
Example 3	Unfair comparisons are being made with BCS based on the idea of 'similar schools'
Example 4	Reference to A Level outcomes for 2018 are misleading and not in line with the consultation process
Example 5	Analysis and comments about AWPS and Key Skills are unfounded
Example 6	Misleading conclusions are drawn from analysis of student numbers and class sizes at PHS and the PSF
Example 7	Inaccurate and misleading reference is made in relation to GCSE standards at PHS

Example 1

Inaccurate and misleading reference to A Level standards at PHS and the PSF

From Document 1, paragraph 4.2

'The educational achievement and success at Key Stage 5 (in respect of the A Level results) of Hawthorn and Pontypridd High Schools are consistently below the Welsh averages and are amongst the lowest in RCT and Wales.'

From Document 1, paragraph 4.7

'The educational performance of the sixth forms has been mixed with two of the secondary schools (Pontypridd High and Hawthorn High ?) consistently being amongst the worst performing schools in respect of A Level performance'

Comparative A Level outcomes in Year 13

		L3	AWPS	3 A*/A	3 A*/C
2015	Pontypridd High	95.2	856	3.2	68.3
	Bryncelynnog CS	98.6	670	5.6	34.7
	RCT lowest			0	27.0
	RCT average	96.9	730	3.1	57.9
	Wales average	96.9	799	7.9	68.1
2016	Pontypridd High	100	928	5.9	64.7
	Bryncelynnog CS	100	824	8.8	67.2
	RCT lowest			0	40.2
	RCT average	97.0	765	4.0	65.2
	Wales average	98.0	823	6.7	70.6
2017	Pontypridd High	100	820	5.6	42.6
	Bryncelynnog CS	94.3	788	18.9	52.8
	RCT lowest			0	16.3
	RCT average	96.3	678	5.5	45.1
	Wales average	97.1	731	10.5	54.7

Thorough and accurate analysis of this data which is shown in the table below reveals that:

- In each of the 3 years reported in this consultation (2015-2017) PHS has exceeded the Wales averages in 50% of the performance indicators selected by the LA (6/12 in years 2015 to 2017)
- Accurate analysis would not conclude from this that PHS is consistently below the Welsh averages and are amongst the lowest in RCT and Wales.
- Analysis of the data shows that if PHS is in this position then so it is for BCS.

From Document 3, page 12 – the Director has written :

'The data in the consultation document is based on Welsh Government data sets. Welsh Government updated the Key Stage 5 results on 12/11/18. The following table shows the most recent results published on the Welsh Government All Wales Core Data Sets and provides data relating to Level 3 outcomes, the Average Wider Points Score (AWPS) and the percentage of learners achieving 3A/C. The results confirm that the Key Stage 5 results for both schools at 3A*/C are consistently below both the RCT and the Welsh average from 2015-2017.'*

Supplementary Question:

Do you accept that LA analysis and commentary in relation to standards at PHS and the PSF being 'consistently below the Welsh averages and are amongst the lowest in RCT and Wales' was inaccurate and misleading given the justification for that statement is to refer to 2018 data and to the A* to C performance measure only ?

Example 2

Negative inferences through comparisons about standards at PHS and the PSF in relation to BCS

From Document 1, paragraph 4.2

'However, Bryncelynnoq Comprehensive School is an improving school and has consistently performed above the Welsh average for A level provision.'

From Document 3 - Minutes of meeting with PHS Student Council

ET - The LA is not saying that Pontypridd High School is a poor school. Bryncelynnoq is improving and has consistently better results.

Reference to A* - A	It is true that BCS has achieved outcomes above the Welsh averages in 2016 and 2017. PHS has not achieved this.
Reference to A* - C	PHS outcomes were above the Welsh averages in 2015 but not in 2016 or 2017. BCS outcomes have not been above the Welsh averages in any of these 3 years.
Reference to '<u>Consistently better</u>'	How can 50% of A Level performance indicators from 2015-2017 shown to be above Welsh averages be referred to with statements like 'worst' and 'below' in describing standards at PHS ? Over the same period BCS exceeded the Wales averages in 50% of the PI's, exactly the same as PHS.
Reference to '<u>better</u>'	If LA officers can justify the use of the term 'better' to describe and compare outcomes based on a higher % (of grades A* to C), then this is educationally flawed and a very worrying development
Reference to BCS being an '<u>improved school</u>'	The term 'improved' with reference to BCS suggests standards have been below that expected. This is reflected by the 2016 BCS Estyn report as follows; <i><u>'However, performance in the average wider points score and the proportion of pupils achieving three passes at grades A*-C has been below the average for similar schools and below national averages in each of the last four years.'</u></i> We believe this reference by the LA to 'improved' is only linked to 2018 results at BCS and it is true that BCS have improved in 2018. However, negativity towards PHS is clear because at A Level, outcomes in 3 of the 4 indicators in 2018 also improved and in two instances were above the Welsh averages. There is no reference to that achievement.

Supplementary Question

How does the LA justify its statement that BCS has 'consistently performed above the Welsh average for A level provision.' ?

Example 3

Unfair comparisons are being made with BCS based on the idea of ‘similar schools’

From Document 3, page 12 – the Director has written :

For the post 16 provision the Welsh Government data does not compare performance of schools based on the free school meal categories. However, the Council’s data evidences that the majority of pupils eligible for free school meals do not return to the sixth forms in Pontypridd and Hawthorn High Schools.

- This explanation is incorrect as the concept of similar schools is still referred to by Estyn in their inspection reports when commenting on A level outcomes, thus recognising that comparisons should only be made directly with similar cohorts.
- In their reports, Estyn refer to outcomes at L3 and the AWPS.
- Surely any analysis would conclude that a school which is in a lower eFSM / BMQ group would have a greater number of more able A level students and should therefore achieve a higher % of A* to C grades. This is not better but expected and can be shown to be the case in all schools across Wales with a low eFSM %.

Supplementary Question

Is it the LA view that all schools should be achieving the same outcomes at A level irrelevant of the nature of their school catchment area ?

Example 4

Reference to A Level outcomes for 2018 are misleading and not a part of with the consultation process

From Document 3 - Minutes of the meeting with PHS staff

ET - Results are going up. KS4 and KS5 data for 2018 evidence this statement.

- This consultation process was based on student outcomes up to and including 2017. There should be no reference to 2018 data and certainly no attempt to justify the selection of BCS and CyC by using 2018 data. It would seem the reason it is being referred to is because outcomes for BCS and CyC 'improved' in 2018 and as such they add more conviction to the LA proposal for post-16. This is not fair in relation to the consultation process.
- Given that the LA have made continued reference to 2018 outcomes in order to justify the post-16 proposals, we can also present outcome data for PHS students. The tables below show A Level outcomes from 2016 - 2018 at PHS in relation to the new WG performance measures which were confirmed in March this year.

Table 1 : Learners starting AS and A2 courses

Start of Year 12 to completion of Year 13	AS and A2 retention						
	Learners starting 3+ AS levels	Learners at 8 week point	Learners completing AS year	Learner completion from 8 week point	Learner retention from Year 12 to Year 13		
					No.	%	Wales Ave.
2015 / 2017	81	76	62	82%	55/76	72%	79%
2016 / 2018	79	77	76	94%	64/77	83%	79%
2017 / 2019	67	63	62	98%	51/63	81%	79%
2018 / 2019	tbc	tbc	tbc	tbc	tbc	tbc	tbc

The key point with these new measures is that final A Level outcomes are measured against the number of students who started the A Level courses in Year 12 and who were there after an 8 week period.

The table shows that the % student completion from Year 12 is very high, 94% for those students completing A Levels in 2018. Also important is the fact that 83% of Year 12 students in 2018 were retained from Year 12 into Year 13, a figure 4% above the Welsh average. The LA have frequently quoted the higher retention figure of students at BCS going into the sixth form from Year 11 in to Year 12. A more important figure is how many of those Year 11 students actually complete their final A Levels. Students at PHS are obviously very well recruited and provided with the best education and support, hence high numbers complete A levels above the Welsh average

Table 2 : Two Year A Level measure based on the initial Year 12 cohort

Year of A Level completion in Year 13	Learners completing Year 13 (Two year measure)	2 Year measure A level 2							
		Two year completion rate		% of learners achieving 3 or more A2 at A*/ A		% of learners achieving 3 or more A2 at A*/ C		% of learners achieving 3 or more A2 at A*/ E	
		Outcomes measured from 8 week point at start of Year 12							
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
2017	55	55	72%	3	4%	24	32%	47	62%
Wales average			79%		9%		40%		62%
2018	64	64	94%	5	6%	34	44%	56	73%
Wales average			79%		9%		40%		62%
2019	51	51	83%	3	5%	27	43%	50	79%
Wales average			79%		9%		40%		62%

This table shows clearly that for those students completing A Levels from Year 12 (94%), those achieving 3 of more A* to C grades is above the Welsh average. This is important because the LA has stated that outcomes at PHS are ‘amongst the worst in Wales’. Clearly this is not the case either by using data up to 2017 and by reference to 2018 and the new WG performance measures.

Table 2 : Welsh Baccalaureate Advanced L3

WBQ	Learners starting In Year 12	Learners at 8 week point	Learners completing	Completion rate	% pass WBQ (from Yr 12 8 week)
2015 / 2017	81	76	55	72%	63%
Wales average				64%	47%
2016 / 2018	79	77	64	83%	70%
Wales average				64%	47%
2017 / 2019	67	63	51	79%	79%
Wales average				64%	47%

Outcomes in the WBQ are excellent. This is a challenging A Level course which is very well taught, hence the results which are significantly above Welsh averages.

Table 3 : Skills Challenge Certificate Advanced L3

SCC	% A*		% A		% B		% C		% D		% E		% SCC pass (from Yr 12 wk 8)
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
2017	1	1%	8	11%	28	37%	17	22%	1	1%	0	0%	72%
Wales ave		2%		10%		14%		14%		10%		4%	55%
2018	0	0%	11	17%	31	49%	14	22%	0	0%	0	0%	88%
Wales ave		2%		10%		14%		14%		10%		4%	55%
2019	7	11%	13	21%	30	48%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	79%
Wales ave		2%		10%		14%		14%		10%		4%	55%

Outcomes in the Skills Challenge Certificate are excellent. This is a challenging A Level course which is very well taught, hence the results which are significantly above Welsh averages. Importantly these are not Key Skills which the LA highlighted as an 'unfair' means of comparison with other schools.

Table 4 : Year 13 destinations

Year	Learners completing Year 13	University			College	Apprentice Scheme	Employment	Gap Year	Return to School	Other
		Ox.	RG	Other						
2017	55	0	3	44	4	-	3	-	-	1
2018	64	0	7	47	3	-	4	1	-	2
2019	51	0	?	40+	tbc	tbc	tbc	tbc	tbc	tbc

Supplementary Question

Does the analysis of data for 2017 and 2018 under new performance measures show A level standards at PHS to be 'consistently below the Welsh averages and are amongst the lowest in RCT and Wales.' ?

Example 5

Reference to AWPS is wrong and unfounded

Supplementary Question

How is BCS referred to as 'better' school yet in terms of AWPS 'comparison between PHS with any other institutions is very difficult.

From Document 3, page 14 – the Director has written :

*The AWPS is calculated by dividing the total number of points gained from all courses sat at Key Stage 5 and not just the number of A-levels or their equivalent. **Pontypridd High School provide a large number of Key Skill courses that inflate this figure and makes comparison with any other institutions very difficult.** Due to this very issue, the Welsh Government no longer uses the AWPS as an assessment criteria comparator. It should also be noted that the AWPS is not a criteria that is used by Universities in scoring a student's University application.*

From Document 3 - Minutes of the meeting with PHS Student Council

The student council queried the Average Point Score.

CE confirmed that Pontypridd High was the highest. However, this is not a good comparator. AWPS is not a criteria used by Universities for University applications.

Comparative A Level outcomes in Year 13

		AWPS
2015	Pontypridd High	856
	Bryncelynnog CS	670
	Wales average	799
2016	Pontypridd High	928
	Bryncelynnog CS	824
	Wales average	823
2017	Pontypridd High	820
	Bryncelynnog CS	788
	Wales average	731

AWPS 'points'		UCAS 'points'	
A*	300	A*	56
A	270	A	48
B	240	B	40
C	210	C	32
D	180	D	24
E	150	E	16

High levels of completion in Year 13 lead to high points score

This reference to Key Skills is a clear example of the LA making a point about negativity for no apparent reason other than to 'down grade' achievement at PHS. Of equal concern is the analysis by the LA about Key Skills, qualifications that ceased to exist as part of the WBQ in 2015. In addition:

- BCS has and still does enter students for the WBQ / SCC just like PHS. Perhaps PHS are just better at teaching this A Level course and achieving the higher grades and this should have been acknowledged.
- The WBQ is recognised by the Welsh Government and Universities. It is not an easy qualification yet the LA seem to think it is an 'easier option' which inflates results.
- In every other way the LA are keen to compare results where it shows BCS to be a 'better school'. Interesting that when it comes to the WBQ the LA feel it is unfair to compare and 'it is very difficult to make comparisons'.
- The AWPS is linked to UCAS but UCAS use a lower score – the principle is the same
- The WBQ is an accepted A level course and contributes on equal terms to the new WG performance measures

Supplementary Questions

Can the LA confirm that PHS has inflated its AWPS through a 'mass' entry for Key Skills since 2015 ?

What does the LA believe is the common link between the AWPS and the UCAS university application points score ?

Example 6

Misleading conclusions are drawn from analysis of student numbers and class sizes at PHS and the PSF

From Document 3 - Minutes of meeting with PHS Student Council

With reference to post 16 class sizes and the subject offer -

'These have been scrutinised and are accurate. Each school is funded directly for the number of students enrolled on each course. Hence if there are 14 students undertaking a course in Pontypridd High School but 8 are from Hawthorn, Pontypridd High School will only receive funding for the 6 Pontypridd High School students.'

- Governors are not questioning the funding mechanism but the LA must accept that combining students from 2 schools and then only using one teacher from either school must be more cost effective. This is the fundamental basis of the PSF provision.

From Document 3 - Minutes of the meeting with PHS Student Council

The school does not have the pupil numbers to have a viable 6th form.

- The school operates a joint sixth form which cumulatively has 246 students. This is the 3rd highest school based sixth form provision in RCT
- It seems that the cumulative benefits of sharing a provision are not understood. The point is that PHS and HHS share staffing to ensure class sizes are viable and costs more efficient. This is shown in the table below.

Number of A Level classes with 5 students or less

	2016	2017	2018
PHS	8	5	1
HHS	9	2	2
PSF (Shared)	1	1	0
TOTAL (Actual)	17	8	3
RCT (consultation document)	28	25	n/a

Average A Level classes size

	2016	2017	2018
PSF	11	14	14
HHS (HHS classes plus PSF shared classes)	5	5	n/a

- The tables above illustrate the advantages of working in partnership and how the number of classes with less than 5 students has been reduced significantly in recent years by increasingly sharing provision between ourselves and PHS.

- RCT calculations presented in the consultation document only consider each school's provision in isolation and take no account of students from both schools in each class.
- As a result, they seem to have chosen to present figures which completely ignore the efficiencies which have been achieved for many years by working in partnership. This creates an unfairly negative picture of the viability of the Pontypridd Sixth Form.

Supplementary Question

Does the LA understand that PHS only has responsibility for delivering 9 A Level courses yet our students are able to access over 20 because of the partnership with HHS within the PSF ?

From Document 3, page 12 – the Director has written :

For example, for Pontypridd High School in September 2018 out of a potential 155 pupils in year 11 (as at July 2018), only 50 returned to Year 12, indicating that 67.74% choose alternative provision. This clearly suggests that Pontypridd High School does not currently provide the choice of curriculum options or educational experiences that some learners are seeking.

- PHS and the PSF is providing more courses and options than BCS as shown by the LA own analysis in the consultation document
- Outcomes at PHS have been shown to be above Welsh averages (except for A*/A) in 2018

Supplementary Question

Given PHS is achieving outcomes above the Welsh averages in nearly all new performance measures, in what ways does the LA believe PHS is not currently providing the choice of curriculum options or educational experiences that some learners are seeking

From Document 3, page 12 – the Director has written :

Furthermore, if the curriculum offer is likely to be further restricted in future due to the deficit position, a further decline in numbers is inevitable and the provision will become even more unviable.

- Whilst both schools are in a deficit position, collaborative working has ensured that a broad curriculum offer has remained in place over the last 5 years. This is the result of strong leadership, making the PSF a viable option at the present time.
- The Director is suggesting that the offer will decline due to the deficit position. It is the proposals that have been put forward that may lead to any decline in student numbers and inevitable the curriculum offer

From Document 3, page 12 – the Director has written :

By enhancing the curriculum offer in Bryncelynnoq School it is likely that an increase in pupil numbers will be experienced as evidenced in Tonyrefail Comprehensive School following the implementation

Supplementary Question

Can the LA be precise about the number of additional students have attended the new Tonyrefail and Treorchy Sixth Forms from the old Tonypandy, Ferndale and Porth Schools ?

From Document 3 - Minutes of the meeting with CNS Student Council

Officers outlined that Bryncelynnoq Comprehensive School is a good, improving school with strong outcomes and is led by a strong Senior Management Team. The percentage of learners that return from year 11 to year 12 is nearly 45%.

- The positive slant towards BCS extends here to the 'strong senior management team'. This suggests to Governors that this is an advantage they hold on our own leadership team. This may not be the intention but this is the tone that comes across through each document.
- Senior LA Officers have been very praiseworthy of the leadership at PHS. Indeed, we have been asked to present our CPD programme and leadership structure to all schools and CSC challenge advisers.

Supplementary question

What is your opinion on the quality of leadership and management at PHS ?

Example 7

Inaccurate and misleading reference to GCSE standards at PHS and the PSF

From Document 2, page 10

'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'

This statement is factually inaccurate and Governors would point out that the Welsh Assembly has categorized PHS as being a 'Yellow' school for each of the last three academic years. The Welsh Assembly defines Yellow schools as being those that **"Have secured good levels of learner outcomes in key performance indicators."** (Page 19 of the WAG National School Categorisation Guide)

- For the years 2015 and 2016 the average for Pontypridd High School (PHS) was 20.8%. For 2016 and 2018 this average fell to 19.8%. Since September 2018 the figure for PHS is 20.2%
- Between 2015 and 2016 PHS was in a group of Schools with a FSM entitlement of 20-30%. Between 2017 and 2018 PHS has been in a group of 'similar' schools between 15-20%. As such, between 2015 and 2016 you would expect PHS to be in quartile 1 or 2 for all performance indicators given the average FSM entitlement of 20.8%. As this figure decreased to 19.8% for 2017 and 2018 you would expect any comparison with similar schools to be more in quartiles 3 and 4.
- BCS (10-15%) is not a 'similar' school to Pontypridd High and the LA is making comparisons and referring to similar schools when convenient to do so.

