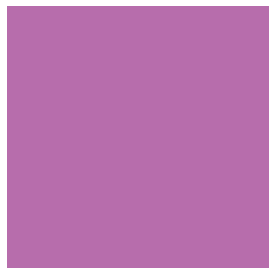
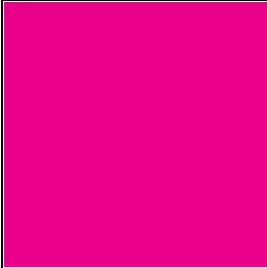


21ST CENTURY SCHOOLS



CONSULTATION ON A PROPOSAL TO CLOSE TREF-Y-RHYG PRIMARY SCHOOL WITH PUPILS TRANSFERRING TO TONYREFAIL COMMUNITY SCHOOL

The Consultation Document and Appendices are also available on the 'Get Involved' page on Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council's website.

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

Table of Contents		Page
Introduction		
Consultees		2
Consultation Process		3
What to Consider?		3
Making your Views Known		3
Views of Children and Young People		5
Community, Equality and Welsh Language Impact Assessment		5
Section One – Background to the Proposal		
Where are we now... Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School		6
Where are we now... Tonyrefail Community School		8
Alternative Options Considered?		13
Benefits and Disadvantages, Risks and Mitigation Factors		17
Where we would like to be...		22
Additional Learning Needs Provision		24
The Welsh in Education Strategic Plan		25
Admission Arrangements		26
Section Two – The Likely Impact of the Proposal		
Educational Case for the Proposal		28
Likely Impact on Pupils of the Proposal		29
Likely Impact on Staff of the Proposal		30
Estyn Information		31
Financial Implications of the Proposal		33
Home to School Transport Provision		34
Land and Buildings Information		35
Consultation Response Form		
Consultation Response Form		36
Appendix A	Community Impact Assessment	
Appendix B	Equality Impact Assessment	
Appendix C	Welsh Language Impact Assessment	

Introduction

Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council (RCTCBC) wishes to seek the views of stakeholders on the proposal to close Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School and extend the catchment area of Tonyrefail Community School to incorporate the catchment area of Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School. It is proposed that Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School will close with pupils transferring to Tonyrefail Community School by no later than September 2025.

The proposal is made in accordance with the Welsh Government's (WG's) School Organisation Code (2nd Edition) (011/2018). Section 2.1 of the WG's School Organisation Code (2nd Edition) (011/2018) refers to elements of school organisation that require the publication of proposals, including:

- The closing of a maintained school.

Consultees

We are seeking the views of the following stakeholders:

- The Governing Bodies of:
 - Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School.
 - Tonyrefail Community School.
 - Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Tonyrefail (YGG Tonyrefail).
 - Cwmlai Primary School.
 - Hendreforgan Primary School.
- Parents/carers, prospective parents/carers (where possible), and staff members of:
 - Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School.
 - Tonyrefail Community School.
- Pupils of:
 - Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School.
 - Tonyrefail Community School.
- Neighbouring Councils.
- The Church in Wales and Roman Catholic Diocesan Authorities.
- Welsh Ministers.
- Members of the Senedd for the Rhondda, Cynon, Taf and Ogmore constituencies and regional Members of the Senedd for the area.
- Members of Parliament for the Merthyr Tydfil and Aberdare, Rhondda and Ogmore and Pontypridd constituencies.
- Estyn.
- Teaching and staff trade unions.
- Central South Consortium Joint Education Service.
- Police and Crime Commissioner for the area.
- Childcare providers.
- Mudiad Meithrin.
- Menter Iaith.
- Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership.
- Children and Young People's Partnership.

- Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board.
- Welsh Language Commissioner.
- Tonyrefail Community Council.

Consultation Process

The consultation will start on Monday 30th September 2024 and will be completed at 17:00 on Friday 15th November 2024. Feedback from the consultation will be collated and summarised, and it is anticipated a Consultation Report will be presented to RCTCBC's Cabinet during December 2024. This Consultation Report will be available for all persons to view on RCTCBC's website, and copies can be obtained on request from the address detailed on page 4 of this Consultation Document.

RCTCBC's Cabinet will consider the Consultation Report and decide, based on the feedback, whether to proceed with the proposal, amend the proposal or not proceed with the proposal. If RCTCBC's Cabinet decides not to proceed, that will be the end of the proposal.

If RCTCBC's Cabinet decides to proceed with the proposal, a Statutory Notice will be published providing a 28-day notice period for objections. The School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 requires that anyone wishing to make objections to a school organisation proposal can do so following publication of the Statutory Notice. Responses to the consultation will not be counted as objections. To be considered as statutory objections, objections **must** be made in writing or by email, and sent to RCTCBC within 28 days of the date on which the Statutory Notice was published.

RCTCBC's Cabinet will consider the outcome of the Statutory Notice at the next available Cabinet meeting and determine the proposal.

If there are objections, RCTCBC's Director of Education and Inclusion Services will publish an Objection Report providing a summary of the objections and the response to them within seven days of the determination of the proposal. This Objection Report will also be available for all persons to view on RCTCBC's website, and copies can be obtained on request from the address detailed on page 4 of this Consultation Document.

If RCTCBC's Cabinet approve the proposal, it will be implemented in accordance with the date stated in the Statutory Notice or any subsequently modified date.

What to Consider?

The remainder of this Consultation Document sets out the rationale for the proposal. We would like you to consider the information and to hear your views as to whether you support the proposal.

Making your Views Known

Face to face meetings will be arranged with School Councils, Governing Bodies and staff, and there will be two drop-in sessions for the wider community. Dates are set out in the table that follows:

Making your Views Known			
School(s) Affected	Group	Time/Date	Venue
School Council			
Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School.	School Council.	Wednesday 6 th November 2024 at 14:00.	Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School.
Tonyrefail Community School.	School Council.		Tonyrefail Community School.
Governing Body and Staff			
Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School.	Governing Body and Staff	Monday 21 st October at 15:45.	Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School.
Tonyrefail Community School.	Governing Body and Staff		Tonyrefail Community School.
Public Drop in Session			
Parents/carers and members of the local community.		Wednesday 6 th November 2024 between 15:30 and 17:30	Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School.
			Tonyrefail Community School.

A Consultation Response Form is attached on page 36 of this Consultation Document. The Consultation Response Form will also be available at the meetings detailed in the previous table and on RCTCBC's website on the 'Get Involved' page.

The Consultation Response Form enables consultees to indicate if they wish to be notified of the publication of the Consultation Report, once presented to RCTCBC's Cabinet.

Consultees are also welcome to put their views, comments, and any questions in writing to:

Director of Education and Inclusion Services 21 st Century Schools Valleys Innovation Centre Navigation Park Abercynon CF45 4SN	OR	schoolplanning@rctcbc.gov.uk
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All correspondence should be received no later than 17:00 on Friday 15th November 2024.

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

Views of Children and Young People

RCTCBC has acknowledged that the voice of children and young people is important, and they must be involved as active participants in the development, delivery, management, and improvement of their educational experience.

Children and young people have a right to express their views in all matters affecting them and for their views to be heard and considered in accordance with their age and maturity. As such, RCTCBC's Directorate of Education and Inclusion Services 21st Century Schools Team will ensure that suitable arrangements are made to involve children and young people as active participants throughout this consultation process, and if a decision is made to progress the proposal, throughout the implementation process.

RCTCBC will consult with the children and young people who attend:

- Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School.
- Tonyrefail Community School.

This will be done by meeting and discussing the proposal with their School Councils.

These consultation sessions will have the support of school-based specialist staff to support pupils and assist with the engagement process. Feedback from these meetings will be collated and summarised, and a Consultation Report will be presented to RCTCBC's Cabinet for consideration once the consultation period has ended.

