



**CYNGOR BWRDEISTREF SIROL
RHONDDA CYNON TAF
COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

COMMITTEE SUMMONS

C.Hanagan
Service Director of Democratic Services & Communication
Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council
The Pavilions
Cambrian Park
Clydach Vale CF40 2XX

Meeting Contact: Tracy Watson - Senior Democratic & Scrutiny Officer (07747 485567)

YOU ARE SUMMONED to a virtual meeting of the **EDUCATION AND INCLUSION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** to be held on **THURSDAY, 14TH SEPTEMBER, 2023** at **5.00 PM.**

Non Committee Members and Members of the public may request the facility to address the Committee at their meetings on the business listed although facilitation of this request is at the discretion of the Chair. It is kindly asked that such notification is made to Democratic Services by Tuesday, 12 September 2023 on the contact details listed above, including stipulating whether the address will be in Welsh or English.

AGENDA

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SCRUTINY RESEARCH

A scrutiny research facility is available within the Council Business Unit to support Members' scrutiny responsibilities and their roles as Elected Members. Such research strengthens Scrutiny Committee work programmes to ensure outcome-based topics are identified. For any scrutiny research requirements please contact scrutiny@rctcbc.gov.uk

1. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

To receive disclosures of personal interest from Members in accordance with the Code of Conduct

Note:

1. Members are requested to identify the item number and subject matter that their interest relates to and signify the nature of the

personal interest: and

2. Where Members withdraw from a meeting as a consequence of the disclosure of a prejudicial interest they must notify the Chairman when they leave.

2. MINUTES

To approve as an accurate record the minutes of the hybrid meeting of the Education and Inclusion Scrutiny Committee held on the 19th July 2023.

5 - 16

REPORTS OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, DEMOCRATIC SERVICES AND COMMUNICATIONS

3. CONSULTATION LINKS

Information is provided in respect of relevant [consultations](#) for consideration by the Committee.

4. PROPOSALS TO DEVELOP A NEW SPECIAL SCHOOL IN RHONDDA CYNON TAF

To consider the consultation which proposes to develop a 3-19 new special school in Rhondda Cynon Taf (RCT), as outlined in the report.

17 - 118

5. CONSULTATION ON THE PROPOSALS TO REALIGN ADDITIONAL LEARNING NEEDS MAINSTREAM LEARNING SUPPORT CLASS PROVISION WITHIN RHONDDA CYNON TAF

Pre-Scrutiny – For Members to scrutinise and make any recommendations to the report before presenting to Cabinet.

119 - 244

6. CHAIR'S REVIEW AND CLOSE

To reflect on the meeting and actions to be taken forward.

7. URGENT BUSINESS

To consider any items, which the Chairman, by reason of special circumstances, is of the opinion should be considered at the meeting as a matter of urgency.

Service Director of Democratic Services & Communication

Circulation:-

The Chair and Vice-Chair of the Education and Inclusion Scrutiny Committee

(County Borough Councillor S Evans and County Borough Councillor K Webb respectively)

County Borough Councillors:

Councillor M Ashford, Councillor J Brencher, Councillor J Cook, Councillor J Elliott, Councillor S Emanuel, Councillor R Evans, Councillor S Hickman, Councillor C Lises, Councillor M Maohoub, Councillor C Preedy, Councillor J Smith and Councillor D Wood

Co-Opted Members:-

Mr P Booth, Voting Diocesan Authorities Representative
Mr M Cleverley, Representing NASUWT and Teachers' Panel
Ms A Jones, Representing UNITE
Mr C Jones, Representing GMB
Mrs R Lydon, Voting Elected Parent / Governor Representative
Mr L Patterson, Voting Elected Parent / Governor Representative
Mr D Price, Representing UNISON
Mr M Thomas, Representing NEU
Mr M Veale, Voting Elected Parent / Governor Representative

Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg / This document is also available in Welsh

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RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNCIL EDUCATION AND INCLUSION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the hybrid meeting of the Education and Inclusion Scrutiny Committee held on Wednesday, 19 July 2023 at 5.00 pm.

This meeting was live streamed, details of which can be accessed [here](#)

County Borough Councillors – The following Education and Inclusion Scrutiny Committee Councillors were present in the Council Chamber:-

Councillor S Evans (Chair)

Councillor M Ashford Councillor S Emanuel
Councillor S Hickman Councillor M Maohoub
Councillor C Preedy

The following Education and Inclusion Scrutiny Committee Councillors were present online:-

Councillor K Webb Councillor J Brencher
Councillor J Cook Councillor C Lises

Co-Opted Members in attendance:-

Mrs R Lydon, Voting Elected Parent / Governor Representative
Mr M Thomas, Representing NEU
Mr M Veale, Voting Elected Parent / Governor Representative

Officers in attendance:-

Ms G Davies, Director of Education and Inclusion Services
Ms C Edwards, Head of Service Transformance, Admissions and Governance
Mr C Hanagan, Service Director of Democratic Services & Communication
Mr T Britton, Head of Achievement RCT – primary sector
Mr P Nicholls, Service Director, Legal Services
Mr R Evans, Director of Human Resources
Mrs T Watson, Senior Democratic and Scrutiny Officer

6 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies of absence were received from County Borough Councillors Smith and Wood and Co-opted Member Mr Booth.

7 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

In accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct, there were no declarations made pertaining to the agenda.

8 MINUTES

It was **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the 27th April and 20th June 2023 as an accurate reflection of the meetings.

9 CONSULTATION LINKS

Members were reminded that following circulation of the open consultations being run by Welsh Government (WG) recently, there was one consultation, which they may be interested in completing.

10 DRAFT WORK PROGRAMME 2023-24

The Service Director Democratic Services and Communications presented his report which sought Members' comments and approval on the Committee's draft Work Programme for the 2023-24 Municipal Year. Members were provided with the background at Section 4.1 to 4.3 and advised that a revised programme was considered by Cabinet, which the Overview and Scrutiny Committee would consider in September which would feed back into this Committee. The Service Director Democratic Services and Communications then continued through Section 5 of the report, Scrutiny areas for consideration, and highlighted to Members that in considering any areas they may wish to amend or add to, it was important to identify where maximum value could be achieved, acknowledging that this was a particularly busy committee with a wide-ranging remit, so it was important to provide that focus and identify matters that could add value and form policy development.

The Chair thanked the Service Director Democratic Services and Communications for presenting the report.

Following discussion between Members and Officers the following amendments / additions to the FWP, were agreed:

- Move the report on Estyn Recommendations from unallocated to the Autumn term;
- Move the School Attendance data report forward, from the Spring term to the Autumn term;
- Move the report on Post 16 Curriculum offer from unallocated to the Spring term.
- Add an item on Travel Plans, to the unallocated.