Welsh Government Performance Indicator	2015 Compared to schools who were 20-30% eFSM	2016 Compared to schools who were 20-30% eFSM	2017 Compared to schools who were 15-20% eFSM	2017 Compared to schools who were 20-30% eFSM
5 A* to C at GCSE (with Eng/Maths)	2	1	3	2
L2 Threshold	1	1	4	2
L1 Threshold	2	1	2	2
Capped 8/9 points	1	1	3	1
Best English A* to C %	3	1	4	2
Best Maths A* to C %	1	1	2	1
Best Science A* to C %	4	3	3	2

Pontypridd HS

Performance Indicator	2015	2016	2017	2018	RCT Ave.	Wales Ave.
L2+ %	53.3%	61.8%	50.6%	54.0%	53%	55%
BMQ	2	1	3	3		
L2 Threshold %	92.9%	98.2%	60.2%	64.1%	64%	67%
BMQ	1	1	4	2		
L1 Threshold %	98.4%	100.0%	97.2%	98.5%	95%	94%
BMQ	2	1	4	2		
Capped 8/9	364.4	375.9	354.6	356	348	350
BMQ	1	1	2	3		
Best English A* to C %	59.2%	71.2%	56.8%	61.0%	63%	63%
BMQ	3	1	4	3		
Best Maths A* to C %	62.0%	65.9%	61.9%	65.0%	62%	64%
BMQ	1	2	2	2		
Best Science A* to C %	63.6%	87.6%	65.9%	54.0%	58%	63%
BMQ	4	3	3	4		
WBQ National				54%	50%	51%
BMQ				2		
Skills CC National				80%	73%	73%
BMQ				1		

Bryncelynnog CS

Performance Indicator	2015	2016	2017	2018	RCT Ave.	Wales Ave.
L2+ %	61.7%	64.9%	62.9%	66.9%	53%	55%
BMQ	2	2	2	1		
L2 Threshold %	75.4%	81.1%	73.1%	74.4%	64%	67%
BMQ	4	4	3	2		
L1 Threshold %	96.6%	98.0%	98.2%	95.9%	95%	94%
BMQ	4	3	3	4		
Capped 8/9	333	333	375.8	368.7	348	350
BMQ	4	4	2	3		
Best English A* to C %	71.4%	74.3%	68.9%	75%	63%	63%
BMQ	2	1	3	1		
Best Maths A* to C %	69.1%	67.6%	69.5%	73.3%	62%	64%
BMQ	2	3	2	2		
Best Science A* to C %	95.4%	98.0%	98.8%	73.3%	58%	63%
BMQ	1	1	1	2		
WBQ National				tbc	50%	51%
BMQ						
Skills CC National				90.7%	73%	73%
BMQ				1		

- Detailed and accurate analysis shows that PHS is not consistently in the third and fourth quartile when compared to similar schools or in comparison to BCS

Supplementary questions

Do you think that the L1 and Capped 9 outcomes for BCS show that their curriculum for less able learners could be improved ?

If that is the case, are you reassured that they can provide students who are less capable of A* to C grades at A Level with the right options and support ?

Does the LA accept that GCSE outcomes for both PHS and BCS are in line with that expected when compared to similar schools ?

Objection 2

In relation to this consultation process, reference to PHS participation in the SCC programme is unfair, misleading and irrelevant.

From Document 3, page 14

It is also important to reflect when considering the performance of Pontypridd and Hawthorn High Schools that until recently both schools were two of forty secondary schools across Wales that were identified by Welsh Government as consistently underperforming and were included in the Schools Challenge Cymru Programme. Over the three years to 2017 both schools had significant additional investment which in total was in excess of £1.24m in addition to the funding allocation from the Council and had access to high quality leadership and teaching support provided directly by Welsh Government. This investment has provided the two schools with a significant advantage over similar schools in Wales. However, despite this considerable additional resource both schools remain in a significant deficit position.

- What relevance has this comment to this consultation and the post-16 proposals ? It is another example of taking every opportunity to make a negative comment about PHS (and HHS).
- PHS were asked to be one of the SCC schools by a senior LA Officer. That person was very clear that participation from PHS was because RCT Officers thought we had real potential to make best uses of the resources on offer. Governors were not part of any discussion about ‘consistently underperforming’ as a rationale for our inclusion.
- Leadership at PHS has been developed through its own very successful ‘Emerging Leader’ programme. On that basis, can the LA please inform Governors what ‘high quality leadership and teaching support’ was accessed at PHS as a result of being one of the SCC schools ? If this refers to a Challenge Adviser then it should be noted all schools had access to a CA. Again the insinuation here is that we had access to something no other schools did and therefore it was ‘unfair’. Surely any improvement PHS made should be celebrated by the LA and not down played.
- In respect of outcome PHS has consistently performed well when compared to the other 39 schools who were part of the SCC initiative. Please see the L2+ comparisons below with a red box highlighting when other schools achieved a higher L2+ outcome. (SCC results are attributable to 2015, 2016 and 2017).
- Staff and staff structures employed through funding have been reviewed and retained where appropriate after SCC funding ended to ensure continued school improvement.

Outcomes for L2+ Threshold in SCC schools – 2015 to 2018

SCC School	2015	+/-	2016	+/-	2017	+/-	2018	+/-
Abersychan Comprehensive	48.7		41.2		43.3		37.7	
Abertillery Comprehensive	34.4		41.2		25.5		35.3	
Afon Taf High School	48.2		58.1		41.7		38.0	

Barry Comprehensive School	50.0		62.7		49.4		58.0	
Bedwas High School	35.0		51.0		54.7		55.6	
Bishop Hedley High School	64.0		60.7		48.4		67.4	
Blackwood CS	59.8		57.9		51.1		43.9	
Cantonian High School	45.0		50.7		46.1		46.4	
Coleg Cymunedol Y Dderwen	44.0		55.8		41.7		45.5	
Glynderw High School Eastern High School Michaelston Community College	24.6		26.5		22.2		27.6	
Ebbw Fawr Learning Community	54.3		42.8		44.5		50.0	
Fairwater High School (now Cwmbran HS)	46.8		39.6		43.2		35.4	
Hawthorn High School	49.3		61.8		45.9		51.8	
Heolddu Comprehensive School	48.9		44.3		40.4		43.3	
Holywell High School	37.6		50.0		39.3		34.4	
Llantarnam School	46.8		39.0		43.1		35.4	
Llanwern High School	45.7		44.5		26.1		37.5	
Lliswerry High School	41.3		53.7		44.6		45.7	
Milford Haven School	43.3		51.7		48.9		43.2	
Morrison Comprehensive	46.3		62.6		46.9		54.4	
Pentrefafod School	52.7		53.3		43.7		39.9	
Pen-Y-Dre High School	39.1		52.6		32.6		44.3	
Porth County Community	47.5		51.9		36.0		45.2	
Rhosnesni High School	49.0		49.7		35.3		40.2	
St Cenydd School	50.0		41.9		45.5		36.3	
St Julian's School	46.6		51.0		48.6		53.7	
St Martin's School	52.3		64.2		65.2		60.9	
St. Illtyd's Catholic High School	46.1		55.2		46.9		36.2	
The Pontypridd High School	53.3		61.8		51.1		54.2	

Tonypandy Community College	49.2		51.9		49.9		48.0	
Tonyrefail School	47.2		60.6		46.8		49.0	
Tredegar Comprehensive School	52.4		53.7		55.1		55.8	
West Monmouth School	56.9		52.4		48.8		55.3	
Willows High School	46.9		52.8		39.2		42.7	
Ysgol Bro Dinefwr	63.3		72.7		64.1		67.3	
Ysgol Bryn Alyn	48.1		50.0		40.0		42.1	
Ysgol Clywedog	52.8		46.5		39.3		31.9	
Ysgol Uwchradd Caergybi	48.6		48.2		45.1		47.4	

There is also reference to £1.24 million of funding and 'despite this considerable additional resource both schools (PHS and HHS) remain in a significant deficit position

This suggests that the funding was used poorly and/or the decision making by which funds were spent lacked strategy and impact. It is important to clarify this;

- SCC criteria for spending were very specific and not intended to solve any 'deficit' budget. All funding was matched to detailed plans and any money allocated was very closely monitored, linked to the improvement plans. Indeed, this was a very comprehensive and time consuming part of the involvement with SCC.
- Indeed, the school benefitted from very well considered planning and expenditure, much of which targeted resources which would not be made available again

School Challenge Expenditure 2014/15		
Capital	Area of spending	Total allocated
	Classroom refurbishment, C-touch screens, Late bus, Science IT room	£75,000
Revenue	English and maths teacher (primary model), core subject support, Emerging Leader programme	£168,000
Total SCC allocation		£243,000

School Challenge Expenditure 2015/16		
Capital	Area of spending	Total allocated
	Staff training room, Reception area, Late bus Cluster C-touch screens	£50,000
Revenue	English teacher, Maths teacher (primary model), core subject / WBQ support, Emerging Leader programme,	£185,000

	Inclusion room and staff Cluster leaders of learning	
Total SCC allocation		£235,000

School Challenge Expenditure 2016/17		
	Area of spending	Total allocated
Revenue	English teacher, Maths teacher, core subject / WBQ support, Emerging Leader programme Aspiring Leader of Science programme Inclusion room and staff Cluster leaders of learning	£235,000
Total SCC allocation		£235,000

Supplementary Questions

Do the LA think PHS used the resources made available through SCC effectively ?

Can the LA confirm what high quality advice and support was provided to PHS through the SCC programme which 'provided PHS with a significant advantage over similar schools in Wales' ?

Objection 3

Aspects of the consultation process have not followed the ‘School Organisation Code’ (2013)

Governors understanding of a consultation process according to this ‘Code’ is that it should:

- include sufficient reasons and information for particular proposals to enable intelligent consideration and response (refer to analysis and commentary of data)
- ensure that the product of consultation is conscientiously taken into account when the ultimate decision is taken (refer to acknowledgement of consultation results)
- ensure meetings are arranged in such a way that consultees in any of the categories set out a paragraph 3.2 are treated fairly and equitably (refer to CyC meeting)

From Document 3, page 8

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

The Governing Bodies, parents, carers and staff of Hawthorn High School, Hawthorn Primary School, Heol-Y-Celyn Primary School, Pontypridd High School, Cilfynydd Primary School, Bryncelynnoq Comprehensive School, Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School and YGG Pont Sion Norton’

- As shown, analysis of data with regard to BCS is often misleading in relation to PHS and the PSF and a fair response on that basis is made more difficult
- Responses to the consultation process clearly show that most people, young and old are against the present post-16 proposals. We do not believe that the views of these people, in particular the students has been listened to and acted upon.

For Post-16 proposals	150 responses
Against post-16 proposals	1,735 responses
Unsure	130 responses
N/A or not answered	153 responses

From Document 3, page 12 – the Diector has written :

Only a small number of pupils in both schools have expressed an interest in attending Bryncelynnoq for sixth form.

Supplementary Questions

How has the LA acknowledged the view of the students expressed through the consultation process ?

Does the LA remain adamant that its strategic plan that 100 PHS students will attend BCS in 2022 remains valid ?

Where in the consultation document does it say that there would be a separate and very specific consultation with a group of 23 CyC students ?

Why was there no similar meeting with students from PHS (and HHS, BCS, CNS) ?

From Document 3, page 12 - The Director of Education has written:

Both Hawthorn High School and Pontypridd High Schools wrote to parents and carers sharing their intended response to the consultation proposals. The letter encouraged parents and carers to copy the responses shared by the respective schools. These letters are included in Appendices 6 and 7 respectively.

The consultation code is important in response to this:

“The information given to children and young people must be presented in such a way that it is relevant to their age and level of likely understanding and allows them to reach an informed opinion. The agreed children and young people’s participation standards for Wales are available on the Welsh Government’s website; proposers should refer to these and act in accordance with them.”

- We are not aware of any attempt by the LA to produce information related to the consultation process that made details relevant to their age and ability, allowing them to reach an informed opinion.
- Governors and staff at PHS acted more than appropriately in making information produced by the LA more ‘user friendly’ and this enabled a large number of them to engage in the consultation process, something the LA was very keen to encourage.

From Document 3, pages 12 and 13 – the Director has written:

Summary of Responses to Consultation Questionnaires

2,168 questionnaires were received during the consultation period. Some were sent in via email, some were received at the open evenings, some by post, by hand, and the vast majority came via the schools affected by the proposals.

We have been made aware by staff members and pupils of these schools that the questionnaires were completed during school time and under staff supervision.

Both Hawthorn High School and Pontypridd High Schools wrote to parents and carers sharing their intended response to the consultation proposals. The letter encouraged parents and carers to copy the responses shared by the respective schools.

For transparency it should be noted that the template for recording consultation responses had been altered by two of the schools and a significant proportion of responses were subsequently recorded on the modified proforma. We acknowledge that these may have been modified as it was felt that not all of the questions were personally relevant to all consultees.

We cannot comment on the survey undertaken by the two schools with their pupils. However, the actual data on the number of pupils that choose to stay in Hawthorn and Pontypridd High School for their sixth form provision is very low

- Why is there any reference to a ‘comment on the survey undertaken by the two schools’. What does this mean ? As it stands it suggests staff and Governors have undertaken a survey that was controlled and unfair.
- It seems again that a negative tone is taken in response to a large number of people engaging in a public process. The last sentence on pupils choosing to stay at either PHS or HHS exemplifies this – how is a statement like this necessary or appropriate at this point in the Director’s report ?

Supplementary Question

What does the LA mean by ‘we cannot comment on the survey undertaken by the two schools with their pupils. However, the actual data on the number of pupils that choose to stay in Hawthorn and Pontypridd High School for their sixth form provision is very low’ ?

Objection 4

The rationale for selecting CyC as a centre of post-16 excellence remain unclear

From Document 3, page 16 – the Director has written :

The Council has an effective working relationship with Coleg Y Cymoedd and has supported the campus developments in Aberdare, Llwynypia and Nantgarw.

The relationship between the College and the Council is stronger than ever with opportunities for collaboration between both parties being developed in many new areas. The Chief Executive of the Council and the Cabinet Member for Education are governors on the College Board.

Supplementary Questions

If the LA has effective working relationships how do Officers explain the poor Estyn Inspection of 2017 in relation A Level outcomes ?

If the LA has effective working relationships how has it proved so difficult to gain any information about provision and outcomes at CyC ?

Can the LA make clear how the ‘relationship’ between the LA and CyC will ensure that students from PHS will have an ‘excellent’ post-16 provision at CyC ?

Objection 5

The inclusion of the student comments from CyC was not in line with the formal consultation process and made public comments about staff and students which were misleading, unfair, unsubstantiated, deeply upsetting and in opposition to the duty of care role that the LA assumes on behalf of our school

Governors firmly believe in students having the opportunity to express them selves, give opinions and support the decision making process. At PHS staff undertake this activity all of the time and it is an integral part of our recruitment process.

To that extent our school completely agrees with **Article 12 of the UNCRC**, which sets out the right of children and young people to express an opinion and to have that opinion taken into account when decisions are being made on any matter that affects them. This Article is seen as particularly important, in that it is an enabling right, empowering and supporting children and young people to access the broader rights under the UNCRC. Pontypridd High unequivocally supports this.

At PHS we have taken this commitment into our Student Voice policy

Student participation and student voice activities should;

- make a positive and demonstrable contribution to the life of our school
 - not undermine teachers' professional authority and must not compromise other fundamental rights of children and young people
 - value and respects the views of all members of the school community
 - reflect the capacity of students to participate in particular activities and the extent to which they can reasonably be held to account for the results of their action
 - be consistent with, and support work to promote equality and diversity and tackle discrimination and prejudice.
 - be inclusive and give all students an opportunity to participate
-
- It is our belief that the published student voice activity that was undertaken with 23 students at CyC certainly undermines teacher's professional authority. This is certainly the thoughts of all professionals we have spoken to and the fact that the LA has redacted some content would seem to reflect that also.

We have looked at the advice and guidance from teaching unions in relation to the decision to undertake and then publish comments from CyC students.

Union – NAS/UWT

Principle 2 – Student voice activities must not undermine teachers' professional authority and must not compromise other fundamental rights of children and young people.

A key criterion for assessing the appropriateness and acceptability of any student voice initiative involves a consideration of the extent to which teachers' professional authority is supported or undermined. Any student voice practice that is used to make judgements

about a teacher's professionalism and so has the potential to undermine teachers' professional authority is unacceptable. Unfortunately, the NASUWT has received examples of schools using student voice to question teachers' capabilities. Not only is this unacceptable employment practice, it is likely to create suspicion and resistance and undermine any benefits of student voice

Union – NEU (Cannot confirm this document under the new union)

Whilst welcoming the Government's encouragement of pupil participation in schools' decision making processes, it is important to make a distinction between broad policy areas and decisions which would affect individuals. Any decision which would have a direct impact on particular individuals rather than on the majority or all, staff or pupils, should not be included within the topics on which consultation with children and young people might take place. As a rule of thumb, any issue which had privacy/confidentiality implications or would impact on employees' employment, salaries or conditions of service should be excluded from eligible areas for pupil involvement.

The number of pupils who have the capacity to operate maliciously and to subvert the consultative process is small. The good practice guidance should address this issue explicitly, including strategies to prevent misuse by pupils and to tackle any suspected subversion.

This guidance is relevant to the meeting that took place at CyC with 23 students and RCT Officers on November 26th, 2018.

As Governors we find this document to be a very poor example of how to undertake a meaningful student voice activity. It illustrates all that is negative as outlined in the union guidance about how an activity which seeks judgements can seriously undermine school staff and the schools themselves.

Estyn place great importance on student voice but they are also trained to ask open questions that do not encourage particular answers. They also ensure that very critical, often anomalous answers are not recorded in order to preserve staff confidence and prevent undermining authority.

Supplementary Questions

Was the student voice activity with CyC students always planned as part of the formal consultation process ?

If Yes, why was this not included in the list of formal meetings and why did PHS not have a post-16 focus group meeting of this nature ?

Why was this meeting arranged. For what purpose did it take place ?

Why was this meeting arranged when no similar meeting with students at PHS, HHS, CNS or BCS took place ?

How were the 23 students identified, what were their ages, subjects chosen and their reasons for attending CyC ?

What advice was sought from HR Officers given the obvious reference to schools, their staff and the LA duty of care role ?

Was the content of the document made public in your report that includes CyC student responses cleared by HR Officers before publication ?

Considering students at CyC made references to named subjects, instances of 'bullying' and inferences that staff at PHS were showing little concern for their professional duties, did the LA not think these issues should have been reported to the Headteacher at Pontypridd High immediately as a safeguarding concern and / or as part of your duty of care to staff and students ?

Notes of a meeting held with students at Coleg Y Cymoedd (CYC) Monday 26th November 2018 Meeting to discuss the Council's proposals to reorganise school provision in the Pontypridd area
Present Gaynor Davies (GD), Director of Education and Inclusion Services Andrea Richards (AR), Head of 21st Century Schools Lisa Howell (LH), Senior 21st Century Schools Officer Sophie Nicholls (SN), Graduate Officer 21st Century Schools 23 students who previously attended Pontypridd High, Hawthorn High or Cardinal Newman.

Q. GD - What is the pastoral care like here?
<u>A. Student</u> – Very good. They help me with my course and are always available to support me if I am struggling with a piece of coursework. They also listen and help if I have any worries and any personal problems I'm having.
<u>A. Student</u> – It depends on the teachers. There were some at school that were great but some that were not. I chose to come here because I could do a BTEC here but in Pontypridd High it was an exam.
What does the student mean by 'some that were and some that were not ? is this reference to pastoral care ? The LA has always been very complimentary of the wellbeing provision at PHS yet LA Officers are prepared to publish the statement of one student which creates the impression that our provision is variable at best. This is unfair and misleading.
Estyn would not publish a report like this based on the response from one student.
What has the BTEC reference got to do with pastoral care ? Even then its inclusion is vague but it is another negative statement about PHS so perhaps this is the reason for its

inclusion. Surely the person recording answers should not have minuted this response in answer to the question being asked. For the record PHS offers both conventional A Levels and BTECs which is clearly not understood by the students and as such a professional recording such an answer should have recognised it as anomalous and not worthy of inclusion.

Q. GD – What about A Levels ?

A. Student – I spoke to my friends at Pontypridd High and they said that the teachers are spread too thinly as they are working with years 7-11 as well as sixth form and they don't have the time to commit and support especially if they are having problems with their coursework.

A. Student – I think a big sixth form is a brilliant idea. I went to sixth form in Hawthorn High and the support and technology there was awful.

A. Student – The consortium is a shambles. Teachers are stretched and we could tell they were stressed.

'I spoke to my friends' confirms this is purely anecdotal information but it is another negative statement about PHS so perhaps this is the reason for its inclusion ?
What is the basis for a student referring to teachers being spread too thinly. In truth it is difficult to believe that these were the exact words of a students when answering this question ?

Is it not the case that in all schools in RCT teachers of A level also teach other year groups. What is the point of including such a comment when it will undoubtedly be the case that BCS have the same staffing structure for their potential 'centre of post-16 excellence'.

In what ways is the consortium a shambles ? The whole comment is incredibly insulting and without merit. Very negative at best and without regard for PHS staff and the professional role they all perform at PHS and within the PSF. This is a clear example of publishing vague, unsubstantiated answers in order to cast doubt over the provision at Pontypridd High and the PSF.