Community, Equality and Welsh Language Impact Assessments

As set out in the WG's School Organisation Code (2nd Edition) (011/2018), it is a requirement to publish Community, Equality and Welsh Language Impact Assessments. These have been produced and are appended to this Consultation Document, they are also available to read on the RCTCBC website:

- Appendix A – Community Impact Assessment.
- Appendix B – Equality Impact Assessment.
- Appendix C – Welsh Language Impact Assessment.

Section One – Background to the Proposal

Where are we now... Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School

Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School is a 3 to 11 English medium primary school located at The Avenue, Tonyrefail with capacity for 157 pupils of statutory school age (reception to year six). Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School has four classes, three of which contain mixed year groups.

Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School was constructed circa. 1899. There is one main building, comprising of nursery and statutory age classes and teaching blocks. The teaching blocks are a three storey, split level building, comprised of solid stone and brickwork walls and associated metal fencing, with split level playground areas due to site topography. The school building has received investment over the last 10 years, specifically to re-configure and improve the internal teaching areas, investing in electrical upgrades, roof works, as well as installing a new canopy and fencing to improve external play areas.

According to the property condition survey carried out by RCTCBC in 2022, Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School is graded C for condition and D for suitability, where A is the highest and D is the lowest performing building, respectively. This means that in terms of condition, Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School is in need of major repairs or refurbishment in the short to medium term.

The backlog maintenance figure for Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School is circa. £381,040. This figure represents the total cost of all maintenance work identified as being required. It does not include costs of further improvements to enable Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School to meet 21st century schools' standards or to become energy efficient.

The site itself and the school building does not fully comply with the Equality Act 2010 and is graded D for accessibility, meaning there are significant issues with access.



External view of Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School.

Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC) data for 2024 indicates that there are 82 statutory school age pupils attending Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School. The table that follows outlines the pupil numbers at Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School over the previous five academic years. The number of nursery age pupils for each academic year is shown separately, as required by the WG's School Organisation Code (2nd Edition) (011/2018).

Pupil Numbers at Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School Over the Previous Five Academic Years (PLASC)					
Pupils	Academic Year				
	2019/2020	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024
Statutory School Age Pupils	93	80	95	90	82
Nursery Age Pupils	19	24	16	15	9
Total	112	104	111	105	91

The data demonstrates that between the academic years 2019/2020 and 2023/2024:

- The number of statutory school age pupils attending Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School has fallen by 11.8% (11) from 93 to 82.
- The total number of pupils attending Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School has fallen by 18.8% (21) from 112 to 91.

At present*, there are 82 statutory school age pupils attending Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School, 41.5% (34) of which live out of catchment. The table that follows outlines the number of statutory school age pupils attending Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School by their catchment primary school.

Number of Statutory School Age Pupils Attending Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School by Catchment School (PLASC)		
Catchment Primary School	Number of Statutory School Age Pupils Attending Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School	Percentage of Statutory School Age Pupils Attending Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School
Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School	48	58.5%
Craig Yr Hesg Primary School	2	2.4%
Cwmlai Primary School	3	3.7%
Cymmer Primary School	10	12.2%
Hendreforgan Primary School	1	1.2%
Tonyrefail Community School	18	22.0%
Total	82	100.0%
<i>*Figures based on actual data as of 12th March 2024.</i>		

The data demonstrates:

- 41.5% (34) of statutory school age pupils attending Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School, live out of the catchment area for Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School.

- 58.5% (48) of statutory school aged pupils attending Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School, live in the catchment area for Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School.
- The school with the highest percentage of statutory school aged pupils who are attending Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School, rather than their catchment school, is Tonyrefail Community School with 22.0% (18).

The table that follows outlines the projected pupil numbers at Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School over the future five academic years based on the status quo. They are calculated in accordance with the guidance issued by the WG and are based on live birth data for the area.

Projected Pupil Numbers at Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School Over the Future Five Academic Years (PLASC)									
Pupils	Capacity	Academic Year						Surplus Capacity in 2028 / 2029	
		Actual	Projections						
		2023 / 2024	2024 / 2025	2025 / 2026	2026 / 2027	2027 / 2028	2028 / 2029	Number	%
Statutory School Age Pupils	157	82	74	60	63	60	54	103	65.6%
Nursery Age Pupils	22	9	11	12	10	9	8		
Total	179	91	85	72	73	69	62		

The data demonstrates that by the academic year 2028/2029:

- There will be 65.6% (103) statutory school age surplus capacity at Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School.

There is little housing development planned in the catchment area of Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School, and what developments are planned will have little impact upon pupil places which means demand for places will remain low.

Where we are now...Tonyrefail Community School

Tonyrefail Community School is a 3 to 19 English medium all through school located on Gilfach Road, it has an overall capacity of 1,778. The statutory primary school age pupil capacity is 385. Tonyrefail Community School was part of a wider £44 million leisure and education investment locally, which also saw the nearby Tonyrefail Leisure Centre receive a new 3G sports pitch for school and community use – along with specialist teaching facilities for physical education classes to be held at Tonyrefail Leisure Centre.

Tonyrefail Community School is the associated all through school that provides secondary education provision for the catchment area of Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School.

As Tonyrefail Community School is a new school, it is graded A for condition and A for suitability. The building has been built to meet the required standards and regulations, allowing pupils of Tonyrefail Community School to benefit from a learning environment fit for 21st century education. Tonyrefail Community School also has facilities that are regularly used by the local community ensuring that others are benefitting from the new resources available.

The school site and building are fully compliant with the Equality Act 2010. As part of the significant investment at Tonyrefail Community School, there was a particular focus on enhancing the onsite and offsite traffic management arrangements, including improved staff parking and the creation of a dedicated home to school transport drop off area.



External view of Tonyrefail Community School.

PLASC data for 2024 indicates that there are 304 statutory primary school age pupils attending Tonyrefail Community School. The table that follows outlines the pupil numbers at Tonyrefail Community School over the previous five academic years. The number of nursery age pupils for each academic year is shown separately, as required by the WG's School Organisation Code (2nd Edition) (011/2018).

Pupil Numbers at Tonyrefail Community School Over the Previous Five Academic Years (PLASC)					
Pupils	Academic Year				
	2019/2020	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024
Statutory Primary School Age Pupils	276	281	282	293	304
Nursery Age Pupils	39	39	39	42	45
Total	315	320	321	335	349

The data demonstrates that between the academic years 2019/2020 and 2023/2024:

- The number of primary statutory school age pupils attending Tonyrefail Community School has risen by 9.2% (28) from 276 to 304.
- The total number of primary age pupils attending Tonyrefail Community School has risen by 10.8% (34) from 315 to 349.

There are 304 statutory primary school age pupils attending Tonyrefail Community School, 64.8% (197) of which live out of catchment. The table that follows outlines the number of statutory primary school age pupils attending Tonyrefail Community School by their catchment primary school.

Number of Statutory Primary School Age Pupils Attending Tonyrefail Community School by Catchment School (PLASC)		
Catchment Primary School	Number of Statutory Primary School Age Pupils Attending Tonyrefail Community School	Percentage of Statutory Primary School Age Pupils Attending Tonyrefail Community School
No Catchment	8	2.6%
Alaw Primary School	1	0.3%
Cwmlai Primary School	42	13.8%
Cymmer Primary School	14	4.6%
Hendreforgan Primary School	68	22.4%
Llwynypia Primary School	3	1.0%
Pontrhondda Primary School	1	0.3%
Porth Community School	1	0.3%
Ton Infants School	1	0.3%
Tonyrefail Community School	107	35.2%
Trealaw Primary School	1	0.3%
Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School	38	12.5%
Treorchy Primary School	1	0.3%
Trerobart Primary School	1	0.3%
Williamstown Primary School	10	3.3%
Ynyshir Community Primary School	1	0.3%
Ysgol Nantgwyn	6	2.0%
Total	304	100.0%

The data demonstrates:

- 64.8% (197) of statutory primary school age pupils attending Tonyrefail Community School, live out of the catchment area for Tonyrefail Community School.
- Only 35.2% (107) of statutory primary school aged pupils attending Tonyrefail Community School, live in the catchment area for Tonyrefail Community School.
- The primary schools with the highest percentage of statutory school aged pupils who are attending Tonyrefail Community School rather than their catchment school are Hendreforgan Primary School with 22.4% (68) and Cwmlai Primary School with 13.8% (42).