Following consideration, it was **RESOLVED** to:

1. Agree the issues for inclusion on the Education and Inclusion Scrutiny Committee's Work Programme for the 2023/24 Municipal Year (as set out in **Appendix A**) with appropriate amendments as necessary;
2. Request that the Service Director Democratic Services & Communications notifies the appropriate Cabinet Member and responsible Officer, of the matters identified for pre-scrutiny in advance of Cabinet consideration;
3. Agree that the Work Programme be reviewed at regular intervals to

ensure the items identified for inclusion are relevant and that any additional referrals are incorporated; and

4. Consider, where appropriate, any items which could be presented to the Committee as Information Reports, to allow Members the flexibility to consider any urgent item or the opportunity for some unallocated items already identified by the Committee to be brought forward for Members consideration.
5. Consider and determine any other matter that Members may wish to scrutinise over this period.

11 REPORT ON A TASK AND FINISH GROUP IN RELATION TO THE REPORT ON SCHOOL MODERNISATION - UPDATE ON BAND B SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES FOR LEARNING PROGRAMME

The Service Director, Democratic Services and Communication provided Members with information regarding the report on a Task and Finish Group in relation to the report on School Modernisation – update on Band B Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme. The Service Director, Democratic Services and Communication took Members through the background at Section 3, noting in particular, that Members had received Estyn’s Report on Education Services in Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council, at their meeting on the 20th June 2023, and highlighted the response from Estyn, at 3.4 of the report, before taking Members through the proposed way forward and next steps.

The Chair thanked the Service Director, Democratic Services and Communications for presenting the report.

A Member was fully supportive of the T&F Group but saw this as a two-track process, so the need for some kind of written report or analysis to compliment any visits.

The Service Director, Democratic Services and Communications explained that through scrutiny resources, it was hoped to capture and provide the feedback provided through the forums and then at key junctures, throughout that process, and feedback those findings to the Committee. He hoped from a scrutiny perspective it would be how the Committee could provide meaningful recommendations, so should Council ever consider taking forward strategic re-organisation proposals, that those were the issues they could be mindful of, and then it would be on the part of Cabinet, advised by the Director, in terms of which recommendations, all or part, that they adopted.

The Director of Education and Inclusion Services explained she was mindful of the fact that the Band B Programme was currently in implementation, so if the Committee was seeking an evaluation of the impact of this investment, then they should perhaps be looking at Band A schools as this programme had been finalised for a number of years. A robust assessment and evaluation of the issues, challenges, and benefits of the Band B programme at this point in time would be more challenging as these developments were ongoing.

A Member, having read the report, and noting Section 3.4 of the report, asked for clarification of the value of the T&F group, given that Band B schools were in the implementation stage now.

The Service Director, Democratic Services and Communications acknowledged there was always a challenge with scrutiny work programming that sometimes the ability for Members to have that broader understanding of some of the issues, was restricted by a Committee environment. The T&F group added value in terms of Members delving deeper, and so it was about approaching this with the view of seeking to develop very specific recommendations, to inform future proposals, would in effect be the purpose of the task and finish group.

The Chair suggested, it was almost starting with the end e.g., what does the group want to achieve, what are the learnings, etc., so it was absolutely clear, before embarking on that piece of work, whilst acknowledging the positive feedback from Estyn.

A Member stated that they had been told at a previous meeting, that no evaluation internally had been done of the processing and development of the Band A schools. This was an opportunity to do that, as part of the T&F group, so that moving forward if such schemes were done again, lessons were learnt, making the best use of the resources, and saving money.

A Member sought clarification around the mention of 3 – 19 schools and assumed that all through schools were included in this, not just a particular category of school.

The Director of Education and Inclusion Services, picking up on the point on the outcomes of Band A, explained that the outcomes of schools, were included as part of the CSC, Exclusions and Attendance reports presented to the Committee annually. Additionally, CSC provided a summary of Estyn's inspection outcomes, so there was some evidence of the performance of the schools that had benefited from Band A investment. An evaluation of Band A was a complex area, and it was important, in exploring this, to get the focus right.

Following consideration, it was **RESOLVED** to

1. Acknowledge the content of the report & consider the suggested proposed way forward and next steps; and
2. Request that the Service Director Democratic Services & Communication make the necessary arrangements.

(Note: The lost motion not to pursue a task and finish group in view of the fact that Estyn had no recommendations or concerns, that they agreed that the school organisation proposals considered the needs of the community, promoted equality and provision for pupils, and as Band B schools were in the implementation phase, and in view of the Committee's busy work programme was proposed by Councillor S Emanuel).

12 EDUCATION WORKFORCE DATA

The Director of Education and Inclusion Services provided Members with information regarding the update on education workforce data across the 115 schools in Rhondda Cynon Taf, and specific data relating to the Welsh medium workforce, noting this was a joint report with colleagues from HR, which drew on 3 key data sources. The Director of Education and Inclusion Services took Members through the background at Section 4, before taking Members through

Section 5, in relation to the iTrent data, and provided an overview of teaching data (all sectors) as detailed in Appendix 1; teaching staff (Welsh medium) data in Appendix 2; and support staff data as highlighted in Appendix 3, before taking Members through the PLASC data, at Section 6. The Director of Education and Inclusion Services continued to take Members through Welsh Language Data at Section 7 before summarising the conclusions at Section 14, of the report.

The Chair thanked the Director of Education and Inclusion Services for presenting the report.

A Member sought clarification about retention in core subjects e.g., Physics.

The Director of Education and Inclusion Services acknowledged that recruiting teachers for core subject areas was a challenge in both English and Welsh medium sectors, but particularly so in the Welsh medium sector. It was challenging to grow the numbers of teachers available, and she was uncertain how successful Universities were in meeting Welsh Government's ambitious targets for initial teacher education. The service was very cognisant that there was movement in the system, and the challenge was retaining staff.

A Member asked what was being done to encourage non-speaking Welsh school staff to take up opportunities to learn Welsh.

The Director of Education and Inclusion Services explained that as part of the recruitment campaign, HR had been going out to record people, in order to share their different experiences, and put those success stories on the Council website, to demonstrate how people can transition into different roles and sectors. As part of outcome 7 of the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan, which focuses on sufficiency of staff in the Welsh medium sector, we can see that there hasn't been enough growth in this area. There is more to do, to encourage access to the training that is available. There is a marketing sub-group, which promotes the message, alongside the re-vamping of the website to attract potential staff. There are also staff in the English Medium sector, that lack the confidence to teach in Welsh, but with the right support could potentially move to the Welsh medium. There is lots of work to be done and it was going to be challenging to secure this growth in staffing, but there was a commitment to try and improve this aspect.

A Member asked how many times did children have a class where the teacher was not a specialist.

The Director of Education and Inclusion Services explained that the data, wasn't collated but the Welsh Medium sector in particular have to be really creative about upskilling staff, who may not be subject specialists to teach a broader range of subjects, as it was important for someone to be in front of children teaching them with the right skills and knowledge. It was about ensuring access to the right professional learning, and tapping into the support from CSC, but also promoting different routes into teaching e.g., graduates working in teaching support posts accessing further training to become teachers. There was a lot of creativity in the system to tackle this, but no quick solution to this national challenge.

The Member then asked if this had an impact on Education outcomes.