Q. GD – What do you think the big differences are between sixth form in school and here?

A. Student – You can express yourself how you want to here and are accepted for that.

A. Student – We are treated like adults and we are trusted more here. We can go home to study and I am doing more learning independently rather than being forced to stay in school.

This answer without any comparable responses from PHS students is unfair and misleading.

What is meant by 'express yourself'? As governors we believe the two students who spoke at the Council meetings at Clydach Vale put this comment in the perspective it deserves. In relation to being treated 'like adults', is that not a criticism of all post-16 provision in every RCT school if it is to be taken seriously at all ?

Q. GD – Is there a clear pathway shown to you here?

A. Student – Yes if you have a target they will tell you all the different options to reach it.

A. Student – The tutors are really supportive and they sort any problems. They help you learn from your mistakes here instead of just disciplining you.

All students at PHS are given advice, support and targets to work towards.

Please refer to the new performance measures which confirm PHS has a retention rate from Year 12 enrolment to Year 13 completion of 83% in comparison to the Welsh average of 69%. This is significant and a true measure of quality recruitment into post-16, the right courses being offered and the best support to maintain engagement over 2 years. IAs Governors we are not able to cannot comment on those figures for CyC and BCS.

Q. AR – Do you get advice on work experience here?

A. Student – I can go abroad for two weeks on my business course, and we also have university lecturers who come in to teach us from time to time.

This is another example of publishing vague, unsubstantiated answers in order to cast doubt over the provision at Pontypridd High.

Progressively all of these questions and their published responses seem like an attempt to present some positive details about the provision at CyC because none was made available in the initial consultation document.

Q. LH – Do you think the learning environment is important to you?

A. Student – Yes, Hawthorn High is a prison. There are fences all around it. There is so much freedom here to go home if we need to.

It is difficult to understand the purpose of this question other than to extract a very negative response about PHS (or HHS) in comparison to the £45 million building at CyC.

Publishing the reference to ‘a prison’ is incredibly insulting and should never have been printed in respect of all staff and students at HHS. Instead, perhaps the whole concept of child protection and safeguarding could have been outlined to the student who said this.

Q. GD – What do you think about the learning environment at the college?

A. Student – They trust us to leave and come back and we trust them to support us.

As governors we are not sure what point is being made here. This is where the nature of this student voice activity really does come across as biased without any consultation and similar opportunity to respond from PHS students.

GD – What impact does that have on your learning?

A. Student – I know that I am responsible for my own learning and I feel more like an adult. You lose your drive to do well if you are trapped in school and there is no room for you. Not everyone learns the same.

GD – So sixth form rooms are full in school?

A. Student – Yes, rooms are full and then you are told off for wandering or you have to ask for a key to a spare room if there is one. In the college there are lots of excellent places to self study.

Q. GD – Does anyone regret coming here?

A. Student – No.

A. Student – No, I met so many friends here and I am not bullied here. In school you have to sort it out yourself and fight because teachers don't do anything.

A. Student – If you are bullied here they sort it out. Everyone is different here but we all respect each other and we are tolerant of each other.

A. Student – The PE boys in school were the favourites and they could get away with bullying.

A. Student – There is also a huge LGBT support group here (in CyC) too. In my first lesson here my teacher said that the most important thing we can do is respect each other and that she would happily have a lengthy debate with anyone who disagreed with that. I know that maybe there aren't enough funds to create the same type of support groups in Pontypridd High, but people weren't confident enough to come out in school. Some of my friends changed their names here and staff would help here and adapt what they called them to make it suitable for them.

Is it the case that there is no room for young people to work at PHS and what evidence is there that staff spend all of their time telling students off for wandering around ? We would have thought that students taking responsibility for managing their time carefully and purposefully was a good thing for staff to encourage. In addition we thought the point from the LA was that we had plenty of surplus space ?

The reference to teachers not doing anything about bullying, which leads to fighting is extremely unfair, misleading and should have immediately been reported to the Headteacher as a safeguarding concern. The fact that such a statement has been 'held' until made public is wrong and an issue of safeguarding that should have been addressed by LA Officers.

In addition, the reference to PE becomes a safeguarding issue which should have been passed on to School (which ever one ?) once that thought was expressed. Indeed, we would have thought that the College staff should have been made aware of it given LA officers thought such a comment was worthy of publishing.

The negative reference to PHS in relation to LGBT issues is insulting without knowledge or understanding of the number of issues which have and are being dealt with in our school. As such you can only conclude again that this is another opportunity being taken to make negative and misleading comments about PHS in comparison to CyC. This places students at PHS in a very difficult position, suggesting to them that they will not get the support they need should they want to discuss matters with staff. In reality the situation portrayed by this student response could not be further from the truth.

Q. AR – Do you think sixth form in schools is old fashioned?

A. Student – Yes in a way because you are trapped and so many teachers left Pontypridd High because they are stressed and too busy trying to teach year 7-11 too. The 3-16 is okay but I loved meeting new people when I went to high school and made that transition. There was a lot of bullying in my primary so I was glad to meet new people.

How does this question support the promotion of a Sixth Form in any school ?

Again the specific reference to PHS undermines staff professional authority. It suggests that staff are poorly managed and their welfare is unimportant. This is not the case and Governors believe it is insulting to staff who are managing their workload, those that have retired on their own terms and many others who have been promoted to other posts. In relation to the latter, over the last 3 years this has included the promotion of 6 staff to Heads of Faculty, 7 to Assistant Head, 2 to Deputy Head and one to Headteacher. Such information could have helped to balance up the negative and misleading tone of the single and quite possibly uninformed comment from one student.

The Governing Body would welcome the Director’s written response to the questions we raise. Governors would also be prepared to meet with the Director to further discuss these issues of concern.

**Governing Body
Pontypridd High School
May 2019**

The Our Children First ~ Ein Plant Gyntaf Group Objections to the RCTCBC 21st Century Schools Proposal for the Pontypridd Valley

The following pages set out the objections of the Our Children First ~ Ein Plant Gyntaf Group to the RCTCBC 21st Century Schools Proposal for the Pontypridd Valley.

The document follows the outline of the consultation document and organises the objections based on each section and proposal. It finishes with objections against the consultation process, consultation report and decision making process that are not already mentioned earlier in this response.

Where required it makes reference to the Welsh Assembly School Organisational Code 2013 and 2018.

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) Lack of examination of other options within the proposal:

Consideration of Alternative Options - Page 21: The number and range of alternative options considered is limited to an exploration of the greater use of video conferencing. Here follows a list of alternative proposals not considered;

Basing the sixth form on one site instead of the current two, would remove the present need for pupils to be bussed between sites and would also be open to pupils from Cardinal Newman who do not want to travel to Cardiff or Bryncelynog where that school does not currently provide teaching in a subject. It would require a minimum of re-organisation.

A Pontypridd 6th form could be run jointly by the three Pontypridd Schools enabling teachers to continue to provide 6th form lessons. This would help retain teachers at the 11-16 schools and provide continuity for pupils.

A joint sixth form between all three High Schools based on the Cardinal Newman would minimise transport issues for Pontypridd pupils (saving money) and are far easier to access by public transport than Bryncelynog.

Base the Pontypridd 6th form in Pontypridd itself with its excellent transport links.

The proposal completely fails to inform readers that Bryncelynog already works together with the nearby Y Pant School and shares its current 6th form provision with

this school. This fact has not been taken into consideration at any point. A Joint Pontypridd 6th form could provide post 16 education for children from Bryncelynog School (if they do not move across to Y Pant).

Coleg y Cymoedd could provide a satellite 6th form Provision in Pontypridd Town which would cover the subjects currently offered by the four existing 6th forms in a supportive environment more similar to a school 6th form provision. Such Tertiary colleges work successfully elsewhere.

Potential links to the University of South Wales has not been considered as an option even though the existing joint Pontypridd 6th form already has links. These could benefit both the 6th form and the University.

2) Lack of equality of access and expenditure on post 16 education:

The proposal talks about 'equality' at many points, However, there does not seem to be equality in terms of investment in the schools across the county, access to sixth form provision, with some young people being at significantly greater distance to the sixth forms that will remain, with sometimes congested and polluted transport routes.

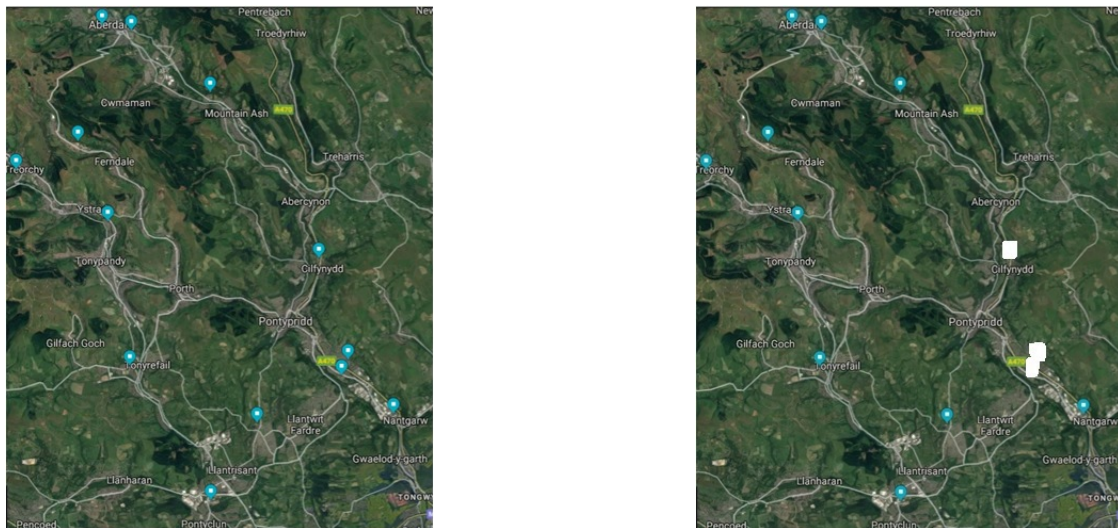
The proposed total investment is set at £37.4 million. However, this funding is spread across four school sites with no investment being directed at Cardinal Newman school at all. However, the Rhondda & Tonyrefail received an £85m investment and Y Pant received £27m alone. Hawthorn High recently finally got a new sports hall and the new lower school building some years ago and Bryncelynog has had a new science block, but much of the 21st Century plan for the Pontypridd area revolves around the repurposing of existing buildings. Thus, there does not appear to be an equality of spending between the valley areas. Details and costings of previous developments at the schools concerned could have been included in the proposal to demonstrate that there was equality.

The closure of individual primary and secondary schools to create all through schools does have one notable financial benefit for the schools involved; any existing deficit is wiped out and the schools begin with a clean slate. Hawthorn High's current deficit is quoted as £415K, Pontypridd High's at £518K, and Cardinal Newman's at £707K. Two deficits will be removed but Cardinal Newman will fail to benefit in the same way, and given its status as a Catholic faith school. The plan to open or transfer a primary school onto the site as mentioned on page 30 of the proposal document may assist the archdiocese to tackle this deficit.

The report to Cabinet (Appendix A) states that "Priority for this funding will be to improve the sixth form facilities at the school, however it is envisaged that other improvements and refurbishment works to the school will also be incorporated" (Page 10) The reason for this funding is to create a Sixth Form Centre of Excellence, thus the money should be used specifically for this, as advertised.

Page 13 of the proposal document states; "Choice is often dependent on learner postal code. There is no equitable post 16 options entitlement for the County Borough." Indeed, access to a range of sixth form provision across the county does not appear to be equitable. For example, there is just 3.7 miles between sixth form options in the Mountain Ash area whereas the distance from Hawthorn High to Pontypridd High is 4.5 miles, and the distance to Bryncelynog will be longer at 5 and 6 miles respectively.

At the time of proposed changes to education in the Rhondda and Cynon valleys, changes to the provision in Mountain Ash were not suggested and not consulted on (e-mail from RCTCBC Education Dept). Please refer to the following maps which show the distribution of sixth form provision, pre and post proposed changes;



3) Lack of examination of impact on equality and take up of places because of transport issues.

“With respect to proposals to reorganise secondary schools or to add or remove sixth forms relevant bodies should take into account the following specific factors: whether proposals are likely to lead to increased participation in learning by pupils beyond compulsory school age, taking into account transport issues and costs to the learner and others, the affordability of such costs, and the likelihood of learners being willing to travel.”

The consultation document ignores the issues of access to 6th form education for pupils who would have neither private transport or much money and the impact that this would have on access to education. Bryncelynog School is based in Beddau is described in the proposal as being part of Pontypridd Town but given that it is many miles from central Pontypridd along narrow country lanes this would appear to be nonsensical. A map of the area pre and post removal of the three sixth forms shows a ‘hollowed out’ town area with no access to sixth form education.

Providing school buses is expensive and would mean that if a pupil misses the bus or has a medical or other appointment in school time they would almost certainly end up missing a whole day in school.

Sixth form pupils have part time jobs. How can they travel to and from Bryncelynog if they have a part time job which requires them to work locally to their home, when it will take them so long to return after school?

According to the School Organisational Code (2013) When considering whether a closure is appropriate, special attention should be given to the following: how parents’ and pupils’ engagement with the alternative school and any facilities it may offer could be supported (e.g. how pupils; particularly any less advantaged pupils) will be helped

to participate in after school activities). The proposal document does not discuss what provision will be offered to assist with after school extra-curricular activities. For example, how will pupils be able to return home as a school show which could finish at 9.30pm with no direct bus route to most areas. This will therefore impact upon the pupils who will be unable to travel and therefore removes the equality of opportunities, and impact most upon the poorer students without transport.

The distance travelled is likely to also mean a lot of time to get to the school. Buses would be continually starting and stopping and taking convoluted routes through built up areas to pick up pupils which would make the journey far longer. The morning journey would take place in the rush hour when sections of the route are currently packed with rush hour traffic further lengthening the journey (with the Upper Boat area likely to worsen when DWP office opens on Treforest Industrial Estate). This will create a lot of extra road traffic on the A470 at the Tesco and Nantgarw junctions, and this will be at the same time that large numbers of sixth formers will be bussed along the same road to the same junctions. The A470 is approaching capacity now and it may be that many young people will, as part of their educational experience, be waiting in long queues. The journey time and distance is likely to put off many pupils from taking up a 6th form education.

This is particularly likely to be true of young people from the less well off areas to the North of Pontypridd from families who have not previously had higher education. On the other side the better off pupils from the area around Bryncelynog (13% Free School Meals (FSM)) would be hugely advantaged as they can easily walk to school. The poorer pupils from the Pontypridd area (20 - 24% FSM) are the pupils who will be most disadvantaged by the proposal. Bryncelynog may be too far away for some young people to travel to.

An objection made by a respondent to 'The Reorganisation of Primary Schools, Secondary Schools and Sixth Form Provision in the Rhondda Valleys and Tonyrefail - Objection Report' was that a 'significant minority of pupils will not continue into post 16 provision as it will involve travelling' (page 18). The response was that there was no documented evidence to support this statement and was not raised as a concern by school pupils in the meetings held with the School Councils.

In the 'Notes of a meeting held with the school council at Hawthorn High School', travelling was raised as a concern as included in the list of comments that did not receive answers from RCTCBC staff at the meeting because of a lack of time. These were included in the consultation response report, but none were responded to at that time either;

"I think that we should have a sixth form and Ponty should have a sixth form because they are easy to access from each other and they are not too far away."

In the 'Notes of a meeting held with students at Coleg Y Cymoedd (CYC)' where RCTCBC staff asked the questions, the students also noted this as a concern;

"Q. GD – Are there any negatives to taking the sixth form out of the schools?"

A. Student – It will be hard for the people who live far away from the school.

GD – We will offer transport to those living more than two miles away.

Student – Yes we get transport here too but it can be difficult on occasions. We get public buses can be unreliable. Some of the buses are school buses but they are often late because they have already been to drop off at one school.

GD – We need to get the transport right for these pupils then.

Student – Yes.”

It is clear, therefore, that this is a cause of concern that does need to be addressed.

3) Lack of consideration of additional pollution and transport congestion.

The proposal minimises the major impact that transport will have. There will be a large increase in the need for school buses as well as private transport. This will lead to increased costs for the council as well as increases in pollution along the routes to school. This is particularly true where buses get stuck in heavy traffic during rush hours. The proposal is in opposition to moves to try to reduce pollution and will lead to an increase of this.

The proposal to base 6th form education in a village some distance from Pontypridd will make the use of public transport to get to school almost impossible unless this is increased or subsidised routes are introduced by RCTCBC. The Welsh Government is encouraging the use of public transport and Pontypridd is a very well served transport hub. Basing 6th form provision in Pontypridd town centre or on major transport centres such as the railway station at Treforest would reduce or potentially even remove the need for school buses and the ongoing cost of these. This would also make the 6th form far more accessible to pupils from all parts of the Pontypridd area and would have the advantage of more people (teachers and pupils) using the facilities in Pontypridd Town. This could have a very positive impact on the town and increase the links between businesses in the town and 6th form pupils.

The document fails to consider both the current need for people in Wales to reduce their carbon footprint by reducing private transport. This should have been covered in the consultation document. Increased fuel costs in the future mean that the reliance on buses or other private means of transport for Pontypridd pupils should have been considered as this is likely to become more difficult in the future. There has been no consideration of the current and future environmental impacts of the proposal.

Travelling to Coleg Y Cymoedd at Nantgarw or Bryn Celynog will only add to traffic pressures and those Sixth Formers whose parents want them to receive a Catholic education will be bussed off to Cardiff, again increasing carbon emissions and traffic pressures.

The proposal fails to consider the negative impact that implementation of the proposal will have on Pontypridd Town. People with young families are unlikely to move to a town where there is no 6th form provision and their children would be forced to travel to a neighbouring village or attend a distant College of further Education.

4) Lack of accurate of data on which to make the decision.

Coleg y Cymoedd run fewer A levels than the existing Pontypridd Sixth Form, the report suggests that they run more.

The range of A levels offered is also different, thus 'like' will not be being replaced with 'like' which the report suggests.

No information is given as to the number of A level students studying at Coleg Y Cymoed who are mature students, or from out of RCT (from Caerphilly for eg) leading to a potential inaccurate inflation of A level student numbers.

The proposal chooses not to explain the recent issues at Coleg Y Cymoedd when they ran a joint 6th form teaching programme for children from Cardinal Newman High School. Within a couple of years Cardinal Newman High School withdrew from this arrangement and restarted their own 6th form provision. The full reasons for this are not widely known but it is unacceptable that RCT should be forcing this option on the young people of Pontypridd before this set of circumstances has been explained and it is clear that it will not be repeated. This therefore raises doubts as to whether Coleg Y Cymoedd is a 'centre of excellence' as described in the proposal. (At the consultation events, senior staff from the Education Department also confirmed that the term 'Centre of Excellence' as simply a term meaning that the school has a 6th form).

The suggestion that all of the deficit is as a result of sixth forms is inaccurate, much of the deficits carried by the High Schools are of a very long standing nature.

Council leader Andrew Morgan in his recent address to the Council also stated that the recent dip in results generally was as a result of curriculum changes. Thus, there is always a context to absolute results figures.

Mention is made of performance only being 'adequate' in certain schools, but no further detail is given. The figures suggest that 3 schools are very similar and only Cardinal Newman High School has better results. The recent school gradings from the Welsh Assembly confirm this.

Larger sixth forms will naturally give students a greater choice of courses and more stimulating discussions with larger cohorts of students whilst studying. However, it should be pointed out that according to the figures as presented in the proposal, Bryncelynnog Sixth form is rather small (and much smaller than the joint Pontypridd 6th form), but still has excellent results (depending on which you refer to). Again the results are little better than those from the Pontypridd 6th form a result that would be expected given the wealthier intake for Bryncelynnog School.

No mention is made of the differences between the sixth forms in terms of their intake of students who would have qualified for Free School Meals. Bryncelynnog, has a lower percentage of FSM eligible children when compared to Hawthorn High School.

The proposal fails to identify that there is a Joint Pontypridd 6th form in operation provided by Pontypridd High School and Hawthorn High School. A 6th form class may (for example) have 14 pupils but the document has counted this as 6 from Hawthorn High School and 8 from Pontypridd High School even though there is a single teacher and a single classroom. This means that the 6th form figures as discussed in the proposal are misleading.