The table that follows outlines the projected primary pupil numbers at Tonyrefail Community School, over the future five academic years, based on the status quo. They are calculated in accordance with the guidance issued by the WG and are based on live birth data for the area.

Projected Primary Pupil Numbers at Tonyrefail Community School Over the Future Five Academic Years (PLASC)									
Pupils	Capacity	Academic Year						Surplus Capacity in 2028 / 2029	
		Actual	Projections						
		2023 / 2024	2024 / 2025	2025 / 2026	2026 / 2027	2027 / 2028	2028 / 2029	Number	%
Statutory Primary Age Pupils	385	304	330	350	353	362	356	29	7.5%
Nursery Age Pupils	N/A	45	39	43	41	36	32		
Total	440	349	369	393	394	398	388		

The data demonstrates that by the academic year 2028/2029:

- There will be 7.5% (29) statutory primary school age surplus capacity at Tonyrefail Community School.

Alternative Options Considered

Given the limitations of the site of Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School, the number of alternative options available for consideration were limited. In accordance with the WG's School Organisation Code (2nd Edition) (011/2018), alternative options were identified and consciously considered. Some of the benefits and disadvantages of each of the discounted options are listed in the table that follows.

Option	Benefit	Disadvantages
Retain the status quo.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No WG Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme investment required. • No RCTCBC investment required. • No disruption to the pupils, parents/carers and staff. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aspects of the buildings at Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School have reached the end of their usable life and are now beyond economic repair. • The buildings at Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School are not of a 21st Century Schools standard. As such, the conditions for delivering the Curriculum for Wales are not ideal. • Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School would continue to not be fully compliant with the <u>Equality Act 2010</u>.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The backlog maintenance figure of circa. £381,040 at Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School would remain. • Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School would continue to have classes of mixed year groups. Having to organise classes in such a way can pose significant challenges for teaching and learning – the projected pupil numbers at Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School could make this situation more challenging in time. • The benefits of moving to a larger more educationally and financially viable primary school would not be realised. • Given low pupil numbers school budgets could not be protected sufficiently, and deficit budget positions would directly contribute to Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School's lack of financial viability and sustainability.
<p>Build a new primary school on the site of Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No long-term change for pupils, parents/carers and staff. • No disruption to the pupils, parents/carers and staff in the long term. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant WG Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme investment required – there is no funding allocated for this and the business case justification would be challenging to demonstrate given the declining pupil numbers. • Significant RCTCBC investment required. • The location of the site would restrict the ability to build a fully accessible school fit for the 21st century, with appropriate outdoor facilities.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Temporary, mobile, classrooms would need to be utilised for the duration of the construction. Given the site restrictions, pupils may need to be located elsewhere. • Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School would continue to have classes of mixed year groups. Having to organise classes in such a way can pose significant challenges for teaching and learning – the projected pupil numbers at Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School could make this situation more challenging in time. • The benefits of moving to a larger more educationally and financially viable primary school would not be realised. • School budgets could not be protected sufficiently, and deficit budget positions would directly contribute to Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School's lack of financial viability.
<p>Refurbish Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No long-term change for pupils, parents/carers and staff. • No disruption to the pupils, parents/carers and staff in the long term. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant WG Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme investment required – there is no funding allocated for this. • Significant RCTCBC investment required. • The location of the site would restrict the ability to build a fully accessible school fit for the 21st century, with appropriate outdoor facilities. • Temporary, mobile, classrooms would need to be utilised for the duration

		<p>of the construction. Given the site restrictions, pupils may need to be located elsewhere.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School would continue to have classes of mixed year groups. Having to organise classes in such a way poses significant challenges for teaching and learning – the projected pupil numbers at Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School could make this situation more challenging in time. • The benefits of moving to a larger more educationally and financially viable primary school would not be realised. • School budgets could not be protected sufficiently, and deficit budget positions would directly contribute to Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School’s lack of financial viability.
<p>Federate Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School and Tonyrefail Community School under one head teacher and one Governing Body.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No WG Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme investment required. • No RCTCBC investment required. • No disruption to the pupils, parents/carers and staff. • Consistent pedagogical approaches across the schools. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aspects of the buildings at Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School have reached the end of their usable life and are now beyond economic repair. • The buildings at Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School are not of a 21st Century Schools standard. As such, conditions for delivering the Curriculum for Wales are not ideal. • Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School would continue to not be fully compliant with the <u>Equality Act 2010</u>. • The backlog maintenance figure of circa. £381,040

		<p>at Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School would remain.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School would continue to have classes of mixed year groups. Having to organise classes in such a way can pose significant challenges for teaching and learning – the projected pupil numbers at Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School could make this situation more challenging in time. • Some of the benefits of moving to a larger more educationally and financially viable primary school would not be realised.
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Benefits and Disadvantages, Risks and Mitigation Factors

Any proposal involving school reorganisation will inevitably cause some disruption and uncertainty, although experience shows this can be kept to a minimum through meaningful engagement throughout this consultation process, and if a decision is made to progress the proposal, throughout the implementation process.

The benefits and disadvantages of the proposal are highlighted in the table that follows, as is information as to how any identified risks can be mitigated.

Benefits
<p>Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School does not form part of RCTCBC’s and the WG’s Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme. This means that no investment to create 21st century school facilities is planned for at the site, and there is no budget to make significant improvements in the meantime. Attending a new school of a 21st century schools standard could result in a significant improvement to the quality of the educational experience for the pupils of Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School. The proposal addresses the significant surplus capacity and declining pupil numbers in Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School and offers more sustainable education in the area, delivering enhanced resources to invest in the quality of teaching and learning, to meet the need of all pupils, including the most vulnerable.</p>
<p>Greater opportunities for pupils to socialise and interact with a larger number of peers from their own year group.</p>
<p>Greater opportunities for progression and professional development for all staff within a larger school environment.</p>
<p>Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School was not built to be energy efficient, unlike the new building at Tonyrefail Community School. Tonyrefail Community School has:</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Been built to BREEAM ‘excellent’ standards. • Has an Energy Performance Certificate rating of A. • Has Electric Vehicle chargers on site, contributing to the delivery of RCTCBC’s Tackling Climate Change Strategy: 2022 to 2025 – <u>Think Climate RCT</u>.
<p>The proposal would also support the WG’s <u>Delivery Plan for a Low Carbon Wales</u> and its ‘Route Map’ to decarbonise the public sector in Wales.</p>
<p>A dedicated area has been designed within Tonyrefail Community School so that the local community and third parties are allowed to safely utilise the facilities at the school, both during and after the school day. Pupils and parents/carers of Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School could benefit from this.</p>
<p>Tonyrefail Community School has been designed to comply with ‘Secured by Design’ standards, which ensure that the school boundary and buildings are fully secure and protected with CCTV. The site perimeter is secure, deterring antisocial behaviour and preventing unauthorised individuals from accessing the site out of school hours.</p>
<p>Tonyrefail Community School was part of a wider £44 million leisure and education investment locally, which saw the nearby Tonyrefail Leisure Centre receive a new 3G sports pitch for school and community use – along with specialist teaching facilities for physical education classes to be held at Tonyrefail Leisure Centre.</p>
<p>Pupils of Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School would not have to wait for a new school to be built. The construction of the new school at Tonyrefail Community School is complete.</p>
<p>The data demonstrates that with the redesignation of areas there is sufficient capacity at Tonyrefail Community School for all current and future pupils of Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School and in-catchment pupils to attend, continuing to meet the local demand for English medium primary education. Strict implementation of admissions criteria will be necessary to ensure that school places are prioritised for in-catchment pupils.</p>
<p>The benefits of moving to a larger more educationally and financially viable primary school would be realised.</p>
<p>A 3 to 19 school provides a continuity of educational experience which negates the transition dips in pupil performance and creates greater opportunities to provide a seamless transition between primary and secondary education in terms of curriculum planning, learning, and teaching.</p>
<p>Disadvantages</p>
<p>Understandably, some pupils may initially be daunted at the prospect of moving to a new, larger school on a new site. However, should the proposal proceed, there will be targeted support for all pupils from Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School and Tonyrefail Community School. Meaningful and positive transition is an integral part of ensuring that pupils settle into their new school setting with little disruption to their wellbeing and education. This is supported by providing effective pastoral and academic support and structured opportunities for pupils to become familiar with the new school environment and staff.</p>
<p>There could be staffing implications for those employed at Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School, should the school close. For example, there will be certain roles that are replicated in Tonyrefail Community School’s staffing structure. RCTCBC has well established human resource (HR) policies and procedures that give reassurance to staff and employers about the management of organisational change. RCTCBC’s HR Team will visit all staff at Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School and make them are aware</p>