The Director of Education and Inclusion Services acknowledged that all school leaders wanted children to have access to highly specialist staff, and one of the Directorate's strategic priorities, was around ensuring that all children were being taught a transformational curriculum, that improved outcomes. In CSC, all the professional learning that is offered focuses on upskilling the workforce, so that they are well placed to deliver an exciting curriculum. It was hoped that not having access to subject specialists had diminished significantly since the pandemic, but staff absence and recruitment challenges still occur. The data showed that mental health was an issue, but HR, did a lot to support the wellbeing of the workforce through occupational health support, with professionals that not only raised awareness, but tried to support people to get back into work.

The Director, Human Resources, also provided the Member with information regarding support for staff, explaining the dedicated support for school staff, which took place after 3pm, so as not to impact on the school day, as well as the introduction of CARI with regards to mental health.

A Member picking up on the high percentage of leavers after one year of service, asked if there was a regular monitoring service of newly qualified teachers and sought clarification around the percentage.

The Director of Education and Inclusion Services agreed that the support provided was critical. When CSC brings their annual report to the committee, it explains all the mechanisms available to support newly qualified teachers. It was acknowledged that retention of staff was key, alongside understanding the current pressures facing the workforce in the post pandemic phase, with pupils' re-engagement in education and behaviour. As a newly qualified teacher, it was noted that it was important that the support was there, so that newly qualified teachers don't find the challenges overwhelming. Schools were pretty strong on the whole in terms of retaining staff.

The Head of Achievement RCT – primary sector, pointed Members towards the CSC website, and highlighted that under 'NQT induction,' this showed all the support provided. CSC had a team of people that worked closely with NQT's, to ensure they achieved the standards.

The Chair, on behalf of a Member sought clarification around temporary staff, transitioning to permanent.

The Director, Human Resources explained that a lot of staff were initially taken on, on temporary contracts, often due to funding arrangements. The Director, Human Resources explained he would need to drill down a bit more in terms of those that moved from temporary to permanent, although this was often normal, in terms of progression.

The Member also asked if there was a supply pool in RCT, and if teachers used the Teacher Booker system.

The Director, Human Resources explained that there hadn't been an RCT dedicated supply pool for a number of years, although there were small pockets of internal supply staff managed by each individual school, but these tended to be allocated to specific schools. In terms of the Teacher Booker system, the current understanding was that it was not currently fully functional but that there was work ongoing between the WLGA and WG, to rectify this, so it could be

used at a point in time.

A Member asked what was being done to retain teachers or move them to other schools, where schools were downsizing, as a result of the financial crises.

The Director, Human Resources acknowledged that where any redundancy occurred, they would look to redeploy those teachers to other schools, or use a bump redundancy arrangement, which had been successful over the years. This would be done for support staff as well, as part of the Council's management of change process. It was noted however, that schools had to agree to take staff on, because governing bodies were autonomous, so there was no guarantee that all staff could be re-deployed.

A Member sought clarification, around the return on investment in respect of social media campaigns, noting they had not seen teaching posts advertised yet.

The Director, Human Resources explained he didn't have the costs to hand, but referred to the recent social media campaigns, in relation to social care and cleaning staff, which had been very successful, so anecdotal evidence would say it had been very successful.

The Director of Education and Inclusion Services explained that the promotional and marketing activity was in development now with the targeted social media campaign planned for the future.

The Member sought clarification around the geographical spread of teachers and support staff e.g., how many lived in county and out of county, etc.

The Director, Human Resources explained that this information could be collated, and shared with Members.

The Member, referring to the Educator Wales, and initial teacher training asked if the WG targets were realistic, and what was being done in order to achieve them.

The Director of Education and Inclusion Services explained that WG were thinking of creative solutions to tackle this and there are workforce plans in place. Recruitment is challenging, and something that is flagged up as a challenge and concern, in the All-Wales meetings.

Following consideration, it was **RESOLVED** to

1. Note that Members had reviewed and scrutinised the content of the report; and
2. Considered whether they wished to scrutinise any parts in greater depth and require further reports in future.

13 SCHOOL ADMISSIONS

The Head of Service Transformance, Admissions and Governance provided Members with a summary of the annual school admissions process, which provided an update on developments within school admissions in the admissions year 2022/2023 and application dates for the forthcoming 2023/2024 admissions year. The Head of Service Transformance, Admissions and Governance then

took Members through Section 4, which provided a summary of the normal/annual routine admissions, applications for the academic year 2022/23, appeals processes, late applications, parental responsibility, all through schools, the timetable for 2023/2024, waiting lists and admissions at other times. Section 5 then clarified in more detail the Welsh Medium transfers, with a breakdown provided. Section 6 then outlined the admissions for learners with special education needs, and the Head of Service Transformance, Admissions and Governance concluded with Section 7, which detailed the Fair Access Panel.

The Chair thanked the Head of Service Transformance, Admissions and Governance for presenting the report.

A Member sought clarification in relation to transfers from Year 6 to Year 7.

The Head of Service Transformance, Admissions and Governance noted there was parental choice, noting there was no such thing as feeder primaries, just associated schools, so this meant adhering to the statutory admissions code. This meant a child from Year 6 in an All-through school could apply to Year 7, in another school.

A Member referring to in-year transfers, sought clarification if these were internal transfers in RCT only, or included pupils coming into the county borough. The Member also noted in the case of secondary schools, the number of in-year transfers seemed high, and asked if it was known why.

The Head of Service Transformance, Admissions and Governance explained in relation to in-year transfers, that 51.81% were due to house moves, although there were other issues, but unfortunately, there was no legal right to ask for the reasons why. With regards to secondary schools, there was an in-year transfer officer, and when parents moved between schools, the officer met with parents, to try and understand the reasons, before the transfer took place.

A Member sought clarification around why people were opting to send their children to a church school, for example, rather than their associated school.

The Head of Service Transformance, Admissions and Governance explained that faith schools were their own admissions authority, and it was entirely parental choice, with parents often applying to 2 schools, 1 RCT school and 1 faith school.

The Member noted that it was difficult trying to plan strategically, when there was significant changes in numbers, and asked if there was any work that could be done.

The Head of Service Transformance, Admissions and Governance explained that one thing that had been done was to email all primary schools with their pupil number projections, in order to identify which secondary schools, the potential children they've got, so they could work closely with associated primary schools. The other thing that was done with secondary schools, when the admission process shuts in October, was to cross reference with faith schools, where there were duplicate applications. If there were particular schools where there was a high percentage of children who had applied to faith schools, a conversation was had with the primary headteacher, to find out why, but ultimately it came down to parental choice.

The Director of Education and Inclusion Services explained that in terms of transition, most schools would support transition to multiple schools. In terms of associated schools, they were duty bound to have sufficient spaces in particular areas to meet the local need, but this could be challenging if a shift or trend was seen, e.g., a brand-new school inevitably attracts high applications. Conversations take place, from a school improvement perspective, when trends relating to school admissions start to shift but legislation does support parents to choose.