There are basic errors in the presentation of the data. For example, the table on page 33 of the consultation document should include the number 'three' in each column, in that each column is for the percentage of students with three A levels at the various grades mentioned.

A level results figures for Coleg Y Cymoedd were not ratified at the time that the consultation document was written. Are these now available?

Predictions as to the number who would attend Bryncelynog Sixth form are based on every young person choosing that option, and yet the proposal also suggests Coleg Y Cymoedd as an open option to these children. Thus the predicted capacity figures are flawed. Consultations conducted by the high schools with their pupils suggest it is unlikely that more than a handful of pupils would move to Bryncelynog from the Pontypridd Schools.

4) Lack of consideration of the effect on attainment of increased travel distances:

The international research literature discusses the detrimental impact on attainment when children have to travel to get educated. RCT already buses more children to school than any other County Council within Wales,

5) Failure to respect the views of those who responded to the consultation:

Under case law, a consultation process should ensure that the product of consultation is conscientiously taken into account when the ultimate decision is taken. With regards to proposal one concerning the removal of the Pontypridd 6th Forms, only 7% of responses to the consultation were in favour.

Proposal 2: Create a new, 3 – 16 'all through' school for Hawthorn.

1) Lack of detail on financial savings:

Cost savings in terms of maintenance of old buildings are alluded to (but not specified), and also staff reductions in terms of excess Head posts and other posts at the all through schools. It can also be assumed that higher qualified, expensive staff, and therefore also more experienced members of staff who are required by the High Schools in order to teach 'A' levels will also no longer be required and these staff might therefore seek to choose employment elsewhere. (Further, the proposal suggests that all through schools will enable teaching staff to broaden their expertise by teaching a wider range of students. By closing the sixth forms, this breadth is immediately halved.) However, all through schools require a greater number of heads of department, be it Foundation Phase, Middle School, Upper School or subject or additional learning needs area (this can easily be seen by looking at the existing staffing lists of the few all through schools that already exist in the county). Thus, staffing costs may actually increase rather than decrease, therefore there is no accuracy in the predictions here.

It difficult to establish from the proposal what any likely cost benefits may be. Redundant buildings will be sold, but for how much it can obviously not be known. Previous sales of old Victorian buildings have not shown a great return, although any schools with larger amounts of open space can do better (eg Glantaf Infants).

2) Lack of proof of benefit in terms of educational outcomes:

Section One of the proposal outlines the plan, its basis on the Donaldson Report, criteria used for review of school provision & the educational case for the proposals; “School organisation change should point to the educational benefits that any change will offer.” (Page 11).

Under case law, a consultation process should include sufficient reasons and information for particular proposals to enable intelligent consideration and response.

At the start of the proposal from pages 11 - 17, the educational case for the proposals is described. In some instances, whilst lists of worthwhile bullet points are given, the later detail of the proposal provides little information as to how the proposals would seek to bring these things about. Taking just one example (and many could have been chosen);

“Provide a more appropriate skills-based curriculum and wider extra-curricular opportunities which should improve attendance and educational outcomes.” (Page 11).

How does a skills-based curriculum and more extra-curricular activities than the schools are currently providing influence attendance and educational outcome?

The table on the following page lists a number of these comments from this section of the proposal and queries whether evidence is provided. In the case of additional learning needs for example, which is one of the major proposals of the document as listed on page 7, this is almost the only reference made to ALN within the whole document,

Additionally, throw away statements are made with no supporting evidence, for eg; “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.” or “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.” (Both Page 17). No evidence to support these statements is provided in the proposal.

An objection made by a respondent to ‘The Reorganisation of Primary Schools, Secondary Schools and Sixth Form Provision in the Rhondda Valleys and Tonyrefail - Objection Report’ was the removal of sixth forms could ‘result in major recruitment difficulties’ (page 17). In the response that followed, this point was not addressed. Statements in the table below point to the benefits of the new model in terms of staff being able to teach between levels, however the statements are vague and not backed up by evidence at any point in the consultation document from the experience of this county, or any other.

Introduction Section	Page	Overview/Criteria and Educational Case	Comment / Questions / Where is this evidenced in the proposal?
Overview	7	improve the learning environment for pupils with ALN	proposal as to how this is to be achieved Whilst all the other proposals one page seven are discussed in detail in the document, little further mention is made of this area.
	7	high quality, viable and sustainable learning environment	In what ways will the learning environments be high quality, viable and sustainable? Where is the demonstrated in the proposal? Where is the information on how this is to be achieved and measured?
Successful Futures	9	The more flexible workforce with greater capacity and flexibility'	Use of flexibility twice here - a tautology?
	9	flexible workforce	What is the evidence from the other all through schools in the county? How has this worked in practice
	9	professional learning community	Proposal states that this is 'likely to be enhanced by the all through model'. Where is the evidence for this?
	9	learning spaces	Proposal suggests that savings in terms of technology costs will be made. Where is the evidence for this from the other all through schools in the county?
	9	learning spaces	What is the evidence from the other all through schools in the county about how learning spaces are used by all children across the continuum of learning?
	9	better relationship between the school and parents and carers	What is the evidence from the other all through schools in the county for this?
Educational Case - Outcomes	11	Larger depts/skills & expertise sharing	Where is the evidence for how this improves educational outcomes?
	11	Professional development & move between key stages	Will be effectively reduced following loss of sixth form? Can primary teachers teach secondary students and vice
	11	Professional development & move between key stages	Where is the evidence for how this improves educational outcomes?
	11	Skills based curriculum	How? Where is the evidence for this from other all through schools?
	11	Skills based curriculum and extra curricular activities 'should improve attendance and educational outcomes'	Where is the evidence for the link between improved attendance and educational outcomes and these matters?
	11	Transition anxiety	Do all through schools actually do this - where is the evidence that it is reduced via all through schools
Educational Case - Provision	11	Broader and more diverse curriculum	Such as what?
	11	Broader and more diverse curriculum which is viable and sustainable	What does this mean? How will this curriculum be more viable and sustainable?
	11	Improve range and quality of facilities	What exactly is being proposed? How will the quality and range be improved? How does this improve educational provision?
	11	Continuity of support for vulnerable groups	Where is the evidence for this from the other all through schools? How has this taken place?
	11	Financial savings from staffing structure changes	In what ways does the staffing structure change and what does this mean can be saved? How does this improve provision?
	11	More extra curricular and out of school activities	Is there the funding for this? There was funding previously for after school which appears to have fizzled away - is this the case? Staff used to volunteer, do they still do so, will they continue to do so?
	11	Build better relationships with parents and carers	How does this impact on educational provision?
Improve leadership and management	12	leadership opportunities for other staff will enhance educational provision and outcomes	Where is the evidence for this from the other all through schools? How does the provision of leadership opportunities enhance educational provision?

3) Lack of evidence upon which to make the decision:

The move to an all through school takes considerable and careful management by a skilled team, and the Pontypridd area would need to learn from the experiences of the other schools who have gone before in RCT. Ysgol Llanhari is the only school cited in the proposal as a good example of a successful all through school (though four others exist). It should be noted that this is also a 3-19 school, something which is not actually being proposed for the Pontypridd area, the primary element at this school is clearly split from the secondary which is not what is envisaged so much for either Hawthorn or Pontypridd High and the school was not originally planned to become an all-through school.

Additionally, the proposal documents for ‘The Reorganisation of Primary Schools, Secondary Schools and Sixth Form Provision in the Rhondda Valleys and Tonyrefail’ make reference to evidence of how this model is working in Lampeter and in England and Scotland and the headteacher from Ysgol Llanhari also attended some of the consultation events to give; ‘her personal views, with evidence of how this model is working very successfully at her school’ (RCTCBC Objection Report re Rhondda Valleys and Tonyrefail re-organisation - page 13). In the proposal document for the Pontypridd Valley and at the consultation events, no such supporting evidence was provided.

The initial letter that was sent when the proposal was launched suggested that the all through schools in the other areas of the county had been a ‘success’. Given that some only opened in September of 2018, and due to building delays caused by the alteration of a CADW listed building one is not yet fully functioning all on the same site, there is only a short time period for this success to have been achieved. Thus, it might be better to say that their launch was ‘successful’. Additionally, one newly amalgamated 11-16 school which increased in size three-fold has recently received a poor inspection report, especially in relation to leadership.

4) Conflicting information on Transition:

The proposal suggests that this will be better for children in all through schools, and yet elsewhere also time states that no child in a non all-through school will be disadvantaged. It is difficult to see how both these statements can be true?

5) Lack of information on Additional Learning Needs:

As discussed above, ALN is hardly mentioned in the proposal, excepting that some facilities would move to new sites. No evidence is given in the proposal as to the effect of larger schools on pupils with ALN.

Estyn’s response to the proposals continuously state that it “does not evaluate suitably the impact of the changes on pupils with SEN” and also “does not provide sufficient details on the impact of the change in catchment areas on the travelling time and wellbeing of pupils”. The comments on the proposal made by Estyn were not referred to at any time during the cabinet meeting where the proposal was voted on.

6) Lack of evidence supporting the all-through school model:

The rationale for all-through schools is weak. It appears to stem from a report commissioned by the Welsh Government and published in 2015.¹ However, no published research exists in the peer-reviewed academic literature demonstrating how well or how badly these schools operate in practice. Scottish schools have had all-through schools for some time and as far back as 2013 Scottish head teachers expressed their concerns over these new schools, citing the bullying of young children by much older ones, and the introduction of “teenage issues” to a much younger cohort of children who would otherwise be shielded from such matters by attending an entirely different school.² Given that in the last academic year (2017/18) just 13 of 1,521 state funded schools in Wales³ were of the all-through type, it seems that children in the Pontypridd area are to be the subject of a vast social experiment.

7) Lack of benefit to Heol y Celyn English stream children:

Rhydyfelin hill is particularly steep in places and tricky to negotiate in icy weather. RCTCBC would be able to establish how attendance patterns at Heol Y Celyn are currently impacted by poor weather in order to judge the likely effect that the removal of the English language stream to Hawthorn would have on overall attendance at the new larger school. Such a move may have an adverse effect on the RCTCBC Education Attendance & Welfare Service ‘Miss School, Miss Out’ campaign. Thus, the Rhydyfelin community at the top of the hill would be disadvantaged by moving to Hawthorn School.

Parents with young children would be particularly hard hit. Without a car, they may need to walk up and down the hill three times a day to bring children to school, return at midday for a child in part-time nursery, and then return at the end of the day, with the nursery child in tow to pick up other children. These parents may therefore choose not to send their children to school until aged 5, or try to get them into the nursery class in the children’s centre, if it is still there. It is unlikely that they would be able to afford wrap around care based at the school. Thus, this group of parents would be disadvantaged, and may be forced into applying for their child to attend the closer Welsh school, thus removing all element of choice.

8) Lack of impact on travellers assessed:

Travellers are not considered in the impact assessment, indeed it is stated that there were no travellers at any of the schools in the area. Heol Y Celyn, Ffynon Taf and Parc Lewis Primary all regularly have children who are travellers. Perhaps at the point when the data was searched for, these children were not there, but perhaps a broader time period of search should have been made?

¹ Professor Graham Donaldson, *Successful Futures: Independent Review of Curriculum and assessment arrangements in Wales*, 2015, Cardiff, Welsh Government.

² Henry Hepburn, “Secondary staff urge caution over all-through schools,” *Tes*, (formerly Times Educational Supplement), 17th May 2013.

³ “Pontypridd school shake-up plans put out to consultation,” BBC website, 5th October 2018, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-45761276>

9) Lack of accuracy:

The proposal suggests that children are not currently taught in classes by age group. This is not true for all of the primary schools concerned, but, as no detail is given, the scale of this cannot be judged.

6) Failure to respect the views of those who responded to the consultation:

Under case law, a consultation process should ensure that the product of consultation is conscientiously taken into account when the ultimate decision is taken. With regards to proposal two concerning the creation of a new, 3 – 16 ‘all through’ school for Hawthorn only 12% of responses were in favour.

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

1) Lack of detail on financial savings:

As for proposal 2

Additionally, it is suggested that financial savings of around £40,000 per year.⁴ from the local authority’s revenue budget would be made from the Cilfynydd Primary proposals. However, this does not tell the whole story as there will be considerable capital expenditure on the new school, as well as on road safety improvements and likely other changes. These come within the purview of the council but others – such as the cost of extra health care, the cost of extra environmental damage, what economists refer to as externalities – most certainly do not.

2) Lack of proof of benefit in terms of educational outcomes:

As for proposal 2

3) Lack of evidence upon which to make the decision:

As for proposal 2

4) Transition:

As for proposal 2

5) Lack of information on Additional Learning Needs:

As for proposal 2

6) Lack of evidence supporting the all-through school model:

As for proposal 2

7) Failure to consider increase in traffic:

Cllr Steve Belzak states that the northern end of Cilfynydd Road is busy at times when children are travelling to and from school, and the traffic will increase if the schools proposal goes through. This is because many parents who currently see that their children walk to Cilfynydd primary will see to it that they no longer travel on foot. Parents will be mindful of the traffic on Cilfynydd Road and they will be concerned that younger children will be more prone to some form of accident than older ones. No doubt, some of this extra traffic will be generated because the walking distance to a school at the north west corner of the village (as opposed to the centrally-positioned Cilfynydd Primary) will increase. This traffic increase will be of concern to all residents of the village and especially those who live in Wood Street and all the roads that feed into Wood Street. An already-bad situation can and will be made worse. Consider what happened on the Friday (12th October 2018) two weeks before half term when very

⁴ 21st Century Schools: Consultation on the reorganisation of primary schools, secondary schools and sixth form provision in the Pontypridd area, RCT County Borough Council, 2015, p54

bad weather hit the locality. More parents than usual drove to Pontypridd High and the whole area in front of the school became thoroughly congested.

8) Failure to tackle issues of excess capacity:

Part of the purpose of the changes is to deal with high level of surplus places across the valley (p.10). Cilfynydd Primary is planned to close and move onto the Pontypridd High School site. It is predicted in the proposal that the surplus capacity would rise to 34% by 2023 if this change was not enacted, and yet, post change, the report suggests that excess capacity at the primary element of the new school will be running at 55 places, 31% of capacity.

On pages 48-49 of the Consultation Document, Cilfynydd Primary School is described as a relatively small school housed in Victorian buildings on a steeply sloping site, 0.9 miles from the Pontypridd High school site but with surplus places.

The Consultation Document also refers to its instruction to reduce surplus places: *“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.”*

Section 35 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 states: *“A school authority must follow the course set out in school improvement guidance issued to it in accordance with this Chapter when exercising a power or duty (including a power or duty that is contingent upon the opinion of the school authority)”*

To put the figures from the Consultation Document into perspective: The current capacity of Cilfynydd Primary School is **188** pupils. The capacity of the Primary section of the proposed 3-16 school is **180**. The proposal predicts that there would be **136** pupils in Cilfynydd Primary School in January 2022. The proposal predicts that there would be **125** pupils in the Primary section of the proposed 3-16 school in January 2022. This is a reduction of only **8 surplus places**, but with **11 fewer pupils**.

Using the above figures from the Consultation Document, the percentage surpluses would be as follows:

Cilfynydd Primary School: 28% surplus
Pontypridd 3-16 School (Primary Section): 31% surplus.

The Welsh Government defines a school with more than 25% surplus as a school with “Significant Surplus”.

At the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting on 3rd April 2019, in response to a query about the surplus places in the proposed changes to Cilfynydd Primary School, Gaynor Davies (RCT Director of Education) said “We like to have extra surplus places in all our schools, to avoid over-subscription”.

Given this evidence, the one and only reason given for the closure of Cilfynydd Primary School is invalid, as the resulting surplus will be *higher* than the existing surplus.

The Welsh Assembly School Organisation Code (2013) for the purpose of this consultation states that: “Where there are more than 10% surplus places in an area, local authorities should review their provision and should make proposals for school reorganisation if this will improve the effectiveness and efficiency of provision. This is especially important where individual schools, have “significant” levels of surplus places. A significant level of surplus provision is defined as 25% or more of a school’s capacity (as defined in Circular 21/2011) and at least 30 unfilled places.”

During previous consultations, Mountain Ash comprehensive was not consulted upon for change, and as of 2019/20, was only 62% full, leaving a 38% surplus. Why is capacity such an issue in one area of the county but not in another?

9) Lack of assessment of impact of pollution on children and young people:

Congestion creates pollution, and much of this pollution is in the form of greenhouse gases. The scientific consensus is that greenhouse gasses warm the atmosphere and disrupt the climate, hindering food production and raising sea levels. Britain not only signed an international agreement in 2015 to limit greenhouse gas emissions, but on 8th October the U.N. body charged with reporting this issue – the Inter-Governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) – came out in a major report with a dire warning. We have, they said, twelve years to turn things around and this will involve unprecedented changes to the way we live. But, based on these school plans, we are going ahead with business-as usual. Cllr Steve Belzak asked the leader of the Council a formal question at the last full meeting of Rhondda Cynon Taf council on 24th October 2018;

From Councillor S Belzak to the Leader of the Council - Cllr A Morgan:

“In what way is the generation of extra road traffic, which is a likely consequence of the “Proposals to improve education in the Greater Pontypridd area,” approved by Cabinet for public consultation on 3rd October, compatible with the COP 21 Paris Climate Accord of 2015 or the report of the widely-publicised Intergovernmental Panel on Climate change (IPCC) published on 8th October 2018?”

Cllr Morgan claimed that there would be no significant increase in road traffic, and that in any event the design of the new buildings would make this plan a carbon neutral one. Council policy was in accordance with Welsh Government guidelines on carbon and climate change. Two points need to be made in response. The Authority will have “no evidence” if it does not look for evidence, and the evidence for increasing traffic in Cilfynydd is based on local knowledge and speaking to residents. As for conformity with guidance from the Welsh Government, there actually needs to be conformity with what the IPCC are stating if climate (and human) disaster is to be averted, and neither guidance from Cardiff Bay or from Westminster has yet caught up with what IPCC are stating.

Cllr Belzak raised the matter of the environmental effects of extra road traffic at the RCT Cabinet meeting of 3rd October. He also brought up the question of the long-term, adverse effects on human health of pollution from road traffic. There is an extensive scientific literature on the harmful effects of pollution from cars, trucks, buses and other vehicles on the health of humans who either live alongside freeways, motorways, dual carriageways and the like, or spend a great deal of their day in close proximity to such

highways. Many of these studies are transnational and they identify pollutants such as carbon monoxide, oxides of nitrogen, soot and other particulate matter in adverse health outcomes such as reduced pulmonary function, respiratory problems such as asthma and even – ironically – reduced cognitive function. Carbon dioxide, chiefly a greenhouse gas is also a culprit in the assault on human health.

The A470 is one of the most “traffic-intensive” and polluted highways in Wales. It was in order to reduce the already high levels of pollution along stretches of the road that the Welsh Government slashed the speed limit to just 50MPH along extensive stretches of the dual carriageway in mid-2018. Further cuts along other stretches of road are contemplated.

For these reasons, Cllr Belzak asked the RCT Leadership at Cabinet if an independent study could be commissioned by the local authority to assess the likely impact on human health of moving a whole primary school from where it is now, east of Ann Street, to a location so close to the A470. The response was that some schools under the plan – such as Pont Sion Norton – would be moved further away from the A470 – while others would be moved closer, but in any event, the schools would not be open at peak traffic times.

Thus, some children might be worse off in terms of health risks, but this would be somehow compensated for by others who might be better off. The claim regarding non-peak times is suspect also since traffic pollution exists all day. It may be at its very worst at rush hour but that does not mean that it’s at an acceptable level at other times. In response to this line of inquiry the claim was made by the council leadership that Cilfynydd Primary School is as near to the A470 as Pontypridd High. Well, actual measurements say otherwise. In addition, the topography of the valley means that Cilfynydd Primary is separated by a high wall and a steep hillside from the road and its often heavier-than air pollutants, whereas Pontypridd High is immediately next to the dual carriageway, at the same elevation. Cllr Belzak asked for an independent expert in public health to be commissioned by the council to look into and report back on such matters, but this request was refused.