of the processes that may follow and the operational and personal support that is on offer.

There will be a community impact of removing a much valued school. In a small community the loss of a school will be felt proportionately more than in a larger community. However, it is anticipated that the proposed changes will not have a long term, adverse impact and it should be noted at this point in the consultation process that RCTCBC considers the overall community impact of the proposal is determined to be positive. Nevertheless, RCTCBC acknowledges that it is likely that the closure of Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School will have an impact on the community and that some will feel this loss.

Risks	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating Action(s)
<p>Approval – Parents/carers choose to send their children to another primary school.</p>	Low.	Low.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RCTCBC’s Directorate of Education and Inclusion Services 21st Century Schools Team will ensure that suitable arrangements are made to involve parents/carers and children and young people as active participants throughout this consultation process, and if a decision is made to progress the proposal, throughout the implementation process. • Choosing a school is a parent/carer’s choice. Applications will be dealt with in accordance with the WG’s <u>School Admissions Code 2013 (05/2013)</u>,
<p>Capacity Pressures – Caused by high levels of out of catchment pupils attending Tonyrefail Community School.</p>	High	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strict implementation of admissions criteria.
<p>Increased Traffic – Increased traffic as a result of the proposal.</p>	Medium.	Low.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is capacity in the locality for an increase in traffic movements. As part of the significant investment at Tonyrefail

			<p>Community School there was a particular focus on enhancing the onsite and offsite traffic management arrangements, including improved staff parking and the creation of a dedicated home to school transport drop off area.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is approximately 1.2 miles between Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School and Tonyrefail Community School. Should the proposal proceed, there is a safe walking route enabling the in-catchment pupils from Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School to walk to Tonyrefail Community School. • In terms of public transport, there is a public transport service bus which runs regularly. The bus stops are in very close proximity to Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School and Tonyrefail Community School. However, the cost and operation of the public transport in the area is not within the remit of RCTCBC to manage.
<p>Staff – Existing Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School Staff may not be retained following implementation of the proposal.</p>	Medium.	Medium.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RCTCBC has well established HR policies and procedures that give reassurance to staff and employers about the management of organisational change. • RCTCBC's HR Team will visit all staff at Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School and make them aware of

			the processes that may follow and the operational and personal support that is on offer.
Community Impact – Impact of the proposal on the local community.	Medium.	Medium.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should the proposal proceed, the existing Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School site will become redundant. As this is an initial consultation process no decisions have yet been made in respect of the future of this site and building. However, one option, if the site does become surplus, is to consult with the local community to ascertain whether there is a sustainable community need locally that can be successfully delivered and met from this site. • As set out in the WG's <u>School Organisation Code (2nd Edition) (011/2018)</u>, it is a requirement to publish a Community Impact Assessment. This has been produced and is appended to this Consultation Document and is also available on RCTCBC's website.

Where we would like to be...

It is being proposed to close Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School. The pupils of Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School will instead attend Tonyrefail Community School. Should the proposal proceed, pupils attending Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School will transfer to Tonyrefail Community School by no later than September 2025.

Tonyrefail Community School is a 3 to 19 English medium all through school located on Gilfach Road, Tonyrefail which has a current statutory school primary age pupil capacity of 385. Tonyrefail Community School was part of a wider £44 million leisure and education investment locally, which also saw the nearby Tonyrefail Leisure Centre receive a new 3G sports pitch for school and community use – along with

specialist teaching facilities for physical education classes to be held at Tonyrefail Leisure Centre.

Tonyrefail Community School is the associated all through school that provides secondary education provision for the catchment area of Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School.

The catchment area of Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School sits within the larger catchment area of YGG Tonyrefail, and as is already the case and in accordance with the WG's School Admissions Code 2013 (05/2013), choosing which school their child attends is a decision for the parent/carer. As such, pupils of Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School have the option to attend YGG Tonyrefail, the local Welsh medium primary school. RCTCBC's Welsh Language Immersion Team provide excellent support for pupils who choose to move into Welsh medium education from the English medium sector. This provision has proved successful in other schools and will be available for any pupils that wish to utilise it. There is sufficient capacity at YGG Tonyrefail for pupils of Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School who wish to attend Welsh medium primary education instead of continuing with English medium primary education provision at Tonyrefail Community School.

As Tonyrefail Community School is a new school, it is graded A for condition and A for suitability. The building has been built to meet the required standards and regulations, allowing pupils of Tonyrefail Community School to benefit from a learning environment fit for 21st century education. Tonyrefail Community School also has facilities that are regularly used by the local community ensuring that others are benefitting from the new resources available.

Surplus Capacity

Manging school places is one of a number of key priorities for RCTCBC's Education and Inclusion Services as we focus on becoming a more sustainable and economically viable service area. Whilst the pupil numbers at Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School over the previous five academic years have remained steady, numbers continue to be low and the projected pupil numbers over the future five academic years shows a decline in pupil numbers to a projected 54 statutory school age pupils by the academic year 2028/2029. There has been, and projections show there will continue to be a high number and percentage of surplus capacity. Allowing surplus capacity to remain high through inaction would directly and negatively affect the future financial viability of Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School and could impact pupils' education in the future.

The current and projected surplus capacity at Tonyrefail Community School indicates a lack of available space to accommodate the pupils proposed to relocate from Tref -Y-Rhyg Primary School, however, to note only 35.2% (107 pupils) of the pupils that currently attend the primary phase in Tonyrefail Community School reside in the Tonyrefail Community School catchment. In order to ensure that pupils from Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School can attend Tonyrefail Community School, the capacity at Tonyrefail Community School will increase by 30 places, increasing the capacity of the primary phase to 415 pupil places, and the overall school capacity to 1,808. This increase will be achieved by utilising an area within Tonyrefail Community School that is currently designated as an ancillary space. This space will be redesignated as a classroom and as such will accommodate 30 additional pupils.

These changes will ensure that all pupils currently attending Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary school can be accommodated in Tonyrefail Community School from September 2025. RCTCBC will strictly implement the admissions criteria, in accordance with the School Admission Code 2013 (005/2013) to manage the allocation of places from 2025 onwards.