A Member referring to the table at 4.2, around the Year 7 Sept 2022, 2nd, and 3rd preference, and asked if this was around capacity. The Member sought clarification around the appeals process, noting there were 23 appeals, of which 20 were successful.

The Head of Service Transformance, Admissions and Governance explained that the appeals panel, was in 2 parts, with the local authority and the Head of Service Transformance, Admissions and Governance having to work on facts and figures, and on a calculation basis, if a school was full, whereas the panel would take account of individual circumstances, with quite a significant number of diverse reasons why parents and children had specially requested a school, that the admissions authority couldn't take into account. When parents put their case forward, the Head of Service Transformance, Admissions and Governance had to be black and white, and say the school was full, whereas the appellants could put a case forward, that the panel could take account of, therefore the panel had the authority to overrule a local authority decision, with whatever the decision the panel makes, being legal binding, for the local authority and the school.

A Member, referring to admissions to Welsh Medium primary schools, noted that as demand was increasing, what arrangements were in place, for over-subscription and had entry ever been refused, because there were no spaces.

The Head of Service Transformance, Admissions and Governance explained, people could only appeal for reception upwards, and to date, they had never had to refuse any child a place in a Welsh Medium school, although alternative provision had been offered for nursery schools, where they were full.

A Member asked if there were figures for in-year transfer from English Medium to Welsh Medium, and suggested that after the immersion work was completed, this was something that could be reported on.

The Head of Service Transformance, Admissions and Governance explained that in regard to the immersion work, when the meetings were held with the new Band B schools, moving forward, the immersion teacher attended, to explain to the parents what the options were for Welsh Medium and the English Medium sector, so that was beginning to be promoted.

A Member, referring to 4.2, age ineligible to apply, Pre-Nursery Jan 2023 column 406, and asked what was done in order to make sure parents knew when to apply.

The Head of Service Transformance, Admissions and Governance, explained that this referred to where parents had applied, and their child was too young, so the advertising and promotion had been increased, including attending the Teddy Bears picnic, with potentially 3k parents in attendance and was very

successful as well as explaining to health visitors when the dates were. Where parents had applied too quickly, they were moved forward to the eligible date.

The Member referred to 4.5, parental responsibility, and asked about the number of cases.

The Head of Service Transformance, Admissions and Governance, acknowledged there were incidences, but that they tried to keep out of these cases as much as possible which is why the child benefit situation was introduced, with the parent with parental responsibility for child benefit, the overruling one.

A Member referred to page 69 and asked if was possible to have a breakdown of in-year transfers by ALN.

The Head of Service Transformance, Admissions and Governance, confirmed she could provide the breakdown in regard to ALN, in terms of the PLASC return.

The Member referred to section 7, in relation to the Fair Access Panel (FAP), noting there were 55 referrals, and asked of the 12 that were parental IYT requests, were these placed in line with their preference.

The Head of Service Transformance, Admissions and Governance explained in regard to FAP, these were hard to place children, with various emotional problems, who could be quite challenging, so it was about supporting parents and children, when they were moving schools, so they were given as much support and encouragement to be placed in the optimum school for those children.

The Chair felt that it would be good to hear from the officer directly, when exclusions were looked at next time, with some anonymised case studies, to bring that work to life.

The Chair concluded by acknowledging that there was a lot of work that goes on, and not just administrative, but mediation work, communication with parents, etc., and there was a need to acknowledge that, and asked the Head of Service Transformance, Admissions and Governance to pass that recognition on to her team, from the Committee.

Following consideration, it was **RESOLVED** to:

1. Acknowledge the contents of the report and consider whether they wish to scrutinise any parts in greater depth.

14 CHAIR'S REVIEW AND CLOSE

The Chair thanked Officers for their detailed reports and diligence in answer questions and thanked Members for their engagement and contributions, before reminding Members that the next meeting of the Committee was on Thursday 28th September 2023, and reminded Members to contact the Senior Democratic and Scrutiny Officer regarding the 'Food and Fun' School Holiday Enrichment Programme, which would take place on Wednesday 9th August 2023, if they wished to attend.

15 URGENT BUSINESS

None.

This meeting closed at 7.02 pm

**Cllr S Evans
Chair**

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RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

MUNICIPAL YEAR 2023-24

EDUCATION AND INCLUSION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

14TH SEPTEMBER 2023

CONSULTATION ON A PROPOSAL TO DEVELOP A NEW 3-19 SPECIAL SCHOOL IN RHONDDA CYNON TAF

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES AND COMMUNICATION

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1. For Members of the Education and Inclusion Scrutiny Committee to formally respond to the Council's [consultation](#) which proposes to develop a 3-19 new special school in Rhondda Cynon Taf (RCT).

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:

- 2.1. Consider responding as consultees upon the proposals detailed below in paragraph 5.
- 2.2. Consider as a committee, to provide further comments, observations or recommendations in respect of these proposals prior to Cabinet consideration.
- 2.3. Request the Service Director for Democratic Services & Communications to provide Cabinet with the feedback of the Education and Inclusion Scrutiny Committee.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1. To provide Members of the Education and Inclusion Scrutiny Committee with the opportunity to respond to the consultation by 14th September 2023, so that it can have its say on the proposal to develop a new 3-19 special school in Rhondda Cynon Taf (RCT).

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1. At the meeting of Cabinet held on 28th June 2023, approval was given to begin a process of formal consultation on proposals to develop a New Special School In Rhondda Cynon Taf.
- 4.2. The consultation in respect of these proposals will be undertaken between 3rd July and 14th September 2023 under the arrangements outlined in the Welsh Government's School Organisation Code. These arrangements stipulate that consultation must be undertaken when the proposals are at a formative stage and that Consultation Documents must be prepared and circulated to prescribed consultees, as well as being published on the Council website.
- 4.3. The Cabinet report appended at **Appendix 1**, includes the Consultation Document at **Appendix A** which provides details on the introduction, background to the proposal, the likely impact of the proposal, and consultation response form. The Equality Impact Assessment is detailed in **Appendix B** and the Welsh Language Impact Assessment is detailed in **Appendix C**.

5. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS/SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY

- 5.1. An Equality Impact Assessment is not needed because the contents of this report are for information purposes only.

6. WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1. There are no Welsh language implications arising from this report.

7. CONSULTATION/INVOLVEMENT

- 7.1. The involvement of the Education and Inclusion Scrutiny Committee as consultee, will contribute to the quality and robustness of Cabinet decision-making.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1. There are no financial implications aligned to this report.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

- 9.1. The report has been prepared in accordance with paragraph Part 4 of the Constitution (Overview & Scrutiny Procedure Rules).