Cllr Belzak asked a further question at the October 24th meeting:

“Given the very considerable body of evidence in the peer-reviewed scientific literature (arising out of transnational studies) as to the adverse health outcomes for people spending a considerable portion of their day (regardless of rush hours) adjacent to freeways, motorways and dual carriageways, will the Leader now commit to my suggestion at Cabinet on 3rd October of an independent investigation by a public health expert into the long term health implications for students and staff of moving Cilfynydd Primary School from its present location to a site immediately adjacent to the traffic-intensive A470?”

In his reply, the Leader made reference to schools not being open at peak times for traffic, but this misses the point. Air quality may be at its worst during peak traffic times, but this does not mean that air quality is satisfactory at non-peak times. The same points were put to the Director of Education at a meeting with staff and Governors of Cilfynydd Primary School in November 2018. Her response was to the effect that a school already existed at the site which is subject to the air pollution. The body of public health knowledge in 2019 is far more extensive than it was when the school

was first built three decades ago. There may have been good reason not to consider air pollution then, but there is no justification for ignoring it now.

10) Lack of consideration to the community links of local schools:

The proposal to close Cilfynydd Primary School will tear the heart out of the community of Cilfynydd. The school has deep links with the community at many levels and is active in many events of great value to the village, such as Remembrance Sunday, and the Harvest Festival and Christmas celebrations at St Luke's Church. If Cilfynydd had been classified as a rural school the council would have had to keep it open according to the Welsh Government's new School Organisation Code (01Nov2018). According to the BBC:

Closing a rural school in Wales should only happen after councils have done "everything they can" to keep it open, according to new guidelines.

Changes to the School Organisation Code from Thursday include the presumption against the closure of rural schools.⁵

The existence of a school for as long as Cilfynydd Primary School has existed and has played such a prominent part in the lives of so many is a good reason to keep it open but, unfortunately the requirement to keep it open unless every other possible alternative has been tried and has failed does not apply to Cilfynydd because it is not classified as a rural school.

Similar arguments also apply to YGG Pont Sion Norton, which has been part of the community for decades (see below). Traditions play a major role in knitting communities together. You cannot keep tearing up by the roots every institution and every landmark that defines a community without in the end arriving at a state where you have no community, just a bunch of isolated individuals living near each other but with nothing in common.

11) Failure to respect the views of those who responded to the consultation:

Under case law, a consultation process should ensure that the product of consultation is conscientiously taken into account when the ultimate decision is taken. With regards to proposal three concerning the creation of a new, 3 – 16 'all through' school for Pontypridd only 9% of responses were in favour.

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.

1) Failure to tackle issues of excess capacity:

Total pupil projections for 2023 for the two Welsh language schools are given as 299 primary age children, however the proposed capacity at that time for the new school is for 480 places, suggesting that the new school would be at 38% under capacity in 2023. It would appear that in both instances, there is 'building for growth' instead of addressing excess capacity issues.

⁵ "Rules against rural school closures in force in Wales," BBC website, 1st November 2018; https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-46044965?fbclid=IwAR0K-NSMG9WwGqQJvwAo1m-lxp_BpADHWShiZkHC31zvLneyRBBOsEmwr1Q

Addressing excess capacity is frequently mentioned as a goal of the proposal, especially in pages 21-23, but as noted at point 6 above in relation to Cilfynydd Primary - the opposite is often the intention of the proposals.

2) Lack of assessment of impact on community of increased bus and car traffic to schools:

Pont Sion Norton currently has 256 primary age children and 39 nursery children, all of whom would need to be bussed into Rhydyfelin. Even based on the predicted numbers from 2023, this would mean a potential for 250 children to be bussed daily, those from Ynysybwl passing through Pontypridd on the way (where another Welsh school, Evan James is situated). For those in nursery, they would need to be picked up by their parents/guardians at midday as no bus transport is provided at that time.

The numbers of additional buses would be at least five, likely to come in to Holly Street from the Dyffryn Road end. Cardinal Newman already receives nine buses a day, and other buses pass through out of the area as they pick up children from the area to attend the Welsh language secondary school (also an all-through school) Garth Olwg.

There is also potential for even more buses on Dynea Road/Holly Street should a Catholic Primary school be moved to the Cardinal Newman site. This is suggested on page 30 of the proposal and in the 'Notice' document written by Gaynor Davies - Director of Education and Inclusion Services - dated April 30th 2019 as follows; "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." This potential development was not one that readers were asked to give a response to.

Traffic congestion is already acknowledged by residents of Holly Street, Beechwood Street and Oak Street and local residents have not been made aware of the increased numbers of buses that may be using the street as a whole, coming from both ends. Also, there is the potential for increased car traffic from parents accessing breakfast clubs and pick up from wrap around care on their way to and from their jobs. This could mean that the road needs to be looked at in terms of passing places etc and a potential restriction of on-street parking.

3) Lack of equality of access to Welsh education - defeating an objective of the proposal:

RCT's proposed closure and relocation of YGG Pont Sion Norton will inadvertently cause Welsh Medium education in North Pontypridd to become a privilege for the few rather than a provision for all.

These proposed changes will place impossible logistical barriers for families who rely on public transport, leaving parents no option other than choose the local school – which will be English medium. Parents are already telling us this is what they will have to do. RCT is in effect withdrawing accessible Welsh medium education from some of the poorest communities in Pontypridd.

Given that the new Welsh school will be so far away from its population, will parents want their young children to travel that far? Might they decide to 'vote with their feet',

and send their children elsewhere, hence defeating the objectives of the proposal to increase the amount of Welsh language education on offer?

At the Cabinet meeting Cllr Geraint Hopkins stated that children from these communities (Ynysybwl, Coed y Cwm, Glyncoch) already travel by bus to PSN so it will be no different. We respectfully submit it is a backward view to say 'they travel anyway – let them travel further' In the current socio-environmental climate local authorities have a duty to make school transport cleaner and more sustainable. Children should be protected by The Future Generations Act to accessible education whether English or Welsh. It is discriminatory that RCT is placing logistical barriers for children from some of the poorest communities to access Welsh medium education. It is disheartening that in 2019 we are having to campaign for equality for the Welsh Language.

At the Overview and Scrutiny meeting where the call-ins were discussed, Councillors raised many concerns regarding the additional travel necessary to reach the Heol y Celyn site which RCT Education staff repeatedly denied on a specific technicality; namely that the morning buses have to travel up the A470 to then travel south towards PSN to be on the left-hand side of the road for the children to safely dismount. Children would travel 1.1 miles less per day. No information on the length of time on the bus was given. The fact that parents will not be able to access to the proposed school site unless they have a car has been utterly ignored. Parents, carers and grandparents relying on public transport could face up to a two-hour round trip in the event of a sick child or a special event; 'One car families' where the parent in work needs the car will be in the same predicament. Parental engagement in children's education is essential for the wellbeing of the child yet this aspect of the relocation was deliberately overlooked at the Cabinet and Scrutiny meeting.

An objection made by a respondent to 'The Reorganisation of Primary Schools, Secondary Schools and Sixth Form Provision in the Rhondda Valleys and Tonyrefail - Objection Report' was that the 'closure of Primary schools within a community is not a positive move; communities will be damaged' (page 15). The response given was that primary education would still be delivered within the communities with relatively short distances between the current and former primary schools. This is certainly not the case in respect of Pont Sion Norton, the communities that it served and the proposed new site at Heol Y Celyn.

As parents who have sought to give our children Welsh Medium Education we feel we are being discriminated against by our County Borough Council. There are nine English medium primary schools in Pontypridd. Rather than increase the current three Welsh medium sites to offer more access to Welsh education RCT CBC are removing YGG PSN from the North of Pontypridd and expecting 300 children – as young as three years old - to travel up to six miles to access Welsh medium education. How is this a fair provision?

We are calling for **local Welsh education** within the communities of Cilfynydd, Trallwn, Coed y Cwm, Glyncoch and Ynysybwl. We are urging RCT to be aspirational and forward thinking with regards to the Welsh Language and be bold to make provision which will really support the Welsh Government aim to have 1 million Welsh speakers by 2050. This will not be achieved by removing Welsh schools from

communities and placing logistical barriers for families who would have considered Welsh medium education but will feel practically unable to make that choice.

4) Lack of consultation of affected groups:

The Consultation process which RCT boast went above and beyond their obligation was a sham. There was no meeting for parents held at YGG PSN, instead the meeting was held at the proposed site which was impossible for most parents to attend. The meeting was held between 4pm-6pm, therefore many working parents could not attend. Being two bus journeys away from our communities, parents who rely on public transport could not attend.

5) Lack of acknowledgement of concerns and issues in the consultation report and cabinet debate:

In the consultation meeting, parents were repeatedly told that if they had concerns, they should make these known in the consultation questionnaire. These concerns are not noted as part of the consultation report.

125 questionnaire responses agreed with the proposal to relocate YGG Pont Sion Norton, compared to 427 official responses against. 500 signatures on a petition submitted against the proposals were not recorded in the Consultation document. 13 out of 14 members of the public allowed to speak at the Cabinet meeting spoke against the proposals, two of whom spoke specifically against the relocation of YGG Pont Sion Norton to Heol y Celyn. Yet despite this response from the public against the proposals they were passed by the Cabinet.

6) Lack of consideration of additional pollution and transport congestion.

The RCT Education representatives at the meeting could not answer parents questions at the consultation events regarding the added distance children would be expected to travel and had no knowledge of the extreme traffic build up that occurs around Pontypridd town centre during school run times.

7) Lack of consideration of alternative locations:

Parents have asked RCT to consider alternative sites for the relocation of YGG PSN. Parents welcomed the investment into Welsh education and agreed that the current facilities at PSN were not adequate for 21st Century education. However, they asked RCT to revisit the proposals and consider a site within the current catchment area of the school. An alternative site in Glyncoch was suggested and several Freedom of Information Requests regarding its availability, the response being that there were no current plans for this site.

Parents also suggested keeping the current site at PSN for a smaller number of pupils and renovating the existing site to meet 21st Century facility expectations. By splitting the pupils between the current site and the alternative site in Glyncoch this would provide all pupils with accessible Welsh medium education within their communities. When asked at the Consultation event at Heol y Celyn, RCT education staff admitted no alternative sites had been considered, as it was deemed 'unnecessary'. How can transporting 300 pupils out of their communities and across town to access Welsh Medium education possibly be the only option considered by RCT? Furthermore when the Glyncoch site was suggested as an alternative at the Cabinet meeting the Chairman stated that there were already plans for this site, which wholly contradict the

FOI responses received. There is an alarming lack of transparency and accountability to the whole.

8) Concern with regard to the position of some Councillors within the process:

A voting Cabinet member, Cllr Maureen Webber, is a governor at Heol y Celyn, the school earmarked to have millions of pounds of investment - How is this democratic? We submit that she had a vested interest in the passing of the proposal and should not have been allowed to vote.

9) Lack of logical justification for Council's decision:

During the Cabinet meeting it was debated whether YGG Evan James and YGG Abercynon could be alternative options for parents in the PSN catchment communities. It was agreed that these schools could serve the PSN catchment and the director for transport agreed that free school transport would be available. Parents were confused as to what to expect for younger children 0-3 years of age. Heol y Celyn is very likely to hit capacity over the next few years with Rhydyfelin families now choosing this new state of the art school on their doorstep rather than walking their children down the hill to the nearest English medium provision (Hawthorn). Referring to the minutes of the Staff and Governors meeting with Heol y Celyn at Appendix 3 of the Consultation Report:

"A staff member at HYC stated that they have already had requests from parents to move children from the English stream to the Welsh Stream, as a result of the new proposals. They went on to state "More pupils will join the Welsh department in January 2019, what if this increases beyond the capacity of the new school?" Gaynor Davies for RCT replied 'Admission criteria would be applied' she went on to say that 'Catchment areas may be reviewed regularly.'"

PSN parents are in no doubt that their children in the furthest communities away from Heol y Celyn will be the last priority to be given a space at the new school should the school hit capacity. Will siblings then have to be sent to different schools? If one sibling is in Heol y Celyn but another is in Abercynon these schools feed different secondary schools. There are so many unanswered questions and we feel as parents that there will be repercussions to these proposals that have not been planned for; it is the well-being of our children at stake.

It would also appear illogical to suggest building a school to cater for children from the Pont Sion Norton catchment area whilst at the same time being happy for those children to take up places at other schools. Either the school at Heol Y Celyn is the catchment area school for these children, or it isn't.

Furthermore, these suggested changes to catchment area were not put forward as part of the proposal document.

Six Councillors called Cabinet's decision in for Scrutiny and on April 3rd. Many Councillors drew attention to the lack of clarity of any proposed catchment changes for Welsh medium education in Pontypridd and despite all the previous references to YGG Abercynon in the Cabinet meeting as a suitable alternative Gaynor Davies repeatedly denied any planned changes to catchment areas – this does not add up.

12) Failure to respect the views of those who responded to the consultation:
Under case law, a consultation process should ensure that the product of consultation is conscientiously taken into account when the ultimate decision is taken. With regards to proposal four concerning the creation of a new Welsh medium school at Heol Y Celyn only 6% of responses were in favour.

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

Note: Changes to Gwauncelyn catchment are not set to go ahead, others will go ahead.

1) Lack of proper ability to comment on individual proposals:

There are a number of different catchment area changes within this proposal. Given that answers could only be given as Yes/No/Not Sure, it was difficult, if not impossible to comment Yes to one, and No to another for example.

2) Lack of consideration of transport impact:

The proposal contains no Community Impact Assessment of any of these matters.

3) Interdependence of proposals is affected by decision not to change Gwauncelyn catchment:

The proposal often makes reference to the interdependence of the different proposals. By not moving the children from Gwauncelyn to Hawthorn High, their capacity will remain even higher, and the reason for changing the catchments was to deal with issues of excess capacity.

4) Failure to follow the School Organisational Code:

“Where, in the course of consultation, a new option emerges which the proposers decide to pursue, they must consult afresh on this option before proceeding to publication.”

The proposal to continue with the removal of Maes Y Coed and Coedpenaen Primary pupils from the Hawthorn catchment area but to keep Gwauncelyn pupils as part of the Bryncelynog catchment is in effect a ‘new option’ and the community should have been consulted ‘afresh’ on this new proposal. By not doing so the Council have proceeded on the basis of a consultation for Hawthorn that became outdated at the point that the Gwauncelyn amendment was decided upon.

5) Failure to consider future developments:

If the brownfield site in Llanillid has been purchased with a possibility of a new school being required, plus the additional housing developments in the Tonteg areas, perhaps it would be financially prudent to wait a few years, which will allow the specific data from the new schools to come through, assess which is working, and build the new schools / expand the current schools then. As noted above, Gaynor Davies appears to have no difficulty in ‘building for growth’ in terms of allowing excess capacity at both the new Heol Y Celyn school and the Primary end of the new Pontypridd High School, and the Council as a whole, having not amended the catchment area for Gwauncelyn appear to be happy to accept excess capacity at Hawthorn High School.

The proposal document also mentions that other options, such as closing a site (HHS or PHS) has been considered over the next 5 – 10 years. Again, financial prudence would encourage the monitoring of the situation over the next 2 – 3 years, so that a more conservative view could be taken, as the picture may be entirely different.

6) Failure to respect the views of those who responded to the consultation: Under case law, a consultation process should ensure that the product of consultation is conscientiously taken into account when the ultimate decision is taken. With regards to proposal five concerning the amendments to catchment areas 43% of responses were in favour. However the decision was taken to remove the Gwauncelyn element from this proposal, but, proceed with the other 4 proposals where the percentage of people in favour were much, much lower.

Objections to the Consultation Process:

The Welsh Assembly School Organisational Code (2013), in force at the time that the consultation process was begun states the following;

“Case law has established that the consultation process should: • be undertaken when proposals are still at a formative stage; • include sufficient reasons and information for particular proposals to enable intelligent consideration and response; • provide adequate time for consideration and response; and; • ensure that the product of consultation is conscientiously taken into account when the ultimate decision is taken.

The process and guidance which follow have been developed with due regard to the principles listed above. Those considering bringing forward proposals will need to be fully aware of this process and guidance. However, proposers must be mindful of the four underlying principles and take any necessary additional steps to ensure that those principles are fully upheld.”

Formative Stage: This consultation process did not ask for other options prior to the document being created, thus there was only a consultation based upon proposals that the education dept had previously agreed upon.

Include sufficient reasons and information for particular proposals to enable intelligent consideration and response: We would contend that there were flaws in the evidence presented in the consultation and interpretation given to it by the authors of the report. Please refer to the additional documents from both Hawthorn High and Pontypridd High School (essentially the same document); “CONSULTATION ON THE PROPOSED REORGANISATION OF PRIMARY SCHOOLS, SECONDARY SCHOOLS AND SIXTH FORM PROVISION IN THE PONTYPRIDD AREA. A GUIDE FOR PARENTS and CARERS.” This document details the inaccuracies.

For example; The consultation report provides no evidence to substantiate the claim that the sixth form performance in Pontypridd is ‘amongst the worst in Wales’ or that performance at Key Stage 4 in both PHS and HHS is ‘consistently in the third and fourth quartile’. The report also ignores the fact that the two schools operate a shared class provision. If an accurate summary is not provided for the consultation, how could the Cabinet effectively analyse the likely impact of the proposals?

Ensure that the product of consultation is conscientiously taken into account when the ultimate decision is taken: Given that the overwhelming response to the proposals was negative and was also criticised by Estyn, we can not see how RCT Cabinet followed this principle.

The consultation meetings were also flawed. RCT state that they went over and above the actual requirements for consultation, however they did not treat every school and pupil equally. For example in the Hawthorn High school council meeting, they limited the time for the meeting, and because they did not answer all of the questions, they asked the pupils to put their questions on post-it notes and they would respond to them. These responses have yet to be received.

None of the minutes of the meetings were ever agreed, and even though they were requested, these were not made available to the schools / school councils to read prior to their publication for the cabinet members. Therefore there was no opportunity to ratify them.

“3.4 Procedures There is no requirement for proposers to hold consultation meetings although there will be circumstances where proposers will consider that meeting with certain groups of consultees will assist greatly in the dissemination of information and provide a suitable platform for the consultees to make their views known. Where meetings are arranged, proposers should ensure that they are arranged in such a way that consultees in any of the categories set out a paragraph 3.2 are treated fairly and equitably. A full written record should be made of the issues raised and the answers provided at any meetings which are held.”

Page four of the consultation report given to cabinet members details lists the meetings that took place. No mention is made of the meeting held in Coleg Y Cymoedd. Gaynor Davies and colleagues met with 23 students who had previously attended Pontypridd High, Hawthorn High or Cardinal Newman. It is not known how old these students were, or what course of study they were undertaking, for example, A level, or other courses provided by the college. Of this unrepresentative group of all the young people at the college, Gaynor Davies and colleagues asked questions, questions that appear to be leading questions. Similar visits, with similar groups who had transferred back from Coleg Y Cymoedd to the relevant sixth forms, whether asking leading questions, or not, were NOT held. Thus, the report of this consultation process reveals yet another biased set of evidence.

Additionally, a section of the meeting of this report had to be redacted in later versions as a staff member could be identified from the published summary of the meeting.

Why were pupils from schools who feed into the high schools affected not included in the meetings? Ffynnon Taf, Parc Lewis, Coedpenmaen?

The council did not follow the Welsh Assembly School Organisation Code (2013) in relation to how materials were made available to young people;

“3.3 Consultation with children and young people Proposers must also make suitable arrangements to consult with pupils of any affected school (or part of a school in the case of provision reserved for children with SEN) and, where possible, with children

and young people who are likely to attend those schools. As a minimum, this must include consultation with the school councils of the affected schools, but should also include consultation with individual learners where this is appropriate and practicable. Governing bodies must help facilitate this aspect of the consultation. The information given to children and young people must be presented in such a way that it is relevant to their age and level of likely understanding and allows them to reach an informed opinion. The agreed children and young people's participation standards for Wales are available on the Welsh Government's website; proposers should refer to these and act in accordance with them. If consulting with individual learners, proposers should produce and distribute a version or versions of the consultation document appropriate to the age/ages of the children and young people affected. The consultation document should also clearly explain to children and young people the difference between the consultation and objection periods and how and when they can object to proposals. Where necessary, proposers should provide assistance to children and young people who wish to submit a consultation response."