Based on the existing numbers, the table that follows outlines the combined projected pupil numbers at Tonyrefail Community School and Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School over the future five academic years with the increased capacity. They are calculated in accordance with the guidance issued by the WG and are based on live birth data for the area.

Combined Projected Pupil Numbers at Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School and Tonyrefail Community School Over the Future Five Academic Years (PLASC)									
Pupils	Capacity (Tonyrefail Community School)	Academic Year						Surplus Statutory Capacity in 2028 / 2029	
		Actual	Projections						
		2023 / 2024	2024 / 2025	2025 / 2026	2026 / 2027	2027 / 2028	2028 / 2029	Number	%
Statutory Primary Age Pupils	415	386	404	410	416	422	410	5	1.2%
Nursery Age Pupils	55	54	50	55	51	45	40		
Total	460	440	454	465	467	467	450		

Should the proposal to close Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School with pupils transferring to Tonyrefail Community School proceed, the data demonstrates that by the academic year 2028/2029: there will be 1.2% (5) statutory school age surplus capacity at Tonyrefail Community School.

The table above suggests that the combined projected pupil numbers at Tonyrefail Community School and Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary, indicates minor capacity pressures in the academic years 2026/2027 and 2027/2028 should pupils from Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School transfer to Tonyrefail Community School. As with most schools, the number of pupils on roll is only accurate for a short period of time as in-year transfers are commonplace. As such, and for the purpose of this consultation, the actual number of pupils on roll as of September 2024, plus pupil projections based on live data rather than PLASC combined for both schools is outline in the table that follows:

Combined Projected Pupil Numbers at Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School and Tonyrefail Community School Over the Future Five Academic Years Based on Live Data								
Pupils	Capacity (Tonyrefail Community School)	Academic Year					Surplus Statutory Capacity in 2028 / 2029	
		Actual	Projections Based on Live Data					
		Sept 2024	2025 / 2026	2026 / 2027	2027 / 2029	2028 / 2029	Number	%
Statutory Primary Age Pupils	415	387	386	391	391	380	35	8.4%
Nursery Age Pupils	55	53	55	51	45	40		
Total	460	440	441	442	436	420		

Should the proposal to close Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School with pupils transferring to Tonyrefail Community School proceed, the live data demonstrates that by the academic year 2025/2026:

- There will be 7.0% (29) statutory school age surplus capacity at Tonyrefail Community School.
- All pupils from Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School transferring to Tonyrefail Community School can be accommodated.

The school site and building are fully compliant with the Equality Act 2010. As part of the significant investment at Tonyrefail Community School, there was a particular focus on enhancing the onsite and offsite traffic management arrangements, including improved staff parking and the creation of a dedicated home to school transport drop off area.

RCTCBC considers that providing education for pupils attending Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School in a larger, new, purpose built 21st century English medium 3 to 19 all through school at Tonyrefail Community School, amongst other benefits, would offer:

- Greater flexibility and opportunity for pupils within a modern, more enhanced educational environment in which they can learn and grow.
- Potential for financial savings in terms of services which accrue within a larger school, which can be reinvested for the benefit of all pupils.
- Greater opportunities for progression and professional development for all staff which are created within an all through school environment.
- Less demand on staff as responsibilities for developing the Areas of Learning and Experience, as part of the Curriculum for Wales, and Additional Learning Needs (ALN) statutory obligations, will be shared.
- More opportunities for extra-curricular activities.
- Pupils being taught, in the main, with their year group. Three out of four classes in Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School are mixed year groups.
- Greater opportunities for pupils to socialise and interact with a larger number of peers from their own year group.

- Greater opportunities to provide a seamless transition between primary and secondary education in terms of curriculum planning, learning, and teaching.

Tonyrefail Community School is a community school with a private childcare provider co-located on the school site. Little Inspirations is registered with the Care Inspectorate Wales for 50 places. It is a full day care provider offering provision from six weeks to eight years of age. It offers Flying Start, private childcare, childcare offer, and a wraparound service and holiday provision.

Little Inspirations was inspected by Care Inspectorate Wales in May 2023. At that point in time, the judgements for the themes were as follows:

Theme	Judgement
Wellbeing.	Excellent.
Learning.	Good.
Care and Development.	Good.
Teaching and Assessment.	Good.
Environment.	Good.
Leadership and Management.	Good.

Care Inspectorate Wales also set out recommendations for Little Inspirations to implement in order to make improvements to the quality of provision on offer. Care Inspectorate Wales's recommendations were as follows:

1. Recommendation One – Provide further opportunities for children to develop their digital skills.
2. Recommendation Two – Further develop the way practitioners adapt the provision to respond to children's learning.

Information relating to the Estyn inspections of Tonyrefail Community School and Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary school are included in 'Section Two – The Likely Impact of the Proposal' of this Consultation Document.

Images of Tonyrefail Community School

The images that follow show Tonyrefail Community School.



Classroom at Tonyrefail Community School.



Heart space at Tonyrefail Community School.



Hall at Tonyrefail Community School.

Additional Learning Needs Provision

There are no ALN learning support classes (LSC's) at Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School or at Tonyrefail Community School in the primary phase. Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School has nine statutory school aged pupils with ALN, none of which have physical needs, whilst Tonyrefail Community School has ten statutory school aged pupils with ALN, none of which have physical needs. Should the proposal proceed, support for pupils provided by RCTCBC's Access and Inclusion Service Team will continue and will not be affected.

Tonyrefail Community School has been built in will in accordance with Building Bulletin 98 and Building Bulletin 99 and is fully accessible and compliant with the Equality Act 2010, including having provisions such as hygiene rooms for those that may need to use them. The ALN and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018 requires Councils to keep arrangements for supporting pupils with ALN within their area under review and consider whether they are sufficient. As such, the need for an ALN LSC's at Tonyrefail Community School will continue to be reviewed and, should there be a need for primary ALN LSC provision in the future this can be provided.

Tonyrefail Community School has been designed with a flexible 'heart space' to allow opportunities for teaching and learning in smaller groups, intervention spaces, and to provide one to one support where required. This space will not be affected by the increase in the capacity at Tonyrefail Community School.

The Welsh in Education Strategic Plan

All Councils in Wales must produce a Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP). The WESP is a long-term language planning tool which sets the direction for the strategic planning, delivery and growth in Welsh medium and Welsh language education. Through the WESP, and effective strategic planning and investment, RCTCBC aims to contribute significantly to achieving the vision of one million people in Wales being Welsh speakers by 2050 as set out in the WG's Cymraeg 2050. RCTCBC's WESP can be viewed and downloaded from RCTCBC's website via the following link:

<https://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/EN/Resident/SchoolsandLearning/SchoolAdmissions/relateddocuments/WESPJune2022.pdf>

There are seven outcomes within RCTCBC's WESP which will help RCTCBC to archive the targets set, one of which is:

- More opportunities for pupils to use Welsh in different contexts in school.

RCTCBC aims to embed positive habits and attitudes towards the Welsh language through purposeful planning to promote the informal use the Welsh language amongst pupils inside and outside school. Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School and Tonyrefail Community School support this aim by participating in initiatives such as 'Criw Cymraeg,' and both Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School and Tonyrefail Community School encourage pupils to use incidental Welsh wherever possible. Should the proposal proceed, pupils attending Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School would continue to be encouraged to use the Welsh language.