10. CONCLUSION

- 10.1. The Education and Inclusion Scrutiny Committee, in line with its Terms of Reference, has been afforded the opportunity to respond to the consultation published on the 3rd July 2023.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

as amended by

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS:

EDUCATION AND INCLUSION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

**CONSULTATION ON A PROPOSAL TO DEVELOP A NEW 3-19 SPECIAL
SCHOOL IN RHONDDA CYNON TAF**

14TH SEPTEMBER 2023

**REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR DEMOCRATIC SERVICES &
COMMUNICATIONS**

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RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

28TH JUNE 2023

**PROPOSALS TO DEVELOP A NEW SPECIAL SCHOOL
IN RHONDDA CYNON TAF**

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND INCLUSION SERVICES IN
DISCUSSION WITH THE CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION, YOUTH
PARTICIPATION AND WELSH LANGUAGE (COUNCILLOR R LEWIS)**

AUTHOR(S):

Gaynor Davies, Director of Education and Inclusion Services and
Andrea Richards, Service Director of 21st Century Schools and Transformation.

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 Following the report to Cabinet from the Director of Education and Inclusion Services, on the [26th September 2022](#), regarding the proposal to develop a new special school in Rhondda Cynon Taf (RCT), the purpose of this report is to:
- 1.2 Seek formal approval to begin the relevant and required statutory consultation for the proposal to open a new 3 to 19 special school in RCT. The consultation will also include the introduction of catchment areas for all 3 to 19 special schools across RCT, these are:
 - Park Lane Special School
 - Ysgol Hen Felin
 - Ysgol Ty Coch.
- 1.3 Provide an update to Cabinet, regarding the submission of the variation to the approved Strategic Outline Programme in accordance with the Welsh Government's Sustainable Communities for Learning funding approval processes.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:

- 2.1 Note the content of this report.

- 2.2 Give formal approval to commence a statutory consultation with relevant stakeholders on the proposal to:
- 2.2.1 Build a new 3 to 19 special school in RCT on a new site.
 - 2.2.2 Introduce catchment areas for all 3 to 19 special schools across RCT (as listed in 1.2), to better meet and manage the demand for special school places.
 - 2.2.3 Note that children and young people who wish to remain in their existing special school special school placements following the catchment changes can continue to do so. However, all new placements will be informed by the revised catchment areas once the changes are implemented so that learners attend their local special school.
 - 2.2.4 Subject to 2.2.1 and 2.2.2 above, give formal approval to report back to Cabinet to consider the Consultation Report and determine whether to publish the Consultation Report and approve the publication of the proposal in the form of a Statutory Notice.
 - 2.2.5 Subject to 2.2.1 and 2.2.2 above, give delegated authority to the Director of Education and Inclusion Services to make any minor changes required to the draft Consultation Document (attached at Appendix A) prior to its publication and the statutory consultation commencing.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To acknowledge the statutory duties placed upon the Council to deliver the obligations of the [Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal \(Wales\) Act 2018](#) (ALNET Act 2018), will compound the pressures placed on special schools and the Council's capacity to provide a statutory provision for the pupils who require it.
- 3.2 To secure appropriate special school provision for pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) and mitigate against potential long-term budgetary pressures for the Council resulting from out of county and independent placements.
- 3.3 To better meet and manage the demand for special school places across RCT, helping to ensure that pupils are allocated places in the special school nearest their home.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 Previous reports presented to Cabinet by the Director of Education and Inclusion Services ([25th February 2021](#), [4th October 2021](#) and [26th September 2022](#)) highlighted the pressures faced by our special schools as the number of pupils placed in these specialist provisions are increasing on an annual basis. Children's needs are becoming more complex and there is a need to meet demand for placements for some of our most vulnerable children living in RCT. The data presented clearly showed that the demand on the Council's special school provision was significant and the trend data indicated that this

pressure would continue to rise. Since February 2021, the special school population has grown by 94 learners which is a significant growth.

- 4.2 The previous reports presented to Cabinet (linked in 4.1) also described the limitations of each special school site, and the conclusion reached was that all opportunities to significantly extend and increase capacities had been explored and, where possible, undertaken. Since the last report was presented to Cabinet on [26th September 2022](#), works funded by the Council, to maximise the available space on our special schools has continued to be an ongoing priority. By September 2023, an additional two-classrooms will be added to Park Lane Special School and by September 2024, a three-classroom extension will be added to Maesgwyn Special School.
- 4.3 Options and alternatives to expand the existing special school sites have been exhausted and the only feasible alternative is to build a new 3 to 19 special school on a new site, significantly growing the special school provision within RCT and increasing the number of special schools in RCT from four to five. Creating a highly specialist 21st century special school environment will enable the Council to meet the needs of pupils requiring access to highly specialist therapeutic facilities, equipment and resources required to meet all needs, including complex medical and health needs.
- 4.4 Given the considerable changes planned in Wales in relation to the statutory provision required to meet the needs of pupils with ALN with the implementation of the [ALNET Act 2018](#), building a new 3 to 19 special school in RCT, and creating further capacity in our current provision, will also ensure that the Council can continue to meet its statutory obligations.
- 4.5 Following the report to Cabinet from the Director of Education and Inclusion Services on the [26th September 2022](#), the Council's 21st Century Schools Team have successfully submitted a variation to the approved Strategic Outline Programme to the Welsh Government in accordance with the Sustainable Communities for Learning funding approval processes. The agreed capital funding envelope to deliver a new 3 to 19 special school in RCT had increased to £53.4 million, with the Welsh Government funding this project by up to 75.0%.

5. WHERE ARE WE NOW

- 5.1 There are currently 670 pupils (PLASC, 2023) accessing four special schools across RCT with a range of needs, these are:
- Maesgwyn Special School, Cwmdare, Aberdare
 - Park Lane Special School, Trecynon, Aberdare
 - Ysgol Hen Felin, Ystrad, Tonypany
 - Ysgol Ty Coch, Tonteg, Pontypridd
 - Buarth y Capel, Ynysybwl, Pontypridd (satellite site of Ysgol Ty Coch for learners with very complex ASD).
- 5.2 However, as previously reported, it has become increasingly apparent that the special schools currently available are insufficient to meet the growth in

demand. In view of this, a data analysis exercise has been undertaken. Further information on each special school is provided within the draft Consultation Document (attached at Appendix A), including information on the educational provision, age range of pupils and an overview of each special school site, including property condition information and suitability ratings.

- 5.3 The capacity of each special school is not included. In accordance with [Measuring the Capacity of Schools in Wales 2011 \(021/2011\)](#), the capacity assessment method applied to all community, voluntary aided, voluntary controlled and foundation schools in Wales does not apply to nursery, special schools, or pupil referral units. Pupils are placed in special schools based on an assessment of their needs; therefore, special schools can never be classed as 'at capacity.'
- 5.4 The Council's school modernisation programme has been successfully making excellent progress in modernising our school estate, meeting demand for places and expanding pupil places where required. The Council has been building new schools, remodelling, and redeveloping schools across RCT providing 21st century learning environments for our pupils, staff, parents/carers and the wider community.