No consideration was taken as to whether parents in a disadvantaged area such as Rhydyfelin would be able to understand the consultation and the large, detailed report that the council expected people to digest.

In the cabinet report, HHS and PHS were criticised for amending the form to aid their students. Information given to children and young people should have been presented in such a way that it was relevant to their age and easy to understand. It is therefore a criticism of the council rather than a criticism of the schools who tried to ensure that the pupils and their families could actively participate in such a monumental decision affecting their child/children's education.

Objections to the Consultation report:

Lack of summary of all comments made to the consultation in the consultation report:

The report states that it collates 'comments around common themes'. The report is structured in a 'question and answer' format, thus, if a 'comment' that was not a question was made, it does not appear to have been included in the written report of the consultation. There are therefore concerns as to the accuracy of the summary that this report has made of the consultation responses received.

Objections to the Proposal Decision making process:

Lack of consideration to the views of Estyn:

The report includes a response from Estyn who are critical of the following aspects; the lack of evidence of the impact of the changes on children with additional learning needs, special educational needs, standards, curriculum, leadership, management, impact on other local schools and wellbeing. These criticisms are made across many of the individual proposals.

For example, Estyn are critical of the sixth form proposals, citing the lack of "sufficient information as how many pupils will have to travel further to their new school or college of their choice" And, "the proposal does not provide sufficient details on the impact of the change to student travelling time on their wellbeing."

And; "The proposer notes that this ALN proposal includes the closure of two ALN classes at Heol y Celyn Primary School due to the reduction in numbers attending. Should both proposals be successful, there will no dedicated ALN provision at the new 3-16 school for neither foundation phase pupils nor those in key stage 2. The proposer does not provide sufficient evidence as to how the needs of these pupils will be met in the new school."

Estyn also suggests that the Red, Amber, Green ratings have been misapplied in relation to sixth forms. Finally, they are concerned that the proposal has not provided a clear enough case for moving the sixth form from Pontypridd to Bryncelynnog; " ... the rationale for locating the sixth form centre in Bryncelynnog as opposed to Cardinal Newman is not clear", Bryncelynnog being located near Y Pant which retains its sixth form."

Please refer to additional document, a reduced and annotated version of the Estyn response to the report.

Concluding Remarks:

The 21st Century Schools funding is a significant opportunity for Pontypridd, an opportunity to improve the educational facilities and attainment across the valley for all children and at all schools. This proposal, very sadly, does not do that. The Our Children First ~ Ein Plant Gyntaf Group would like RCTCBC to take this proposal back to the drawing board, involve the existing schools in the development of logical, rational proposals for the betterment of education and educational facilities in the Pontypridd valley, instead of this house of cards, which is all ready to come tumbling down.

The 21st Century Schools proposal for the Pontypridd Valley is based on 'Band B' funding being released by the Welsh Assembly. Band A was for the super schools etc that already occurred in the other valleys etc, as well as other changes. If, the Welsh Assembly had waited, collected evidence of the effectiveness of the Band A funding on educational attainment and outcomes etc, then, we wouldn't be where we are now. It is great to apply for the money for investment, but not in such a rushed and ill considered way that bad, poorly formulated plans are put into place to meet the

Proposal to create a Sixth Form ‘Centre of Excellence’ at Bryncelynnog, utilise post 16 provision at Coleg y Cymoedd and St David’s College, Cardiff, and to remove sixth form provision at Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive, Hawthorn and Pontypridd High Schools

Community Impact Assessment

This assessment is prepared in accordance with guidance contained within Annex C of the new statutory guidance circular 011/2018, the School Organisation Code, which was implemented with effect from 1st November 2018. For this purpose, circular 011/2018 incorporates all statutory obligations contained within statutory guidance circular 006/2013.

This proposal was consulted on between 15th October 2018 and 31st January 2019, as part of a wider consultation regarding the reorganisation of school provision in the Pontypridd and Hawthorn areas of Rhondda Cynon Taf. A detailed consultation document was circulated to all prescribed consultees. Copies were forwarded to Welsh Government in compliance with consultation and publication guidelines. The document advised of the availability of all required Impact Assessments and informed all consultees as to how they could obtain copies if they required them.

The reasons for consideration of this particular proposal are fully outlined in the consultation document that has been widely distributed; this document clearly outlines the background to the proposal and why it has been necessary to bring it forward at this point in time.

It must be noted that we are not closing any secondary school provision as a consequence of this particular proposal. The three schools that may lose 6th form provision will remain in situ, albeit with changes made to the age range of pupils they wish to admit (amended from 11 – 19 years to 3 – 16 years or 11 – 16 in the case of Cardinal Newman). Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School will have additional accommodation and facilities provided. Separate Community Impact Assessments have been prepared in respect of all other proposals being consulted upon at the current time.

Taking into account the information provided above, it is considered that the 6th form element of our Hawthorn and Pontypridd School Reorganisation Proposals will have a neutral effect on the communities they serve. All facilities and services provided by these schools to their communities will remain in place. It is for this reason that a more detailed Community Impact Assessment has not been prepared for this proposal, as it is not deemed to be applicable or appropriate in the circumstances.

The only potential impact will be on the pupils who may require 6th form education in the future, in that they may have to travel longer distances to access this provision. There are far too many different ‘permutations’ to outline the distances involved for individual pupils in this report.

Appendix B – Community Impact Assessments

Transportation for pupils will be provided in accordance with the Council's Learner Travel Policy in force at the time of the transfer of the post-16 provision to their new locations. Assessments will be undertaken in accordance with legislation in force and will involve the application of both distance and dangerous route criteria, if applicable.

Proposal to close Hawthorn Primary, Heol y Celyn Primary and Hawthorn High Schools and to create a new 3 – 16 school on the adjacent sites of the current Hawthorn Primary and Hawthorn High Schools

Community Impact Assessment

This assessment is prepared in accordance with guidance contained within Annex C of the new statutory guidance circular 011/2018, the School Organisation Code, which was implemented with effect from 1st November 2018. For this purpose, circular 011/2018 incorporates all statutory obligations contained within statutory guidance circular 006/2013.

This proposal is being consulted on between 15th October 2018 and 31st January 2019, as part of a wider consultation regarding the reorganisation of school provision in the Pontypridd and Hawthorn areas of Rhondda Cynon Taf. A detailed consultation document has been circulated to all prescribed consultees. Copies have been forwarded to the WG in compliance with consultation and publication guidelines. The document advises of the availability of all required Impact Assessments and informs all consultees as to how they can obtain copies if they require them.

At the time of the consultation, the percentage of pupils attending the respective schools who resided within the catchment areas of those schools was as follows:

- Hawthorn Primary – 46%
- Heol y Celyn Primary – 75%
- Hawthorn High – 85%

A significant percentage (40%) of the children attending Hawthorn Primary School, or 97 children in total actually resided in the adjacent catchment area of Heol y Celyn Primary; some actually live in the same street that Heol y Celyn is situated in. We do not consider therefore that transferring the English Medium stream of Heol y Celyn to the new 3 -16 provision at Hawthorn will have an adverse effect on either the children or the local community, as many parents are already exercising their right to choose this school for their children.

Appendix B – Community Impact Assessments

The two Primary schools offer breakfast clubs to all pupils at present; we will recommend that this provision should continue in the new 3 - 16 school if these proposals are agreed.

Neither of the two Primary schools are used outside of school hours by community organisations; any usage made is by school based groups such as the PTA. Both offer after school clubs to their pupils, Heol y Celyn has football, netball and gymnastics clubs on three evenings a week and Hawthorn has various clubs running on three evenings a week.

The Secondary school runs a full programme of extra-curricular activities after school each day. The full facilities of the current Secondary school will be available for the younger children to use, under supervision, so the programme of after school activities available to them can in fact be enhanced and extended.

There is a swimming pool on the High school site that is also open to the public; the organisation and running of this facility will not change as a result of these proposals.

This proposal seeks to enhance the school accommodation and facilities available to both Primary and Secondary aged pupils resident in the Hawthorn area , to cater for all children who may attend the school in the future from its catchment area (which will differ for the Primary and Secondary departments of the new proposed 3 – 16 School). This is not a rural area, and the existence of so many other schools and other community facilities within a short distance means that it is not deemed necessary to consider the enhancement of other community facilities that may exist in the local area.

The catchment area for Primary aged pupils who may attend the new 3 – 16 school will be that of the current Hawthorn Primary and the English medium stream of Heol y Celyn, combined. The distance between the Heol y Celyn site and the site of the new school is just 1 mile; this is the driving distance, the walking distance is shorter. Hawthorn Primary School is located immediately adjacent to the Hawthorn High School site and the distance between them is just a few metres.

No address within the extended Primary age catchment area will qualify for free home to school transport on the grounds of distance, as the furthest addresses from the new school site are all within the qualifying distance, which is 1.5 miles for Primary aged pupils in Rhondda Cynon Taf. The furthest address on the eastern side of the catchment area is 0.9 miles; on the upper western side of the catchment area it is 1.2 miles. It is not considered that these distances will be a barrier to any child who wishes to participate in the pre, and after school provision that will be offered at the new 3 - 16 School in the future; all pupils will be given equal access and encouragement to participate in as many activities as they wish. Having all Primary aged pupils in the Hawthorn area in one school, along with their elder siblings who may attend the Secondary department is considered to be of benefit to parents in

Appendix B – Community Impact Assessments

future, as their children's school provision will be located on one site, as opposed to being a mile apart as it is at present

The catchment area of the Secondary section of the new school will remain as it is for the existing Hawthorn High School, with the exception of the omission of the catchment area of Coedpenmaen Primary School, Pontypridd plus the Graig area of Pontypridd that is in the catchment area of Maesycod will also be omitted. Transportation for children will be provided in accordance with the Council's Learner Travel Policy in force at the time of the transfer of school provisions to the new 3 - 16 School. Assessments will be undertaken in accordance with legislation in force and will involve the application of both distance and dangerous route criteria, if applicable.

Proposal to close Cilfynydd Primary and Pontypridd High Schools and to create a new 3 – 16 school on site of the current Pontypridd High School

Community Impact Assessment

This assessment is prepared in accordance with guidance contained within Annex C of the new statutory guidance circular 011/2018, the School Organisation Code, which was implemented with effect from 1st November 2018. For this purpose, circular 011/2018 incorporates all statutory obligations contained within statutory guidance circular 006/2013.

This proposal was consulted on between 15th October 2018 and 31st January 2019, as part of a wider consultation regarding the reorganisation of school provision in the Pontypridd and Hawthorn areas of Rhondda Cynon Taf. A detailed consultation document was circulated to all prescribed consultees. Copies were forwarded to the WG in compliance with consultation and publication guidelines. The document advised of the availability of all required Impact Assessments and informed all consultees as to how they could obtain copies if they required them.

At the time of the consultation, the percentage of pupils attending the respective schools who resided within the catchment areas of those schools was as follows:

- Cilfynydd Primary – 90%
- Pontypridd High – 68%

A relatively large number of children (30) who reside in the Cilfynydd catchment area choose to attend Coedpenmaen Primary School, which is approx. 1 mile from Cilfynydd Primary. This number of children represents 27% of the total number of statutory age children who currently attend Cilfynydd Primary.

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Cilfynydd Primary School offers breakfast club to all pupils at present; we will recommend that this provision should continue in the new 3 - 16 school if these proposals are agreed.

Cilfynydd Primary is not used outside of school hours by community organisations; any usage made is by school based groups such as the PTA. The school offers after school clubs to its pupils on two evenings each week.

The Secondary school runs a full programme of extra-curricular activities after school each day. The full facilities of the current Secondary school will be available for the younger children to use, under supervision, so the programme of after school activities available to them can in fact be enhanced and extended.

There is a sports hall on the High school site that is widely used by community groups outside of school hours; the organisation and running of this facility will not change as a result of these proposals.

This proposal seeks to enhance the school accommodation and facilities available to both Primary and Secondary aged pupils resident in the Pontypridd area , to cater for all children who may attend the school in the future from its catchment area (which will differ for the Primary and Secondary departments of the new proposed 3 – 16 School). This is not a rural area, and the existence of so many other schools and other community facilities within a short distance means that it is not deemed necessary to consider the enhancement of other community facilities that may exist in the local area.

The distance between the existing school and new school sites for Primary aged pupils who may attend the new 3 – 16 school is just 0.9 of a mile; this is the driving distance, the walking distance is much shorter, via a footbridge over the A470 trunk road.

No address within the Primary age catchment area will qualify for free home to school transport on the grounds of distance, as the furthest addresses from the new school site are all within the qualifying distance, which is 1.5 miles for Primary aged pupils in Rhondda Cynon Taf. The furthest address on the eastern side of the Cilfynydd catchment area to the site of Pontypridd High (Albion Court) is 1.4 miles by car and 1.1 miles on foot. It is not considered this distance will be a barrier to any child who wishes to participate in the pre, and after school provision that will be offered at the new 3 - 16 School in the future; all pupils will be given equal access and encouragement to participate in as many activities as they wish. Having all Primary aged pupils in the Cilfynydd area of Pontypridd in one school, along with their elder siblings who may attend the Secondary department is considered to be of benefit to parents in future, as their children's school provision will be located on one site, as opposed to being almost a mile apart as it is at present

The catchment area of the Secondary section of the new school will remain as it is for the existing Pontypridd High School, with the addition of the catchment area of Coedpenmaen Primary School. The Graig area of Pontypridd that is in

Appendix B – Community Impact Assessments

the catchment area of Maesycoed Primary School, will also be included. Transportation for children will be provided in accordance with the Council's Learner Travel Policy in force at the time of the transfer of school provisions to the new 3 - 16 School. Assessments will be undertaken in accordance with legislation in force and will involve the application of both distance and dangerous route criteria, if applicable.

Proposal to close YGG Pont Sion Norton and Heol y Celyn Primary School (dual language) and to open a new, enlarged Welsh Medium Community Primary School on the former Heol y Celyn site.

Community Impact Assessment

This assessment is prepared in accordance with guidance contained within Annex C of the new statutory guidance circular 011/2018, the School Organisation Code, which was implemented with effect from 1st November 2018. For this purpose, circular 011/2018 incorporates all statutory obligations contained within statutory guidance circular 006/2013.

This proposal was consulted on between 15th October 2018 and 31st January 2019, as part of a wider consultation regarding the reorganisation of school provision in the Pontypridd and Hawthorn areas of Rhondda Cynon Taf. A detailed consultation document was circulated to all prescribed consultees. Copies were forwarded to the WG in compliance with consultation and publication guidelines. The document advised of the availability of all required Impact Assessments and informed all consultees as to how they could obtain copies if they required them.

At the time of the consultation, the percentage of pupils attending the respective schools who reside within the catchment areas of those schools was as follows:

- YGG Pont Sion Norton – 91%
- Heol y Celyn (Welsh Unit only) – 88%

A relatively large number of children (30) who reside in the Heol y Celyn catchment area choose to attend other Welsh Medium schools in the area, including YGG Pont Sion Norton and YGG Evan James. These pupils may possibly choose to return to their catchment school if a new, full Welsh Medium school is constructed on the Heol y Celyn site.

Both schools offer breakfast club to all pupils at present; we will recommend that this provision should continue in the new Welsh Medium Primary school if these proposals are agreed.

Appendix B – Community Impact Assessments

Heol y Celyn Primary is not used outside of school hours by community organisations; any usage made is by school based groups such as the PTA. The school offers after school clubs to its pupils on three evenings each week.

YGG Pont Sion Norton hosts Welsh for Adults classes on one evening a week, organised by the University of South Wales. Menter Iaith also host their 'Clwb Carco' after school provision for pupils on two evenings each week, in addition the school itself offers their own after school clubs on two evenings each week.

The new school will be strongly encouraged to continue with the after school and adult education provision currently offered, with opportunity to expand and extend this if there is recognised demand.

This proposal seeks to enhance the school accommodation and facilities available to pupils who require a Welsh Medium education in the Pontypridd area. In addition to improving provision, it is hoped that a new school with 21st Century Schools facilities will encourage parents to choose a Welsh Medium education for their children, thus assisting the Council in achieving one of the key aims outlined in its Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP). This is not a rural area, and the existence of so many other schools and other community facilities within a short distance means that it is not deemed necessary to consider the enhancement of other community facilities that may exist in the local area.

The catchment area of the new school will encompass that of the existing two schools. The relocation of YGG Pont Sion Norton to the Heol y Celyn site will mean that all pupils resident within this school's current catchment area will qualify for, and receive free home to school transport, as they will reside more than 1.5 miles from the new school. No child resident in the Heol y Celyn part of the catchment will qualify as none will reside more than 1 mile from the school. It is not considered that distance to school will be a barrier to any child who wishes to participate in the pre and after school provision that will be offered in the new school; it is estimated the maximum length of time any child will have to take to travel to the school will be 20 minutes.

Transportation for children will be provided in accordance with the Council's Learner Travel Policy in force at the time of the transfer of school provisions to the new site. Assessments will be undertaken in accordance with legislation in force and will involve the application of both distance and available route criteria, if applicable.

Appendix C

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Directorate: Education
Service Area: 21st Century Schools
Responsible officer: Lisa Howell
Date: Updated 1st of July 2019

This Equality Impact Assessment is written in association with the Community Impact Assessment, the Welsh Language Impact Assessment and also in conjunction with the information as detailed within the associated Consultation Document published in October 2018, the Consultation Report published in March 2019, and the Objection Report which will be published within 7 days of a decision on the proposals being taken.

1. Name of project: Reorganisation of School Provision in the Pontypridd and Hawthorn areas

The Project is to:

- Develop post 16 centres of excellence based at Bryncelynog Comprehensive School, Beddau and Coleg y Cymoedd, Nantgarw.
- 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 closing Heol y Celyn Primary School, which is a dual language school, and YGG Pont Sion Norton; Welsh Medium learners attending both schools will transfer to a new, Welsh medium school, that will be constructed on the former site of Heol y Celyn;
- Amend the catchment areas of Pontypridd High and Hawthorn High to better meet and match the demand for school places;
- Improve the learning environments for learners with additional learning needs (ALN).

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 learners have a high quality, viable and sustainable 21st Century learning environment.

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 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 learners educated through the Welsh medium at Heol-Y-Celyn will transfer to the new school and the Heol-Y-Celyn learners educated through the English Medium will transfer to the new 3 – 16 school at Hawthorn (see above);
- Amend the catchment areas for learners aged 11-16 of two of the LA maintained secondary schools by:
 - Transferring the Graig area of Pontypridd (that is part of the catchment area of Maesycod 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)

2. Proposal Aims. Consider why the proposal is needed? What does the Council hope to achieve by it?
How will the Council ensure it works as intended?

Detailed information of the aims of the proposal is included within the Consultation Document to reorganise primary schools, secondary schools and sixth form provision in the greater Pontypridd area, which was published in October 2018. This has been widely circulated to all consultees and is still available to view online on the Council's website.

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, financial management, 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 learners;
- 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, or meeting Estyn's criteria as a school in need of significant improvement or special measures.

Consideration for these proposals has been aligned with the 21st Century Schools and Education Programme's long term strategic investment in the education estate throughout Wales. The priorities for this investment are:

- Addressing growth in demand for Welsh medium education;
- Reducing surplus capacity and inefficiency in the system;
- Expansion of schools in areas of increased demand for educational services;

- Addressing condition of educational assets;
- Making assets available for community use where demand exists, to optimise the infrastructure and resources for public services;
- Addressing specific demand for places in faith based provision.