The catchment area of Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School sits within the larger catchment area of YGG Tonyrefail, and as is already the case and in accordance with the WG's School Admissions Code 2013 (05/2013), choosing which school their child attends is a decision for the parent/carer. As such, pupils of Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School have the option to attend YGG Tonyrefail, the local Welsh medium primary school. RCTCBC's Welsh Language Immersion Team provide excellent support for pupils who choose to move into Welsh medium education from the English medium sector. This provision has proved successful in other schools and will be available for any pupils that wish to utilise it. There is sufficient capacity at YGG Tonyrefail for pupils of Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School who wish to attend Welsh medium primary education instead of continuing with English medium primary education provision at Tonyrefail Community School.

As set out in the WG's School Organisation Code (2nd Edition) (011/2018), it is a requirement to publish a Welsh Language Impact Assessment. This has been produced and is appended to this Consultation Document and is also available on RCTCBC's website.

Admission Arrangements

The current and projected surplus capacity at Tonyrefail Community School indicates a lack of available space to accommodate the pupils proposed to relocate from Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School, however, to note only 35.2% (107 pupils) of the pupils that currently attend the primary phase in Tonyrefail Community School reside in the Tonyrefail Community School catchment.

In order to ensure that pupils from Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School can attend Tonyrefail Community School, the capacity at Tonyrefail Community School will increase by 30 places, increasing the capacity of the primary phase to 415 pupil places, and the overall school capacity to 1,808. This increase will be achieved by utilising an area within Tonyrefail Community School that is currently designated as an ancillary space. This space will be redesignated as a classroom and as such will accommodate 30 additional pupils.

These changes will ensure that all pupils currently attending Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary school can be accommodated in Tonyrefail Community School from September 2025. RCTCBC will strictly implement the admissions criteria, in accordance with the School Admission Code 2013 (005/2013) to manage the allocation of places from 2025 onwards.

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

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

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

Children will be admitted up to the Published Admission Number in the order of priority as outlined above. If, within any one of the priority categories listed, all applicants cannot be offered a place, preference will be given to children living nearest to the school. Distance will be measured using the shortest, safe walking route between the home address and the nearest open school gate. In areas where

no safe walking route has been identified, the shortest driving route between the home address and the nearest open school gate will be used. This distance will be measured using the 'MapInfo System' only. Measurements calculated by any other system will not be considered. The home address in instances where parents/carers have shared responsibility for children, will be the address to which Child Benefit is paid.

The admission application period for a September 2025 start commenced on 2nd September 2024. Should the proposal proceed, any applications for Tref- Y-Rhyg Primary School will automatically transfer to Tonyrefail Community School unless parents/carers choose to apply for another school.

Section Two – The Likely Impact of the Proposal

Educational Case of the Proposal

School organisational proposals should highlight the educational benefits that any change could 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 could usually impact beneficially on their overall achievement and outcomes.

It is RCTCBC's view that closing Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School with pupils transferring to Tonyrefail Community School could improve educational outcomes and provision for the pupils of Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School. A fit for purpose school building helps to provide a balanced curriculum in all year groups in line with the Curriculum for Wales. Smaller schools may find it more difficult to deliver all Areas of Learning and Experience of the Curriculum for Wales as they have fewer staff to specialise and to lead on curriculum and strategic developments. Smaller schools with fewer staff require staff to take on multiple roles, which can lead to greater workloads and less opportunities to specialise. A 21st century learning environment could also provide greater flexibility, a more adaptable learning environment and greater choice and variety in pupils' learning experiences.

Larger schools can provide greater flexibility for pupils due to an extended, more enhanced educational environment in which to learn and develop. There is also more opportunity for staff to develop specialisms and more bespoke interventions, which is important for pupil progression and the achievement of good educational outcomes for all. In larger schools there is also often the opportunity for pupils to engage in a wider range of curricular and extra-curricular activities. Should the proposal proceed, more pupils will be taught in a purpose-built school building that is fit for providing education in the 21st century.

Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School currently has four classes, three of which are made up of mixed year groups. The projected fall in pupil numbers at Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School could make this situation more challenging in time.

There are significant challenges to teaching mixed year groups. In what is considered to be a standard size class of pupils, there will always be a range of abilities that need to be catered for through effective differentiation to ensure that the work meets the pupils' needs, ensuring they make strong progress in their learning and are suitably challenged. In a small school where you have mixed year groups and a wide range of abilities it can prove to be challenging for the teaching and support staff to meet the wide range of academic needs, as well as the social and emotional needs, of all the pupils. It is acknowledged that Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School offers pupils positive learning experiences, nevertheless the teaching of mixed year groups within one classroom environment can be a significant challenge in educational settings.

Tonyrefail Community School, being a 3 to 19 school offers many benefits. The great strength of a 3 to 19 school is the continuity of educational experience which negates the transition dips in pupil performance. A 3 to 19 school provides the opportunity to

provide a bridge between progression steps in order to create a seamless transition for pupils in terms of curriculum planning, learning and teaching. It can allow for a significant sharing of subject expertise and primary pedagogy in particular across progression steps.

A 3 to 19 school eases the transition process between the age groups and staff and teachers know the pupils well as they progress through the year groups. This enables them to assist pupils where additional support is required.

A 3 to 19 school has a larger strong leadership team, which creates a vision that resonates with all phases. All staff are fully engaged and the school benefits from 'coherence and continuity' which assists pupils' learning progression. Another important benefit of 3 to 19 schools is being able to achieve greater effectiveness through the sharing of resources, and being able to target those resources, whether financial, physical or human, at key areas of school improvement. Additional benefits of 3 to 19 schools include:

- Provision of specialist teaching in years 3 to 6 or extending literacy and numeracy programmes into years 7 to 9.
- Access for primary phase pupils to the facilities of the secondary phase.
- Providing scope for acceleration programmes for more able and talented pupils.
- Joint professional development.
- Directing resources at early intervention approaches.
- Planning a joint curriculum.
- Sharing equipment, hardware and accommodation.
- Increasing the range and capacity for extra-curricular/after school clubs.
- Creating common administrative appointments.

Likely Impact on Pupils of the Proposal

It is anticipated that the proposed changes will not have a long term, adverse impact on pupils and it should be noted at this point in the consultation process that RCTCBC considers the overall impact on pupils of the proposal is determined to be positive. Understandably, some pupils may initially be daunted at the prospect of moving to a new, larger school on a new site. However, should the proposal proceed, there will be targeted support for all pupils from Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School and Tonyrefail Community School. Meaningful and positive transition is an integral part of ensuring that pupils settle into their new school setting with little disruption to their wellbeing and education. This is supported by providing effective pastoral and academic support and structured opportunities for pupils to become familiar with the new school environment and staff.

Advice and support will be provided by RCTCBC to staff from Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School and Tonyrefail Community School to ensure that the transition process is as smooth and seamless as possible.

RCTCBC considers that providing education for pupils attending Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School in a larger, new, purpose built 21st century English medium 3 to 19 all through school at Tonyrefail Community School, amongst other benefits, would offer:

- Greater flexibility and opportunity for pupils within a modern, more enhanced educational environment in which they can learn and grow.
- Potential for financial savings in terms of services which accrue within a larger school, which can be reinvested for the benefit of all pupils.
- More opportunities for extra-curricular activities.
- Pupils being taught, in the main, with their year group. Three out of four classes in Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School are mixed year groups.
- Greater opportunities for pupils to socialise and interact with a larger number of peers from their own year group.
- Greater opportunities to provide a seamless transition between primary and secondary education in terms of curriculum planning, learning, and teaching.

The WG and RCTCBC has adopted the United Nations 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.

RCTCBC considers that the proposal benefits the children and young people accordance with the seven core aims set out above.

As set out in the WG's School Organisation Code (2nd Edition) (011/2018), it is a requirement to publish an Equality Impact Assessment. This has been produced and is appended to this Consultation Document and is also available on RCTCBC's website. Further information relating to the impact of the proposal on pupils, including how the proposal contributes to all seven goals of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act 2015 and an assessment of the proposal on the five ways of working, can be found in the Equality Impact Assessment.