6. NEW 3 TO 19 SPECIAL SCHOOL IN RCT ON A NEW SITE

- 6.1 As outlined in 4.1 to 4.5, and as part of the continuation of the Council's school modernisation programme, investment is needed to provide a new 3 to 19 special school in RCT. It is also proposed to introduce catchment areas for all 3 to 19 special schools across RCT, to better meet and manage the demand for special school places, ensuring pupils are allocated places in the special school nearest their home.
- 6.2 The 3 to 19 special schools across RCT are:
- Park Lane Special School
 - Ysgol Hen Felin
 - Ysgol Ty Coch.
- 6.3 The rationale for bringing the proposal is set out in detail in the draft Consultation Document (attached at Appendix A).
- 6.4 Alongside this proposal, further options to expand the Post 16 Specialist Provision off school sites will need to be explored, and further options or alternatives to expand the existing site at Buarth y Capel may be proposed separately at a later date in accordance with the [School Organisation Code \(2nd Edition\) \(011/2018\)](#).
- 6.5 The new 3 to 19 special school in RCT would be built in accordance with current requirements of planning and building control legislation and will be fully accessible and compliant with the [Equality Act 2010](#).
- 6.6 The majority of pupils (75.9%) currently accessing the special schools across RCT use home to school transport. The new 3 to 19 special school will have

dedicated on-site drop off and pick up facilities making this process safe, less disruptive for the community and manageable for staff.

- 6.7 The investment would also include a review of safe routes to school and, if required, an investment in improvements to walkways, road crossings and traffic calming measures to ensure the required safety standards are met. This is the approach the Council has implemented in other communities through delivering the 21st Century Schools Programme with significant improvements and investment made.
- 6.8 The report to Cabinet from the Chief Executive on the [15th May 2023](#), confirmed the Council Headquarters in Clydach Vale, Tonypany is being released for the potential development of a new special school, noting that any proposal would be subject to the requirements of the Welsh Government's [School Organisation Code \(2nd Edition\) \(011/2018\)](#). As such, this consultation proposes that the new 3 to 19 special school in RCT be built on the vacated Clydach Vale site in Tonypany. This site is proposed as the preferred location following a site appraisal process. A number of vacant sites within RCT have been appraised using the following criteria:
- Ownership
 - Have an adequate site area
 - Have satisfactory access which is capable of being improved
 - Is free from any visual incumbents
 - Is a viable development opportunity subject to a detailed feasibility study.
- 6.9 On applying the appraisal criteria to the identified sites, and following several site visits undertaken by Officers from the Council's Directorate of Corporate Estates and the Directorate of Education and Inclusion Services, all the other sites were discounted with the Council Headquarters in Clydach Vale, Tonypany, being identified as the preferred location for the new 3 to 19 special school in RCT.
- 6.10 Placement into special schools is currently agreed by the Council's Directorate of Education and Inclusion Services' Access and Inclusion Service Panels with pupils being placed in the nearest suitable special school to their home where possible. However, to better manage the allocation of special school places across RCT, the proposal also seeks to introduce defined catchment areas for all of the 3 to 19 special schools across RCT.
- 6.11 On opening, pupils already attending other 3 to 19 special schools that will then reside within the catchment area of the new special school, will be given the option to relocate to the new school. To note this will not be mandatory and this will be down to parental/carer choice. However, once the catchment changes come into effect, the Directorate of Education and Inclusion Services' Access and Inclusion Service Panel will place new pupils into specialist provision according to the newly defined catchment boundaries.
- 6.12 Maps identifying the proposed special school catchment areas are included within the Consultation Document (attached at Appendix A). Maesgwyn

Special School will not be included in this process as it offers a different provision to the other special schools in RCT. As well as the new 3 to 19 special school, the proposed new catchment areas will cover Park Lane Special School, Ysgol Hen Felin and Ysgol Ty Coch.

7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

7.1 The Council must satisfy its public sector duties under the [Equalities Act 2010](#) (including specific Welsh public sector duties). Pursuant to these legal duties Councils must, in making decisions, have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination
- Advance equality of opportunity
- Foster good relations based on protected characteristics.

7.2 An Equality Impact Assessment is being prepared in respect of the proposal and will be published on the Council's website for the duration of the consultation period, together with a Consultation Document that outlines the proposal in further detail in accordance with the requirements of the Welsh Government's [School Organisation Code \(2nd Edition\) \(011/2018\)](#).

8. WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS

8.1 A Welsh Language Impact Assessment is being prepared in respect of the proposal and will be published on the Council's website for the duration of the consultation period, together with a Consultation Document that outlines the proposal in further detail in accordance with the requirements of the Welsh Government's [School Organisation Code \(2nd Edition\) \(011/2018\)](#).

9. CONSULTATION/INVOLVEMENT

9.1 The consultation processes in respect of the proposal will be undertaken under the arrangements outlined in the Welsh Government's [School Organisation Code \(2nd Edition\) \(011/2018\)](#). These arrangements stipulate that consultation must be undertaken when the proposals are at a formative stage and that Consultation Documents must be prepared and circulated to prescribed consultees, as well as being published on the Council website.

9.2 The draft Consultation Document for the proposal outlined in this report is attached at Appendix A, although it should be noted that this remains a working document which may be subject to some minor changes before the Consultation Document is formally published and the consultation process commences.

9.3 The proposed consultation period, if it is agreed to progress this matter, would run from 3rd July 2023 to 14th September 2023.

9.4 The proposed consultation timetable for completion of each action is set out in the table that follows:

New 3 to 19 Special School in RCT – Proposed Consultation Timeline		
Action	Detail	Dates
Cabinet Permission to Consult	Cabinet to consider the proposal and give approval to commence consultation	28 th June 2023
Public Consultation	A Consultation Document would be published on the Council’s website for a minimum of six weeks	3 rd July 2023 to 14 th September 2023
Report back to Cabinet	Cabinet would consider the Consultation Response Report and determine whether to publish the Report and approve the publication of the proposal in the form of a Statutory Notice	October 2023
Publish Statutory Notice	The Statutory Notice must be published for a 28 day period (if approved by Cabinet)	November 2023
Decision by Cabinet	Report back to Cabinet on outcome of Statutory Notice period and details of (any) objections received, with an appropriate recommendation	January 2024
Implementation	In accordance with Cabinet decision either status quo or implementation of proposal	Status Quo: N/A. New school: September 2026

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 Should the proposal go ahead, a significant capital investment would be required. Funding will be secured via the Welsh Government’s Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme at an intervention rate of 75.0%. Costs will be developed alongside the consultation process and approvals sought in line with the Council’s decision-making procedures.

10.2 Revenue implications resulting as a consequence of the new 3 to 19 special school, including the schools’ delegated budget and any potential increases in home to school transport costs will be identified as the proposal is developed and incorporated into the Council’s Medium Term Financial Planning arrangements.

11. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

11.1 Section 315 of the [Education Act 1996](#) requires Councils to ensure that ALN provision is kept under review. In addition, the [ALNET Act 2018](#) requires Councils to keep under review the arrangements for supporting pupils with ALN within their area and consider whether these are sufficient.

11.2 Powers for Councils to develop school organisation proposals are governed by the:

- The [School Standards and Organisation \(Wales\) Act 2013](#)
- The Welsh Government's [School Organisation Code \(2nd Edition\) \(011/2018\)](#).