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

- 3 of the 5 schools have surplus places in excess of 25%;
- The combined maintenance backlog of the schools is over £4M;
- Key Stage 4 outcomes:
 - The educational performance of Pontypridd High for L2+ from 2016-18 has been below the all Wales average for 2 out of the last 3 years and above the RCT average for all 3 years.
 - The educational performance of Hawthorn High Level 2+ from 2016-18 has been below the all Wales and RCT average for 2 out of the last 3 years.
 - The educational performance at both Bryncelynnog and Cardinal Newman for L2+ outcomes have been above both the local and national averages for the last 3 years 2016-18.
- Key Stage 5 outcomes:
 - The percentage of learners achieving 3A* - C grades in Hawthorn High School was below both local and national averages for 3 out of the 4 years from 2015-18, with significant improvement made in 2018.
 - In Pontypridd High School the percentage of learners achieving 3A* - C grades was below both local and national averages from 2015-18.
 - Outcomes for the same measures were more variable in Cardinal Newman RC School over the same 4 year period.
 - In Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School the outcomes for 3A*-C were above the local and national averages for 3 out of 4 years from 2015-18.

The sixth form pupil retention rates at the 4 secondary schools that are included within the proposals are low, as are the post-16 pupil projections. However, cumulatively they will provide the numbers needed to deliver a sustainable and viable sixth form. Deteriorating pupil numbers and the consequent reduction in post 16 funding from the Welsh Government has resulted in Cardinal Newman School, Pontypridd High School and Hawthorn High School having cumulative deficit budgets of circa £1.5M.

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.

Educational Considerations

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 and young people, 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 phases/stages and further develop expertise;
 - Provide a more appropriate skills-based curriculum and wider extra-curricular opportunities which should improve attendance and educational outcomes;
 - Improve 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, technology and learning resources available to the benefit of all learners;
 - Enable greater continuity in teaching and learning, and in the levels of support provided for vulnerable groups of learners;
 - Allow for the potential for financial savings in terms of staffing structures and the purchase of services, which accrue in 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 over time.
- **Improve leadership and management;**
 - Provides the opportunity for the headteacher to distribute key leadership tasks such as child protection, literacy, numeracy, additional learning needs, wellbeing and attendance 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 and collaboration.

These benefits apply equally to mainstream learners and learners with additional learning needs (ALN). 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 learners. 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 learners by strengthening management arrangements, improving the effective and efficient use of resources, and better ensuring a quality educational experience. The percentage of learners opting to stay on in their respective school for a sixth form education in September 2018, was very low. This ranged from 32-36% in Cardinal Newman, Pontypridd and Hawthorn High Schools and 44% in Bryncelynog. A viable sixth form, both educationally and financially should, ideally, have at least 250 students. In January 2019 (source: PLASC return), Hawthorn High School had 83 sixth form learners attending, Pontypridd High 101, and Cardinal Newman 71, totalling 255 between the three schools. Bryncelynog Comprehensive had 144 sixth form learners at the same point in time.
- The delivery of post-16 education is inefficient and for many the educational experience could be considerably better and outcomes improved. 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 785 in the greater Pontypridd area alone. In order to sustain post 16 education in schools with low retention rates, valuable education funds are 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 £600 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 £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 learner interactions, which diminishes the effectiveness of learning. Poor collaborative learning experiences for learners and the restricted choice of subjects available in schools with low retention rates is adversely impacting on the quality of post 16 education. Where providers have made the greatest progress in collaborating across schools to reduce inefficiencies and improve effectiveness, learner opportunities and interactions have increased. However, travel between providers is seen by some learners as a barrier to accessing a wider choice of courses and continuity in teaching in learning.
- Choice is often dependent upon learner postal code and budget deficits suggest that consortia arrangements are not having the desired impact. There are no equitable post 16 options entitlement for learners in the County Borough and the proposals offer an opportunity to improve choice and the quality of learner experience and engagement.

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 rates of progression to Higher Education and employment.
- **Choice** – improving the breadth and depth of curriculum on offer creating greater choice for all young people so that they can choose learning pathways that best enable them to mix and match vocational, academic and occupational qualifications and experience.
- **Participation** – increasing participation and engagement due to the right curriculum offer
- **Equality** – to ensure every sixth form student in the Pontypridd area is able to access the curriculum of choice and a range of educational pathways suitable to their individual needs.
- **Ability to respond to future learners, community and business needs** – improving qualifications and employability, and re-skilling and up-skilling the population of Rhondda Cynon Taf as the commercial environment changes, thus allowing 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, budget deficits and the duplication of provision between providers.

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 learners in terms of curriculum planning and the quality of teaching and learning. In addition, 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 good progress. The cross phase learning and communication with staff is having a positive effect on learners. The all through school eases the transition process between the key stages and staff and teachers know the children and families and carers well as they progress through the year groups. This enables them to assist learners where additional support is required. The School has strong leadership, which creates a shared vision that resonates with all phases, all staff are fully engaged and the school benefits from ‘coherence and continuity’ which assists learners learning progression.

In September 2018, a further 3 all-through schools were established in the Rhondda, two 3-16 schools and a 3-19 school, and in September 2019 a further 3-19 school will be established.

Another important benefit of all-through 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:

- Enhanced opportunities for specialist teaching and roles across school phases/stages;
- Access for primary phase learners to the specialist facilities of secondary phase;
- Providing scope for acceleration programmes for more able and talented learners;
- Enhanced opportunities for providing a robust and graduated response for learners with additional learning needs;
- Joint professional development opportunities and learning;
- Directing resources at early intervention and prevention;
- Planning a seamless curriculum and opportunities for ensuring continuity in teaching and learning;
- Sharing equipment, hardware and accommodation;
- Increasing the range and capacity for extra-curricular/after school learning;

- Creating common administrative appointments.

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 transition and integration into Year 7 is seamless regardless of where learners have received their primary education. No pupil will be disadvantaged when they join the new school at Year 7 and opportunities for strengthening cluster arrangements have been adopted in the clusters of the new all-through schools through the development of leadership programmes and the development of transition programmes.

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

In making the proposed changes, many things will be different for the learners from the Pontypridd area, depending on parents exercising their right of choice, but some things will remain the same. Possible differences could include

- 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;
- Some learners who travel to school by home to school transport might have difficulties in accessing activities before and after school hours, although this would clearly be a potential issue for all learners accessing home to school transport;
- Some vulnerable learners (e.g. learners with ALN, mental health needs, young carers, children looked after etc) might experience difficulties in adapting to home to school transport and/or to a new school or college environment;
- Some learners from RCT and neighbouring authorities will have to travel to Cardiff for faith based education;
- For sixth form students, there will be less travelling during the school day to access the curriculum and therefore there will be greater opportunities for more unstructured/informal interaction between learners and teachers during the school day. The time saved from not travelling to other schools during the school day to access post 16 consortia arrangements can also be used to focus on independent study or completing course work;
- Being in classes with predominantly their own age group, the teacher will be better able to offer primary learners with a wider and more varied curriculum to support the needs of a range of learners, including the most vulnerable;

- There will be more collaborative learning opportunities and access to good peer models to enhance learning and mentoring;
- There will be increased opportunities for establishing extracurricular activities and teams within larger schools due to enhanced staffing and improved facilities;
- 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; and
- Strengthened community links and access to improve sporting and recreational areas.

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 communities of the Pontypridd and Hawthorn High School in accordance with the seven core aims set out above.

In addition, we consider that these proposals, contribute positively to Rhondda Cynon Taf's well-being agenda as well as each of the 7 goals of the Well-being of Future Generation Act Wales 2015:

1. A prosperous Wales
2. A resilient Wales
3. A healthier Wales
4. A more equal Wales
5. A Wales of cohesive communities
6. A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language

7. A globally responsible Wales

In addition, an assessment of the proposals on The Well-being of Future Generations Act's five ways of working is detailed as follows:

<p><u>Long Term</u> (The importance of balancing short term needs with the need to safeguard the ability to also meet long term needs)</p>	<p>How does your project / activity balance short-term need with the long-term and planning for the future?</p> <p>Maintaining the existing educational premises within Rhondda Cynon Taf places enormous strain on Council resources. It is recognised that there is an opportunity through the 21st Century Schools funding to manage these pressures more efficiently and effectively in future years.</p> <p>The long term vision for RCT is to provide all learners with the best opportunity possible to achieve their full potential through the means of education by providing access to the very best learning opportunities with modern, flexible facilities appropriate for delivering the new curriculum.</p> <p>Improved learning environments will act as a stimulus to creating a better future through delivering brand new 21st Century Schools facilities for our young learners through all phases of their educational journeys from foundation phase through to delivering a more efficient and effective post-16 provision.</p>
<p><u>Prevention</u> (How acting to prevent problems occurring or getting worse may help public bodies meet their objectives)</p>	<p>How does your project / activity put resources into preventing problems occurring or getting worse?</p> <p>The Council recognises the challenges of providing everyone with the facilities and opportunities to receive an excellent education in accessible 21st Century facilities. These proposals aim to enhance and improve the educational environment for all 3-19 year olds affected, and create enhanced opportunities for the development of more specialist roles and strengthen the graduated responses for learners with additional learning needs. The post 16 proposals will ensure that resources intended for key stage 3 and 4 learners will be redirected to enhance the quality of provision.</p>

<p><u>Integration</u> (Considering how the public body's well-being objectives may impact upon each of the wellbeing goals, on their objectives, or on the objectives of other public bodies)</p>	<p>How does your project / activity deliver economic, social, environmental and cultural outcomes together?</p> <p>The Council recognises the importance of the Welsh language as a vital element to achieve and reinforce social and cultural benefits. These proposals will deliver more Welsh medium places in the Pontypridd area, opportunities for wider community collaboration and participation, more sustainable educational buildings meeting BREEAM targets all providing a more integrated and improved learning experience.</p>
<p><u>Collaboration</u> (Acting in collaboration with any other person (or different parts of the body itself) that could help the body meet its well-being objectives)</p>	<p>How does your project / activity involve working together with partners (internal and external) to deliver well-being objectives?</p> <p>As a part of this school organisation programme the Council has already consulted with thousands of learners, staff, parents and carers, throughout the Pontypridd area. If these proposals are to go ahead then this collaboration will continue when further consultation will be undertaken to ensure that all stakeholders and partners have an opportunity to shape the 21st Century Schools provision to ensure benefits and well-being opportunities are maximised.</p>
<p><u>Involvement</u> (The importance of involving people with an interest in achieving the well-being goals, and ensuring that those people reflect the diversity of the area which the body serves)</p>	<p>How does your project / facility involve stakeholders with an interest in achieving the well-being goals? How do those stakeholders reflect the diversity of the area?</p> <p>Consultation meetings were held with the student councils of all of the schools directly affected by the proposals, as well as with staff and governors, and open evenings were held in various locations throughout the area which were open to the public. All comments that were submitted during the consultation process were considered by Cabinet.</p> <p>Moving forward, engagement with learners, staff and RCT residents will continue and input and information gleaned from these sessions will shape the new school facilities. In addition, information gathered will influence and inform our future projects so all consultation undertaken shapes the legacy of the 21st Century Schools Programme.</p>

Benefits of a new school building for YGG, Pont Sion Norton

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. This will 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 to close YGG Pont Sion Norton and construct a brand new, purpose built school, with additional pupil capacity 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 build a brand new school, constructed to 21st Century Schools standards and with an increased capacity of 480 pupils plus Nursery provision, will work towards achieving these targets in this area of the County Borough.

Following the recent consultation on the Welsh Government's draft Welsh in Education Strategic Plans Regulations (Wales) 2019 guidance which advocates an increase in Welsh medium education provision for all learners, including those with ALN, and in accordance with the ALN and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018, RCT will seek future approval to consult on establishing a Welsh medium Foundation Phase and Key Stage 2 ALN provision in the new school.

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

As previously stated, all schools involved in the proposal in the Pontypridd and Hawthorn area will close and new schools will be opened with a new governing body. These include the new Welsh medium primary school, and both 3-16 schools. Should the proposal proceed, all the proposed new schools 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 school, agreeing new staff structures and undertaking the appointment process for all of 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 structures for the Hawthorn and Pontypridd 3-16 schools will need to be developed for the schools taking into account a number of factors, including delivering a curriculum without sixth form provision.

The Council recommends that if the proposal is 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 Aberdare areas.

3. Who does it apply to? Please indicate by highlighting or deleting as appropriate

Members of the public

School Staff

Children and young people aged 3-19 years in the Greater Pontypridd area

Parents and carers of the children living in the Greater Pontypridd area.

4. Indicate whether this is a new proposal, a review or a proposed cessation: All 3

5. Identifying Impacts – Please choose whether the proposals will have a positive, negative or neutral effect on **each** issue below:

People / issues to consider	Impact policy / practice will have			If a positive or negative impact is identified, explain why? P – Positive Ne – Negative Neu- Neutral
	Positive	Negative	Neutral (No impact)	
Age (young and old)				<p>Improved learning facilities and environments for all, including:</p> <p>P - Creation of viable, sustainable and efficient schools well equipped to deliver a broad and balanced curriculum for all</p> <p>P - A state of the art new build fit for the 21st Century and designed with a focus on the diverse needs of learners, the new curriculum and the successful inclusion of all learners.</p> <p>P - Excellent school facilities that offer a positive pupil learning experience that benefits from access to the latest technology, and modern specialist facilities.</p> <p>P – Access to 21st Century facilities that promote life-long learning opportunities that aim to enable all learners to reach their potential.</p> <p>P- Provision of safe and secure learning environments for all learners.</p> <p>P – Modern and stimulating learning environments that are accessible to all.</p> <p>P - Primary learners will have access to specialist facilities on their own school site.</p>

People / issues to consider	Impact policy / practice will have			If a positive or negative impact is identified, explain why? P – Positive Ne – Negative Neu- Neutral
	Positive	Negative	Neutral (No impact)	
				<p>P - Secondary learners have potential access to on-site work experience and volunteering opportunities and involvement in buddying and mentoring schemes.</p> <p>P – Due to economies of scale, enhanced access to specialist roles/ support to improve the lives of children, young and their families/carers.</p> <p>P - Improved facilities that will enable learners to access enhanced extra-curricular opportunities and cultural activities which can help develop relationships within communities.</p> <p>P - Improved transition between the primary and secondary school sectors.</p> <p>P – strengthened cluster arrangements to ensure consistency of approaches across settings and robust transition approaches</p> <p>Ne – Some vulnerable learners might become unsettled about a change in educational environment/transport arrangements.</p> <p>P – Access to more independent learning opportunities and facilities for post-16 learners thus improving outcomes, enhancing preparation for higher education and employment, and reducing the risks of learners becoming NEET.</p> <p>P - Larger sixth forms will reduce the need for consortia</p>

People / issues to consider	Impact policy / practice will have			If a positive or negative impact is identified, explain why? P – Positive Ne – Negative Neu- Neutral
	Positive	Negative	Neutral (No impact)	
				<p>arrangements and travelling between sites during the school day thereby maximising opportunities for independent learning</p> <p>P – Enhanced learning pathways and subject choice at post 16 which will improve engagement and the higher education and employment prospects of all learners.</p> <p>P - Improved life chances for young people by providing an appropriate range of relevant courses and qualifications, including more vocational learning routes where appropriate</p> <p>P – Increased participation in learning for learners beyond statutory school age</p> <p>P – More opportunities for community learning, participation and engagement supporting the health and well-being agenda. Further information can be found on page 37, 63 and 64 of the Objection Report.</p> <p>P – Attractive career opportunities for high quality leaders and teachers</p> <p>Ne – Despite robust management of change processes, change may impact on staff morale in the short-term</p> <p>P – a new 21st Century School will impact positively on staff and</p>

People / issues to consider	Impact policy / practice will have			If a positive or negative impact is identified, explain why? P – Positive Ne – Negative Neu- Neutral
	Positive	Negative	Neutral (No impact)	
				<p>learner wellbeing</p> <p>Ne – Some staff that enjoy teaching to A level may not wish to remain in a 3-16 school</p> <p>Ne - Increased travel distances for some primary school learners and some sixth form learners</p> <p>Ne - Increased travel distances for some parents and carers, including pedestrian and vehicular travel.</p> <p>P – generous home to school transport policy</p> <p>Neu - Environmental issues in relation to pollution levels around the A470. Further information can be found on pages 18-19 of the Consultation Report.</p>
Disability (remember to consider the different types of disability)	Yes			<p>New build and refurbished school facilities will be fully compliant with the Equality Act (2010) and will be fully accessible to all users; including learners, families and carers with ALN. This will promote positive inclusion opportunities for learners with a range of disabilities. Refurbished and remodelled premises will have reasonable adjustments undertaken to make the buildings as accessible as possible.</p> <p>The design stage will involve input from a range of partners to</p>

People / issues to consider	Impact policy / practice will have			If a positive or negative impact is identified, explain why? P – Positive Ne – Negative Neu- Neutral
	Positive	Negative	Neutral (No impact)	
				<p>ensure that new or refurbished buildings will meet the needs of learners with wide ranging needs including, learning disabilities, sensory needs, autistic spectrum disorders, physical/medical and mental health needs. A robust evaluation of Band A developments will inform the planning of Band B developments to ensure that these are future proof and fit for purpose.</p> <p>Larger school premises and staffing structures have inevitable economies of scale and scope for enhancing the number of specialist and supportive posts to meet the needs of vulnerable learners and families.</p> <p>Hawthorn High School will have an established key stage 3 and 4 learning support class provision. Consideration will also be given to developing some post 16 independent study or quiet space for learners with ALN in the new post 16 centre of excellence in Bryncelynnog School.</p> <p>There is also an intention to seek future approval to consult on proposals to establish Welsh medium ALN provision in the new Welsh medium school, if approved.</p>
Gender			Yes	<p>New schools for 11-16 and 11-19 year olds will have access to some gender neutral toilet/changing facilities and the same consideration will be given in schools where the toilets/changing are in need of remodelling/refurbishment.</p>
Gender Reassignment			Yes	<p>If the proposals proceed, the privacy of changing and toilet facilities will be considered at the design stage in full consultation</p>

People / issues to consider	Impact policy / practice will have			If a positive or negative impact is identified, explain why? P – Positive Ne – Negative Neu- Neutral
	Positive	Negative	Neutral (No impact)	
				with pupils and staff.
Race			Yes	The proposals will not have a differential impact upon one particular ethnic group as all school settings would be available to all.
Religion or Belief		Yes		<p>Ne - Learners attending the sixth form provision at Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive school will have to travel to St David's College, Cardiff, if they wish to receive post 16 education through the Catholic faith. To mitigate this potentially negative impact, free transportation will be provided for learners resident in RCT; learners who reside in other County Boroughs will need to check their entitlement with their home local authority.</p> <p>Further information on this can be found in the Consultation Document pages 8-11 and in the Objection Report pages 14-25.</p> <p>The senior management in all schools will be required to manage needs and any significant change in diversity in terms of religion or beliefs as a result of the implementation of the proposals.</p>
Sexual Orientation			Yes	Neu - The schools will admit all pupils, irrespective of sexual orientation. The Council's procedure for managing staffing changes arising from reorganisation, will be robustly informed by management of change and equal opportunity policies and practices.
Welsh Language	Yes			P - A new Welsh Medium school, built to 21 st Century Schools standards, with additional capacity provided to allow more choice for parents as to which language medium they can choose for their children.

People / issues to consider	Impact policy / practice will have			If a positive or negative impact is identified, explain why? P – Positive Ne – Negative Neu- Neutral
	Positive	Negative	Neutral (No impact)	
				<p>The proposals provide enhanced capacity for accessing Welsh medium education and are likely to result in an increase in the number of learners accessing Welsh medium provision. If proposals are approved, consideration will also be given to consulting on proposals to establish Welsh medium foundation phase and KS2 learning support class provision in the new school. The proposals are also likely to increase the opportunities for childcare facilities to support working families – including early years, breakfast and after school clubs.</p> <p>Further information on this can be found in the Consultation Document pages 20-22 and in the Objection Report pages 37-64.</p> <p>All signage will be bi-lingual and consideration will also be given to the needs of learners with specific types of ALN e.g. sensory, medical or physical needs.</p>
Carers		Yes		Ne - Increased travel distances for some parents and carers.

EVIDENCE

6. What evidence is there to support your conclusions? Please indicate below

Reports of the Director of Education to Cabinet - October 2018.
Public Consultation Document on the Proposal – October 2018
Public Consultation Report on the Proposal – March 2019

7. In areas where a negative impact has been identified are there any ways that the negative effect could be reduced or removed? Please indicate below and include the evidence on which you have based your conclusion.