Likely Impact on Staff of the Proposal

Should the proposal proceed, it is our intention to recommend to the Governing Body of Tonyrefail Community School that any additional posts required as a result of increased pupil numbers, below senior leadership level, are ringfenced to the existing staff employed at Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School, in the first instance. This process means that staff at Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School would be given the first opportunity to apply for additional posts in Tonyrefail Community School, prior to any posts being advertised externally. If they are successful, they would then simply transfer to Tonyrefail Community School when the proposal is implemented. RCTCBC has well established HR policies and procedures that give reassurance to staff and employers about the management of organisational change. RCTCBC's

HR Team will visit all staff at Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School and make them are aware of the processes that may follow and the operational and personal support that is on offer.

RCTCBC considers that providing education for pupils attending Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School in a larger, new, purpose built 21st century English medium 3 to 19 all through school at Tonyrefail, amongst other benefits, would offer:

- Greater opportunities for progression and professional development for all staff which are created within an all through school environment.
- Less demand on staff as responsibilities for developing the Areas of Learning and Experience, as part of the Curriculum for Wales, and ALN statutory obligations, will be shared.
- Pupils being taught, in the main, with their year group. Three out of four classes in Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School are mixed year groups.

Estyn Information

Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School was inspected by Estyn in February 2017.

At that point in time, Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School's performance was deemed to be adequate whilst its prospects for improvement were good.

The judgements for the key questions were as follows:

Key Questions	Judgement
How good are outcomes?	Adequate.
How good is provision?	Good.
How good are leadership and management?	Good.

Estyn also set out recommendations for Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School to implement in order to make improvements to the quality of education provision on offer. Estyn's recommendations were as follows:

1. Recommendation One – Improve pupils' standards of achievement in oracy and writing.
2. Recommendation Two – Improve pupils' standards of achievement in Welsh second language.
3. Recommendation Three – Improve the achievement of boys, especially in Key Stage Two.
4. Recommendation Four – In the Foundation Phase, address the inconsistencies in provision and improve the use of the outdoor area.
5. Recommendation Five – Improve punctuality and rates of attendance.

Tonyrefail Community School was inspected by Estyn in May 2022.

Estyn set out recommendations for Tonyrefail Community School to implement in order to make improvements to the quality of education provision on offer. Estyn's recommendations were as follows:

1. Recommendation One – Ensure that self-evaluation activities focus on pupils' progress and skills development, and link clearly to precise, robust improvement planning.
2. Recommendation Two – Strengthen provision for and monitoring of the progressive development of pupils' skills across the school.
3. Recommendation Three – Improve provision for developing pupils' Welsh language skills and the promotion of the advantages of learning Welsh, particularly in the middle and upper schools.
4. Recommendation Four – Ensure that teachers consistently plan and deliver sessions that meet the needs of all pupils, particularly the more able.

It is RCTCBC's view that the proposal to close Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School, with pupils transferring to Tonyrefail Community School by no later than September 2025, could have a major positive impact on all five Estyn inspection areas, as detailed below:

1. **Standards (Learning) (Teaching and Learning)** – More pupils will have access to a 21st century learning environment that provides enhanced teaching spaces, dedicated resource areas, stimulating learning environments and state of the art ICT equipment, all of which will support to continue to raise standards, and make progress against Estyn's recommendations. Larger schools have more potential for economies of scale and financial efficiencies which can accrue and be reinvested for the benefit of all pupils.
2. **Wellbeing and Attitudes to Learning (Wellbeing, Care, Support and Guidance)** – Moving pupils from Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School to Tonyrefail Community School, a site with brand new facilities could have a positive impact on pupil wellbeing. Flexible internal spaces are available to deliver additional support to pupils. Extensive outdoor space will provide a diverse and engaging environment for pupils to learn and play in. There could also be greater flexibility for pupils due to an extended, more enhanced educational environment in which to learn and grow, and there will be greater opportunities for pupils to socialise and interact with large numbers of their year group peers.
3. **Teaching and Learning Experiences (Teaching and Learning)** – Moving pupils from Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School, a small school, to the larger Tonyrefail Community School will increase opportunities for interaction, coordination and the sharing of expertise and experience. Pupils of Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School, which has four classes, three of which are made up of mixed year groups, will be able to benefit from being taught in classes of their own age group. A fit for purpose school building helps to provide a balanced curriculum across all age groups in line with the Curriculum for Wales. Smaller schools may find it more difficult to enable staff to develop in-depth specialist knowledge and skills, as they are more likely to hold multiple roles and responsibilities. A 21st century learning environment could also provide greater flexibility and therefore greater choice and variety in pupils' learning experiences.
4. **Care, Support and Guidance (Wellbeing, Care, Support and Guidance)** – The 21st century learning environment at Tonyrefail Community School could provide opportunities for pupils of Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School to further develop a wide range of extra-curricular activities to encourage healthy lifestyles. A fully accessible building and the provision of flexible spaces allows Tonyrefail Community School to extend its good practice and facilitate further interventions,

including ways to nurture pupils as well as continued engagement with families and the local community. Tonyrefail Community School has been designed to comply with 'Secured by Design' standards, which ensure that the school boundary and buildings are fully secure and protected with CCTV. The site perimeter is secure, deterring antisocial behaviour and preventing unauthorised individuals from accessing the site out of school hours.

5. **Leadership and Management (Leading and Improving)** – It is important that leadership in schools is supported by fit for purpose resources that are appropriate for education in the 21st century. The new resources and facilities at Tonyrefail Community School provide effective and supportive learning environments for pupils. Pupils can benefit from suitable and stimulating outdoor areas to play and learn, and the appropriate resources and equipment of a 21st century learning environment ensure that the Curriculum for Wales can be delivered to the required standards. A larger school will provide more professional and progression opportunities for the teaching and support staff and greater scope for distributed models of leadership.

Financial Implications of the Proposal

Should the proposal to close Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School proceed, there will be no capital funding implications.

Any revenue savings resulting as a consequence of the closure of Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School, including the school's delegated budget, will be identified as the proposal develops and incorporated into RCTCBC's Medium Term Financial Planning arrangements and be reinvested into supporting the education of children and young people in Rhondda Cynon Taf.

All schools are allocated funding based on the number of pupils they have on roll and as a result, small schools have far less financial flexibility. As Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School is a small school, it will also face additional pressures as it is not able to benefit from the economies of scale that larger schools can e.g., a greater number of teachers to share the wide range of roles required i.e., Additional Learning Needs Co-ordinator (ALNCO), curriculum leads, attendance, behaviour and safeguarding leads etc.

At the end of the 2023/2024 financial year, the outturn budget set by the respective Governing Bodies at both schools means that Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School will have a deficit balance of £9,057 and Tonyrefail Community School will have a deficit balance of £193,321.60.

At present the cost per pupil for Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School is £6,250.26 and the cost per pupil for Tonyrefail Community School is £5,365.44. Should the proposal proceed, the estimated cost per pupil for Tonyrefail Community School would be £5,242.72.

Schools are facing increased financial pressure from pay awards for staff, which are significantly in excess of the budget uplift provided to Local Government, as well as increased energy costs and other inflationary financial challenges. As a result, for the financial year 2024/2025, if no action is taken, it is estimated that Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School will end the 2024/2025 financial year with a deficit balance of £15,115.98, whilst Tonyrefail Community School will have a deficit of £191,006.

However, should the proposal proceed Tonyrefail Community School will receive an increase in their funding formula as a result of the additional pupils on roll.