11.3 Council's must, when exercising functions under Part 3 of the [School Standards and Organisation \(Wales\) Act 2013](#), act in accordance with any relevant requirements contained in the Welsh Government's [School Organisation Code \(2nd Edition\) \(011/2018\)](#) and must have regard to any relevant guidelines contained in it.

12. LINKS TO THE COUNCIL'S CORPORATE PLAN, NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE FUTURE GENERATIONS (WALES) ACT 2015

12.1 There are links to Making a Difference, the Council's Corporate Plan for the years between 2020 and 2024, specifically:

- **People:**

- Encouraging all residents to lead active and healthy lifestyles and maintain their mental wellbeing:
 - Delivering new indoor and outdoor sporting facilities and enhancing existing sporting facilities such as changing rooms and outdoor play areas.
- Improving services for children and young people and ensuring the needs of children are considered in everything we do:
 - Improving the social, emotional, and mental health and wellbeing of children and young people by increasing the range of specialist services available.

- **Places:**

- Ensuring RCT is one of the safest places in Wales, with high levels of community cohesion where residents feel safe:
 - Supporting the voluntary, community and faith sectors to help build active communities, creating the capacity for meeting the needs of residents within their communities.

- **Prosperity:**

- Ensuring we have good schools, so all children have access to a great education:
 - Improving outcomes for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities
- Helping people into work and better paid employment:
 - Offering employment schemes and apprenticeships in the Council, on the regeneration sites, and through other Council contractors.

12.2 There are links to the Council's Directorate of Education and Inclusion Services' Strategic Plan for the years between 2021 and 2024, specifically:

- **Strategic Priority 3:**

- Ensuring equity and support for vulnerable pupils and their families.

- **Strategic Priority 5:**
 - Delivering 21st century learning environments and innovative services for our pupils and communities.
- 12.3 Due regard has been made to all seven wellbeing goals and the five ways of working, as contained within the [Wellbeing of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#) which requires the Council to think about the long-term impact of decisions on communities to prevent consistent issues such as poverty, health inequalities and climate change.
- 12.4 The proposal could contribute towards achieving some of the seven wellbeing goals by:
- **A Prosperous Wales** - Should the proposal proceed, construction will be competitively tendered, thereby achieving best value for money. Main contractors will be asked to advertise work on Sell2Wales which could provide opportunities for local businesses to tender for the construction. This could provide opportunities for local business to engage with the main contractor for inclusion in their supply chain, via 'Meet the Buyer' events. This would support economic activity in the area.
 - **A Resilient Wales** – The proposal could improve the sustainability of school buildings in the Council's portfolio through a commitment to achieving zero-carbon buildings and building to BREEAM excellent standards.
 - **A Healthier Wales** – The new school will be a fully accessible and integrated community school with a dedicated area designed within so that the local community will be allowed to safely use the facilities, both during and after the school day. Accommodation will consist of enhanced outdoor spaces to support the full range of curriculum activities.
 - **A More Equal Wales** – The new school and the way in which it will be used will bring neutral or positive socio-economic impacts to all of the vulnerable groups.
 - **A Wales of More Cohesive Communities** – Fully accessible and integrated community school with a dedicated area designed within so that the local community will be allowed to safely use the facilities, both during and after the school day.
 - **A Wales of Vibrant Culture and Thriving Welsh Language** – Although the new school will be English medium, Welsh is taught as part of the curriculum and all pupils will benefit from having the opportunity to be taught in brand new facilities fit for the 21st century.
 - **A Globally Responsive Wales** – The new school could build upon the good working practices and initiatives already in place to further develop extra-curricular activities to encourage healthy lifestyles for the

school community. zero-carbon buildings and building to BREEAM excellent standards.

12.5 The proposal could contribute towards achieving some of the five ways of working by:

- **Long Term** – The proposal forms a part of the Council’s wider 21st Century Schools Investment Programme and contributes to the delivery of sustainable schools fit for the 21st century and supports the better strategic management of the Council’s education estate. Given the considerable changes in Wales in relation to the statutory provision required to meet the needs of pupils with ALN, with the implementation of the [ALNET Act 2018](#), building a new 3 to 19 special school in RCT, and creating further capacity in our current provision, will ensure that the Council can continue to meet its statutory obligations.
- **Prevention** – The Council believes that the proposal represents the best opportunity to safeguard and sustain educational standards for the future and provides a platform for further improvement through significant investment in permanent and fit for purpose facilities.
- **Integrations** – The new school will be a fully accessible and integrated community school. A dedicated area will be designed within so that the local community will be allowed to safely use the facilities, both during and after the school day.
- **Collaboration** – The Council will continue to work effectively with internal and external partners to ensure the new 3 to 19 special school meets the short and long term needs of pupils, parents/carers, staff and the wider community.
- **Involvement** –The proposal is made in accordance with the [School Organisation Code \(2nd Edition\) \(011/2018\)](#) and seeks the views of a prescribed list of stakeholders including pupils, parents/carers, staff and the wider community. As such face to face meetings will be arranged with the staff, school councils and governing bodies.

12.6 As stated in 7.1 and 7.2, an Equality Impact Assessment which further details the contribution of the proposal to the [Wellbeing of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#) is being prepared.

13. STRATEGIC OR RELEVANT TO ELECTORAL WARDS

13.1 Given the considerable changes in Wales in relation to the statutory provision required to meet the needs of pupils with the implementation of the ALNET Act (2018), the proposal to build a new 3 to 19 special school in RCT, creating further capacity in our current provision, will ensure that the Council can continue to meet its statutory obligations and as such is a strategic proposal relevant to all wards.

14. CONCLUSION

- 14.1 In accordance with Section 315 of the [Education Act 1996](#), councils are required to ensure that ALN provision is kept under review. In addition, the [ALNET Act 2018](#) requires councils to keep under review the arrangements for supporting pupils with ALN within their area and consider whether these are sufficient. Building a new 3 to 19 special school in RCT, and creating further capacity in our current provision, will ensure that the Council can continue to meet its statutory obligations.
- 14.2 The proposed investment to open a new 3 to 19 special school in RCT on a new site provides the opportunity for more pupils with ALN to benefit from improved educational facilities and learning environments.
- 14.3 Noting that on opening, pupils already attending other 3 to 19 special schools that will then reside within the catchment area of the new special school, will be given the option to relocate to the new school. This will not be mandatory, and this will be down to parental/carer choice. However, once the catchment changes come into effect, the Directorate of Education and Inclusion Services Access and Inclusion Service Panel will place new pupils into specialist provision according to the newly defined catchment boundaries.
- 14.4 It is recommended therefore, that Members give approval to officers to commence the consultation processes necessary, in accordance with the Welsh Government's [School Organisation Code \(2nd Edition\) \(011/2018\)](#), to achieve the proposal outlined in this report.