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 all learners, irrespective of gender, ethnicity or disability. To reiterate, these proposals are not seen as being detrimental to any particular group of learners, they are intended to improve educational provision for all as learners as if agreed, they will access stimulating, modern and fully accessible 21st Century learning environments. The requirements of the ALN and Educational Tribunal (2018) Act and existing SEN legislation will be met to ensure that appropriate provision will be put in place to meet a wide range of learner needs. This will be achieved through effective early intervention and preventative approaches and robust person centred plans and bespoke provision where appropriate. For those learners who may not cope well with the change in their educational environment, strengthened transitional approaches will be adopted in line with person centred planning principles and current SEN legislation. For learners with significant ALN, this would include access to Individual Education Plans, Pastoral Support Plans or increasingly, as the ALNET Act is implemented, Individual Development Plans. Provision, support and intervention strategies will be put in place for vulnerable learners who require support to meet their identified needs. This should be funded from Individual School Budgets or delegated Additional Needs Funding as appropriate. Further information on issues relating to this can be found in the Objection Report on pages 14, 26, 29 and 33.

For learners with other needs or vulnerabilities e.g. children or young people who are carers or looked after, then a robust multi-agency approach will need to be adopted to meet their needs. Data suggests that there a significant proportions of learners who are currently high on vulnerability indicators accessing post 16 college placements through choice, rather than their mainstream local school. In terms of support for vulnerable learners, all secondary schools have access to school based counsellors, Youth Engagement and Participation Officers, Emotional Literacy Support Assistants, Thrive practitioners, pastoral support and wellbeing staff. In addition, every secondary schools has a nominated Young Carers Champion or a Designated Children Looked After Lead to whom young carers or children who are looked after are able to go to for support and guidance. Specialist advice and guidance can also be provided by the Council's Young Carers Officer or the dedicated Children Looked After Team in the Access and Inclusion Service. These professionals can also act as advocates for learners when considering post 16 options and securing appropriate support and transport.

The new provisions under consideration, will have greater scope to develop specialist teams to meet the needs of vulnerable learners as the size of the organisations will have obvious economies of scale.

In order to ensure effective transition arrangements, a Middle Leaders Programme has been established to develop excellent transitional plans and cluster based approaches. Transition plans will be developed and additional funding will be provided to developed leadership skill and capacity and to ensure that robust cluster based transitional approaches are developed and adopted to mitigate the risks.

There is a statutory duty placed upon the 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.

Some Primary Schools learners will have to travel longer distances to schools, likewise sixth form learners may have longer journeys to the new post-16 provisions. In the case of the primary school learners, it is highly unlikely that any child will have further than 1.5 miles to travel to their new school and not qualify for home to school transport; this is the distance at which RCTCBC currently provides home to school transport, which is more generous than that provided for by legislation, i.e. 2 miles. It is the full responsibility of parents to transport their children to school where they do not qualify for free provision, they also have to determine and provide appropriate supervision for children and decide the mode of transport to be used. Free provision will be made available where learners meet the qualifying criteria.

With regard to the proposed alternative sixth form centres for Hawthorn and Pontypridd High School at Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School and Coleg y Cymoedd, learners 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.

Learners 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. For learners' resident outside of RCT will need to check their entitlement with their home local authority (LA). However, there is currently a bus that transports Caerphilly learners (if eligible) to and from St David's College. Learners eligible to free school meals will still access their entitlement at post 16.

The effective transportation of learners with complex ALN and travel training will be an integral part of preparing learners for transition at post 16 and arrangements will be informed by person centred plan.

Full assessments of all available walking routes will be undertaken to ensure that they meet all safety criteria and standards laid down in the Learner Travel Measure 2014. Traffic Impact Assessments will be undertaken and improvements will be made

where identified. Further information on the impact on travel and transport can be found in the Consultation Report on pages 9 and 20-21 and in the Objection Report on pages 14, 16 and 41-50, and further information on the environmental impact can be found on pages 18-19 in the Consultation Report.

The Principal of St David's College is committed to partnership working with Rhondda Cynon Taf and has provided the necessary reassurances that there is capacity to meet increased pupil numbers. Moving forward Carinal Newman will be considered as a feeder school and such applications will be given appropriate consideration.

All of the primary schools under consideration as part of these proposals have breakfast club provisions, which are not only considered to be of benefit to the learners but can greatly assist working parents and carers as well. These clubs will continue if the new 'all through' 3 - 16 schools are created. Many schools also offer some after school provision which has the same benefits as the breakfast clubs; it is hoped that transferring primary aged learners to school sites that have improved facilities will allow for the expansion of this provision. Governing bodies will be encouraged to establish provisions as these are not a statutory requirement.

Every attempt will be made to frequently engage with staff during the management of change process and to ensure that communication is frequent and HR support is readily accessible. If staff are displaced every attempt will be made to provide interim arrangements or redeployment opportunities.

INVOLVEMENT & CONSULTATION

9. What involvement and consultation has been done in relation to this (or similar) policy and what are the results?

In accordance with the School Organisation Code there is no requirement to hold consultation meetings, however in order to fully engage with consultees and to enable Elected Members to make a decision based on the concerns of the wider community to understand the issues raised.

In addition, the prescribed consultation period within the Code is 42 days but Council gave the public 108 days in which to respond, which is more than double the statutory timescales allotted within the Code.

This extended statutory period was undertaken to provide additional opportunities for all consultees to make their views known and the following consultation meetings/ open events were held.

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

School Affected	Group	Time/Date	Venue
YGG, Pont Sion Norton	School Council	Tuesday, 20 th November 2018, 2.30 pm	YGG, Pont Sion Norton
Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School	School Council	Thursday, 22 nd November 2018, 2 pm	Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School
Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School	School Council	Thursday, 22 nd November 2018, 2 pm	Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School
Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School	Parents and public drop in session	Tuesday, 15 th January 2019, 3 – 6 pm	Cardinal Newman RC Comprehensive School
Bryncelynnog Comprehensive School	Parents and public drop in session	Wednesday, 16 th 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, 17 th 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, 22 nd 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, 24 th January 2019, 3 – 6 pm	Pontypridd High School

Interested parties were welcomed to put their views in writing to:

Director of Education and Inclusion Services
Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council
Ty Trevithick
Abercynon CF45 4UQ

e-mail schoolplanning@rctcbc.gov.uk

A Consultation Report was published in March 2019 following the Consultation period. This report contained a summary of the issues raised by consultees, a response to the issues raised, and Estyn's view on the merits of the proposal. This document is available to view online on the Council's website. However all comment and issues raised during this period were provided to Cabinet to review all concerns and issues raised prior to a decision being made.

Since publishing the Consultation Report, Cabinet agreed to move on with the school organisation process and Statutory Notices on the proposals were published triggering an Objection Period which was held from April 30th until May 31st 2019.

The objections received during this period have been collated and all have been provided to Cabinet Members to review prior to a decision on the implementation of the proposals being made. The Objection Report will be published within 7 days of a decision being reached.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

10. What arrangements have you put in place to review the actual impact of the proposals once it has been implemented?

The Council's school improvement team will be fully engaged in supporting all head teachers, school staff and the governing bodies of all schools involved during the first year or so, or for however long they require such support. Support with staff recruitment and for the temporary governing bodies, including a clerking service will be provided by the HR Division and the Governor Support service. Perception surveys will be undertaken with parents/carers, pupils and staff after the schools have been in operation for 6 months and annually thereafter. Feedback received will be evaluated and any necessary actions implemented will be shared with learner, parents/carers, school staff and governing bodies. In addition, these outcomes will be shared with the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee and Welsh Government 21st Century Schools and Colleges Team.

ADDRESSING THE IMPACT

11. What option have you chosen as a result of your impact assessment?

Following a robust and comprehensive consultation process, the evidence suggests that the rationale for implementing the proposals for change as outlined in the Consultation Document and summarised in this and previous reports remains entirely appropriate and valid.

Please indicate and provide reasons for your decision.

The evidence outlined in our consultation document and subsequent consultation report demonstrates that this is the right approach. The proposals will be submitted to Elected Members for consideration.

12. ACTION PLAN

You now need to complete the EIA action plan to outline how you will act on any impacts identified. You may need to prioritise in terms of what actions you choose to take and the timescales to complete them in. In general terms, you should try to act on all negative impacts unless there is a clear reason as to why this is not possible. You could also identify actions for positive or neutral impacts where appropriate i.e. to outline and further promote a positive impact or to outline how to make something have a positive impact instead of a neutral one.

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT ACTION PLAN

Action	Responsible Officer	Timescale for Actions	Timescale and actions for Review	Measures to be taken to evaluate effects of actions
Publish Objection Report with objection summary	Director of Education and Inclusion Services	Before the end of 7 days beginning with the day of its determination		
Establish a professional learning forum for core subject area leaders	Heads of Primary and Secondary Achievement	By September 2021	April 2022	Stakeholder feedback and evaluation of programme
Half-termly School Improvement Forums to be established to facilitate the sharing of good practice within and between schools	Heads of Primary and Secondary Achievement	By September 2022	½ termly from Sept 2022	Routine analysis of performance data and challenge advisor/senior officer feedback
Potential Middle Leaders Programme – Excellent Transition Practice to be extended	Heads Primary and Secondary Achievement	Ongoing but new candidates identified by September 2021	April 2022	Stakeholder feedback and evaluation of programme
Potential Middle Leaders Programme – Leading from the Centre to be extended	Heads Primary and Secondary Achievement	Ongoing but new candidates identified by September 2021	April 2022	Stakeholder feedback and evaluation of programme
Support to develop curriculum plans with	Heads Primary and Secondary	By September 2021	April 2022	Development of robust and achievable

Headteachers	Achievement			curriculum plans
Professional learning forum to be established to include all of RCT's all through schools	Heads Primary and Secondary Achievement	By September 2021	April 2022	Stakeholder feedback and evaluation
Early appointment of Heads to ensure robust planning and preparation for the new schools	Head of HR/Director of Education in partnership with Governing Bodies	By September 2021	Termly support and challenge meetings following appointment	Successful completion of performance targets
Programme of transition opportunities to be developed across cluster schools to ensure consistency and quality of learner experience	Heads Primary and Secondary Achievement	By September 2021	Termly	Effective implementation of transition plan/s
Early identification of vulnerable learners to ensure robust person centred planning in partnership with parents/carers and external agencies where appropriate to ease transition	School ALNCo/CLA or Young Carers Lead in partnership with Access and Inclusion Officers, Young Carers Team and parents/carers.	By September 2021	April 2022	All appropriate person centred plans to be developed dependent on presenting needs. This could include: Pastoral Support Plan; Personal Education Plan; Individual Education/Behaviour Plan; Statement of SEN; or Individual Development Plan.
Early engagement with staff members and trade unions to ensure effective	HR	By September 2020	Termly meetings progress	Trade Union and staff feedback

implementation of the Council's management of change policy and early identification of potential redeployment opportunities for any displaced staff				
To finalise all plans with input from key stakeholders (school governing bodies, school councils, school staff, specialist advisors on ALN, Welsh Government etc) for school building design and construction and repair/refurbishment of existing buildings	Director of Corporate Estates and Head of 21 st Century Schools	By September 2020	Monthly meetings	Regular review of construction programme action plans
To undertake any highways works that are identified as required to improve walking routes and to make arrangements for any transport provision that may be identified.	Director of Highways and Transportation	By September 2022	Monthly meetings	Regular review of construction programme action plans
To agree and provide free transport to eligible learners and support parents/carers during the application process	Director of Highways and Transportation	By September 2022	April 2022	Free transport to mitigate increased travel distances for learners affected.
Work with Governing Bodies	Director of Education	By September 2022	April 2021	Consultation with

to establish childcare facilities to support working families – including breakfast and after school clubs	and Inclusion Services			relevant governing bodies
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13. Please outline below any negative impacts that have been identified in the EIA questionnaire but not addressed in the action plan. You will need to explain your reasons for not addressing them.

None

Please keep a copy of the questionnaire and action plan and send copies to:

Equality, Diversity & Social Justice Team
The Pavilions
Cambrian Park
Clydach
CF40 2XX

Email: equality@rctcbc.gov.uk

Tel: 01443 424075

Signed: Gaynor Davies Revision Date: 01/07/2019
Job Title: Director of Education and Inclusion Services

Proposals to Reorganise School Provision in the Pontypridd and Hawthorn Areas

Welsh Language Impact Assessment

Background

This assessment has been undertaken in accordance with the guidelines outlined in Annex C of the School Organisation Code.

As part of our proposals in respect of the above, the Council is planning to undertake some reorganisation of Welsh medium primary education provision in this area of Rhondda Cynon Taf, which will not only improve and enhance the learning environment but also increase Welsh medium pupil capacity. It is proposed that the Council closes the Welsh medium stream of Heol y Celyn Primary School, which is a dual language school and YGG Pont Sion Norton; Welsh medium pupils attending both schools will transfer to a new, full Welsh medium school, that will be constructed on the former site of Heol y Celyn, in a new building that will be constructed to 21st Century School standards. This will of course be subject to parental preference.

Our proposals in respect of the Hawthorn area involve the closure of Hawthorn High School, Hawthorn Primary School and Heol y Celyn Primary School, and the creation of a new, 3 – 16 ‘all through’ school on the sites of Hawthorn High and Hawthorn Primary, which are immediately adjacent to each other. The pupils from these schools, together with the pupils from the English medium stream of Heol y Celyn will transfer to the new school, subject to parental preference.

Access to Welsh Medium Education

The vacated Heol y Celyn site will be cleared and a new Welsh medium community primary school will be constructed in its place. This new building will be constructed to 21st Century Schools’ standards and will be a much improved provision compared with the two current school buildings. Information on current building condition and suitability is contained within the consultation document. The capacity of the new school building will be 480 pupils, plus 60 Nursery places, which represents an increase over the existing YGG Pont Sion Norton combined with the Welsh stream of Heol y Celyn of almost 100 places. It is considered that this capacity will be sufficient to cater for current and forecasted pupil demand and it will also allow for growth in the Welsh medium sector.

Pontypridd already has a Welsh medium primary school with surplus capacity of 81 at YGG Evan James and to the north of Pontypridd, YGG Abercynon also has surplus capacity of 54. The consultation responses has suggested that there is a demand for pupil places specifically for a new Welsh medium school in Glyncoch and a demand to maintain the existing YGG Pont Sion Norton. The current demand projections and parental preferences suggest that this is not justified within these communities. A new larger school in the Heol y Celyn area, plus the existing Welsh medium primary school

in Pontypridd at YGG Evan James, and YGG Abercynon, meets future demand for the whole of Pontypridd and provides parents with choice. Nevertheless, this will be closely monitored to ensure that any growth in demand is met with an appropriate and measured response from a school organisation and planning perspective.

The Council is fully committed to the Welsh Government Cymraeg 2050 target and increasing our Welsh medium places through the delivery of our 21st Century Schools and Education Programme, as well as expanding our early years' provision, significantly increases capacity at targeted gaps to provide additional access points for Welsh Medium Education. In effect growing the language and increasing the opportunities at 'grass roots'.

The Council has invested substantially since 2012 in Welsh medium education and is committed to increasing provision and investing millions in improving the learning environment for existing learners and the number of Welsh medium spaces in our schools.

Any services provided by both YGG Pont Sion Norton and Heol y Celyn outside of school hours, such as breakfast clubs, after school clubs and other community facilities will continue in the new building. Any links with outside organisations such as the Urdd, Menter Iaith etc will be maintained and hopefully strengthened and expanded.

Cylch Meithrin Rhydyfelin does offer wrap around care and the new school will offer more opportunities for this provision to grow, and more opportunities for the Meithrin to work more collaboratively with the school. The nursery provision in the new school will not be dual language, it will be Welsh medium. The current Heol Y Celyn Primary School and YGG Pont Sion Norton both offer full-time nursery provision and there is no reason to expect changes in this provision in the new school. However, decisions relating to the duration of nursery placements is a governing body consideration.

The new school building will have a community room facility and the headteacher will be encouraged to consider using this facility to increase participation in the Welsh language, such as offering opportunities to parents and other community members to learn Welsh.

Nearly 70% of the pupils that currently attend YGG Pont Sion Norton use Home to School Transport, and the location of the new school in Rhydyfelin would enable 100% of those pupils currently within the catchment of YGG Pont Sion Norton to qualify for free Home to School Transport. Therefore, for the vast majority of pupils attending YGG Pont Sion Norton access to school clubs and extra-curricular activities will remain unchanged. It is common for learners accessing Welsh medium education to be transported to and from school and access to before/after school activities can be a challenge in these cases.

The school bus route distances of the new routes proposed will be shorter than the current school bus routes travelled. The Transport Unit have calculated the routes, and the average overall distance travelled for those pupils who already use school transport will be shortened by just over 1 mile per day.’ The actual distances are recorded in the table below. It is acknowledged that traffic congestion can cause issues for all road users and impact on travel times at certain times of the day, however this is something that can be difficult to control.

Contract 163/01 - Ynysybwl Terminus	AM Mileage	PM Mileage
YGG Pontsionnorton (Current)	10	5.5
Heol y Celyn Primary (Proposed)	7.1	7.3

Contract 163/02 - Ynysybwl / Coed y Cwm	AM Mileage	PM Mileage
YGG Pont Sion Norton (Current)	9.5	5
Heol y Celyn Primary (Proposed)	6.6	6.8

Contract 163/03 - Glyncoch	AM Mileage	PM Mileage
YGG Pont Sion Norton (Current)	8.3	3.8
Heol y Celyn Primary (Proposed)	5.4	5.6
	AM Mileage	PM Mileage
Average Overall Distance Variation	-2.9	1.8

Those pupils who currently do not travel to YGG Pont Sion Norton by bus, as they live within the 1 ½ mile in-catchment walking distance, will qualify for free Home to School Transport to the new school. The furthest that these pupils will have to travel to school will be 4.5 miles each way to the new school.

To confirm the available service bus routes, there is a direct bus to Heol Y Celyn from Glyncoch, but from Ynysybwl and Cilfynydd it would require a change of bus in Pontypridd Bus Station which is no different to the current situation for parents from Glyncoch and Ynysybwl. Currently parents from Glyncoch and Ynysybwl needing to attend YGG Pont Sion Norton in an emergency via public transport are currently required to change buses at Pontypridd Bus Station, as is also the case for learners who live in these areas attending secondary education in YG Garth Olwg.

It is recognised that these changes will affect parents who live in Cilfynydd but for those that live in the other communities referenced in the objections the status quo will be maintained. RCT is experienced in providing safe transport for pupils upwards from the age of 3, and this service is provided in line with the School Transport Policy. The Council currently transports over 2,000 primary age pupils to school, of which over

250 are in their first year of school (aged 3-4). All primary school contracts are operated by drivers and passenger assistants that have been cleared by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). The safety and well-being of our pupils is paramount to us at all times.

Information on the standards of provision at both of the existing schools were contained within the consultation document. It must be stressed that YGG Pont Sion Norton is a well-established, successful school and whereas this proposal involves its closure, its provision will in fact be relocated to a brand new building to be constructed less than 2 miles away from its current site. We would therefore expect this new school to closely replicate and, hopefully improve upon the current provision and high standards currently available at YGG Pont Sion Norton.

One of the main targets outlined in the Council's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) 2017-2020 is to increase the number of children receiving education through the medium of Welsh, which will assist the local authority in working towards the Welsh Government target of having 1 million people in Wales able to speak Welsh by 2050. One of the ways highlighted to work towards achieving this is to consider making our three dual language schools, of which Heol y Celyn is one, in to full Welsh medium provisions. We consider that this proposal will achieve this aim and in addition, the extra pupil capacity in a new, state of the art building will hopefully encourage more parents to choose a Welsh medium education for their children.

In addition, following the recent consultation on the Welsh Government's draft Welsh in Education Strategic Plans Regulations (Wales) 2019 guidance which advocates an increase in Welsh medium education provision for learners with Additional Learning Needs (ALN), and in accordance with the ALN and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018, RCT will consult on establishing a Welsh medium Foundation Phase and Key Stage 2 ALN provision in the new school.

Further information is considered in the Equality Impact Assessment in Appendix C to this report.