Home to School Transport Provision

There is a statutory duty placed on all Council's in Wales to provide pupils with free transport to their nearest suitable school if they reside beyond safe 'walking distance' to that school. The term suitable school applies to the catchment area English, Welsh, dual language or voluntary aided mainstream primary school, secondary school or special school/class as appropriate. The law relating to safe 'walking distance' is defined as two miles for pupils of statutory school age receiving primary education and three miles for pupils of statutory school age (year 7 to 11) receiving secondary education.

RCTCBC has exercised the discretionary powers afforded to it under the provision of the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008 to make a more generous provision to pupils. Following a recent public consultation exercise initiated by RCTCBC's Cabinet, in relation to a proposed new Home to School Transport Policy for RCTCBC, the information set out below is the relevant information in relation to Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School and Tonyrefail Community School:

- The eligibility criteria for walking distance for pupils of statutory school age receiving primary education at their nearest suitable school has been set at 1½ miles, instead of 2 miles as required by the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008.
- Free transport to their nearest suitable school, where places are available, is provided to pupils who meet the 1½ mile eligibility criteria from the start of Foundation Phase, rather than from the start of statutory school as required by the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008.
- 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.

Further information in relation to the RCTCBC's Home to School transport provision can be viewed and downloaded from RCTCBC's website via:

<https://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/EN/Resident/ParkingRoadsandTravel/Travel/SchoolandCollegeTransport/SchoolandCollegeTransport.aspx>

There is approximately 1.2 miles between Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School and Tonyrefail Community School. Should the proposal proceed, there is a safe walking route for the pupils of Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School to walk to Tonyrefail Community School. No pupils in the catchment area of Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School will be entitled to free home to school transport.

In terms of public transport, there is a public transport service bus which runs regularly. The bus stops are in very close proximity to Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School and Tonyrefail Community School. However, the cost and operation of the public transport in the area is not within the remit of RCTCBC to manage.

Land and Buildings Information

Should the proposal proceed, the existing Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School site will become redundant. As this is an initial consultation process no decisions have yet been made in respect of the future of this site and building. However, one option, if the site does become surplus, is to consult with the local community to ascertain whether there is a sustainable community need locally that can be successfully delivered and met from this site. This process will be managed in accordance with RCTCBC's Policy on Surplus Land and Buildings.

Consultation Response Form

To comply with the legal duty under the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013, and help RCTCBC reach a decision on the proposal, it would be helpful if you could answer the following questions. Please note, any personal information given will not be shared and will only be used to provide you with feedback, should you request it. Any comments that could identify you will be anonymised in the Consultation Report produced. Completed Consultation Response Forms should be returned to:

Director of Education and Inclusion Services 21 st Century Schools Valleys Innovation Centre Navigation Park Abercynon CF45 4SN	OR	schoolplanning@rctcbc.gov.uk
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The proposal:

To close Tref-Y-Rhyg Primary School with pupils transferring to Tonyrefail Community School.

Do you agree with the proposal?	Yes		No		Not Sure	
<i>Please tick</i>						

Please let us know the reasons for your choice.

Do you think the proposal could impact opportunities for people to use and promote the Welsh Language (Positive or Negative)?

Equality Monitoring Form

RCTCBC is committed to the principle of equal opportunities and having a clear picture of the equality profile of our consultation respondents can help monitor the effectiveness of our equal opportunities policies and procedures. We conduct monitoring in order to identify gaps in access to our services, and make targeted changes where gaps are identified. Data is only used to improve services and in reporting.

You are entirely free to decide whether or not to complete this form and there are no consequences of failing to do so. We do not intend on capturing any personal identifiable information through this form. Please be mindful of this in the responses you provide within the free text areas. In the instance where you do provide us with information about yourself or others, RCTCBC will ensure it will be processed in line with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 2018 and only used for monitoring and reporting purposes.

Age:

1. How old are you?

- 16-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65-74
- 75+
- Prefer not to say.

Sex:

2. Are you:

- Female
- Male
- Prefer not to say.

A question on Gender Identity will be asked later.

Do you identify as:

- Non-binary
- Trans
- N/A
- Prefer not to say.

If you prefer your own term, please provide this here: _____

Which of the follow best describes your sexual orientation?

- Bisexual
- Gay man
- Gay woman/Lesbian
- Heterosexual/Straight
- Prefer not to say.

Gender Identity:

3. Is the gender you identify with the same as your sex registered at birth?

- Yes
- No, please write in your gender: _____
- Prefer not to say.

Sexual Orientation:

4. Which of the follow best describes your sexual orientation?

- Bisexual
- Gay man
- Gay woman/Lesbian
- Heterosexual/Straight
- Prefer not to say.

If you prefer to use your own term, please provide this here: _____

National Identity:

5. How would you describe your national identity?

- British
- Cornish
- English
- Irish
- Northern Irish
- Scottish
- Welsh
- Other (please describe): _____
- Prefer _____ not _____ to _____ say

Ethnicity:

6. How would you describe your ethnic origin?

- Arab
- Asian: British
- Asian or Asian British: Bangladeshi
- Asian or Asian British: Chinese
- Asian: Cornish
- Asian: English
- Asian or Asian British: Indian
- Asian: Irish
- Asian: Northern Irish
- Asian or Asian British: Pakistani
- Asian: Scottish
- Asian or Asian British: Other East Asian
- Asian or Asian British: Other South Asian
- Asian: Welsh
- Asian or Asian British: Other (please describe): _____
- Black: British
- Black or Black British: African
- Black or Black British: Caribbean

- Black: Cornish
- Black: English
- Black: Irish
- Black: Northern Irish
- Black: Scottish
- Black: Welsh
- Black, Black British or Black African: Other (please describe): _____
- English Gypsy
- Irish Gypsy
- Irish Traveller
- Scottish Gypsy
- Scottish Traveller
- Welsh Gypsy
- Mixed/Multiple: African & Caribbean
- Mixed/Multiple: Black British and White
- Mixed/Multiple: Black African & White
- Mixed/Multiple: Black Caribbean & White
- Mixed/Multiple: East Asian & White
- Mixed/Multiple: South Asian & White
- Mixed/Multiple: Other (please describe): _____
- Roma
- Sinti
- White: British
- White: Cornish
- White: English
- White: Gypsy
- White: Irish
- White: Irish Traveller
- White: Northern Irish
- White: Scottish
- White: Welsh
- White: Other (please describe): _____
- Prefer not to say.

If other Ethnic Group or if you would prefer to use your own definition, please specify:

Disability:

7. Do you consider yourself to be disabled?

'The definition of disability as defined under the Equality Act (2010) is 'a *physical or mental impairment which has a substantial or long term adverse effect on the ability to carry out day-to-day activities*'.

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say.

Religion or belief:

8. What is your religion or belief?

- Buddhist

- Christian (including Church of Wales, Catholic, Protestant and all other denominations)
- Hindu
- Jewish
- Muslim
- Non-religious (e.g. Atheist, Humanist etc.)
- Sikh
- Prefer not to say.

If other Religion or Belief, or if you prefer to use your own definition, please provide this here: _____

Caring Responsibilities

9. Do you look after, or support family members, friends, neighbours or others because of either: a long term physical or mental condition/disability or problems related to old age?

- No
- Yes, 1-19 hours a week.
- Yes, 20-49 hours a week.
- Yes, 50 or more hours a week.
- Prefer not to say.

Pregnancy and maternity

10. Are you currently pregnant, or have you been pregnant within the last 12 months?

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say.

11. Have you taken (or are you currently taking) maternity leave in the last 12 months?

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say.

Veterans and Armed Forces

12. Have you ever, or are you currently, serving in the Armed Forces?

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say.

- I do not wish to provide any of the information requested on this form.**