Other Information:

Relevant Scrutiny Committee:

Education and Inclusion Scrutiny Committee

Contact Officer(s):

Andrea Richards, Service Director for 21st Century Schools and Transformation
Lisa Howell, 21st Century Schools Business and School Organisation Manager

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

28TH JUNE 2023

**Item: 21ST CENTURY SCHOOLS PROGRAMME – PROPOSALS TO DEVELOP
A NEW SPECIAL SCHOOL IN RHONDDA CYNON TAF**

Background Papers
Appendix A – Draft Consultation Document

Officer to contact(s):

Andrea Richards, Service Director for 21st Century Schools and Transformation
Lisa Howell, 21st Century Schools Business and School Organisation Manager

21ST CENTURY SCHOOLS



CONSULTATION DOCUMENT

CONSULTATION ON A PROPOSAL TO OPEN A NEW 3 TO 19 SPECIAL SCHOOL IN RHONDDA CYNON TAF

The Consultation Document and Appendices are also available on the 'Get Involved' page on the Council website.

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



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Introduction

The Council wishes to seek the views of stakeholders on the proposal to open a new English medium 3 to 19 special school in Rhondda Cynon Taf (RCT) for 180 pupils, however this will be subject to undertaking further feasibility and progressing with the detailed design of the new school. The new special school will provide education for pupils with a range of additional learning needs (ALN) including autistic spectrum disorders, severe learning difficulties, profound and multiple learning difficulties, social, emotional, and behavioural difficulties, and sensory impairment.

It is proposed that the new school will be built in the Clydach Vale area of Tonypany, and it will open no later than the 2026 academic year. The new school is in addition to the four special schools already open in RCT.

It is also proposed to introduce catchment areas for all 3 to 19 special schools across RCT, these are:

- Park Lane Special School
- Ysgol Hen Felin
- Ysgol Ty Coch.

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

- The opening of a maintained school (including special school).

Who will we consult with?

We are seeking the views of the following stakeholders:

- The governing bodies of:
 - Park Lane Special School
 - Ysgol Hen Felin
 - Ysgol Ty Coch, including Buarth y Capel.
- Parents/carers, prospective parents/carers (where possible), and staff members of:
 - Park Lane Special School
 - Ysgol Hen Felin
 - Ysgol Ty Coch, including Buarth y Capel.
- Pupils of:
 - Park Lane Special School
 - Ysgol Hen Felin
 - Ysgol Ty Coch, including Buarth y Capel.
- Neighbouring local authorities
- The Church in Wales and Roman Catholic Diocesan authorities
- Welsh Ministers

- Members of the Senedd for the Rhondda, Cynon and Taf constituencies and regional Members of the Senedd for the area
- Members of Parliament for the Rhondda, Cynon, and Taf 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.

What will the consultation process entail?

The consultation will start on 3rd July 2023 and will be completed at 17:00 on 14th September 2023. Feedback from the consultation will be collated and summarised, and a Consultation Report presented to the Council's Cabinet during October 2023. This Consultation Report will be available for all persons to view on the Council's website and copies can be obtained on request from the address detailed on page 4.

The Council'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 the Council's Cabinet decides not to proceed, that will be the end of the proposal.

If the Council's Cabinet decide to proceed with the proposal, a Statutory Notice will be published providing a 28 day notice period for objections. The School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2018 requires that anyone wishing to make objections to a school organisation proposal can do so. To be considered as statutory objections, objections **must** be made in writing or by email, and sent to the Council within 28 days of the date on which the Statutory Notice was published.

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

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

If the Council'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 do you have 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.

How do you make your views known?

Face to face meetings will be arranged with the staff, school councils and governing bodies as follows:

School(s) Affected	Group	Time/Date	Venue
1. Park Lane Special School 2. Ysgol Hen Felin 3. Ysgol Ty Coch, including Buarth y Capel	Governing Bodies and Staff of: 1. Park Lane Special School 2. Ysgol Hen Felin 3. Ysgol Ty Coch, including Buarth y Capel	1. 20 th July 2023 at 15:30 2. 19 th July 2023 at 15:30 3. 17 th July 2023 at 15:30	1. Park Lane Special School 2. Ysgol Hen Felin 3. Ysgol Ty Coch
1. Park Lane Special School 2. Ysgol Hen Felin 3. Ysgol Ty Coch, including Buarth y Capel	School Councils of: 1. Park Lane Special School 2. Ysgol Hen Felin 3. Ysgol Ty Coch, including Buarth y Capel	1. 18 th July 2023 at 10:00 2. 19 th July 2023 at 10:00 3. 17 th Ysgol Ty Coch at 13:30	1. Park Lane Special School 2. Ysgol Hen Felin 3. Ysgol Ty Coch

A drop in session will also be arranged so that members of the public can discuss the proposal with Officers from the Council's Directorate of Education and Inclusion Services and provide any feedback at the session. This will be held on Tuesday 22nd August 2023 between 15:00 to 18:30 at the Council Chamber, The Pavilions, Clydach Vale, Tonypany, CF40 2XX.

A Consultation Response Form is attached on page 30. The Consultation Response Form will also be available in the meetings detailed above and on the Council'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 the Council's Cabinet.

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

Director of Education and Inclusion Services 21 st Century Schools Ty Trevithick Abercynon CF45 4UQ	OR	schoolplanning@rctcbc.gov.uk
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All correspondence should be received no later than 17:00 on 14th September 2023.

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.

The views of children and young people

The Council has acknowledged that the voice of children and young people is about involving them 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, the Councils 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.

The Council will consult with the children and young people who attend:

- Park Lane Special School
- Ysgol Hen Felin
- Ysgol Ty Coch, including Buarth y Capel.

This will be done by producing a children and young people's version of the Consultation Document and Consultation Response Form. As detailed on page 4, the Council will hold a meeting with the School Councils of:

- Park Lane Special School
- Ysgol Hen Felin
- Ysgol Ty Coch, including Buarth y Capel.

To discuss the proposal and guide the School Council through the children and young people's version of the Consultation Response Form. These consultation sessions will have the support of school-based specialist staff to support pupils and assist with the engagement process. Feedback from this meeting will be collated and summarised, and a Consultation Report will be presented to the Council's Cabinet for consideration once the consultation period has ended.

Community, Equality and Welsh Language Impact Assessments

As set out in the School Organisation Code 2018, it is a requirement to publish Community, Equality and Welsh Language Impact Assessments. These have been produced and are appendices to this Consultation Document and are also available on the Council's website:

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

Section One – Background to the Proposal

Where we are now...

Considerable changes have been made in Wales in relation to the statutory provision required to meet the needs of pupils with additional learning needs (ALN). The Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018 (ALNET Act 2018) requires Councils to keep under review the arrangements for supporting pupils with ALN within their area and consider whether they are sufficient. The ALNET Act 2018 is supported by the statutory Additional Learning Needs Code 2021.

For pupils with significant needs who experience difficulties in coping with mainstream education, specialist provisions are required. The Council has a range of specialist provisions which include:

- Forty-five Learning Support Classes
- Two Pupil Referral Units
- Four Special Schools (three for pupils aged 3 to 19 and one for pupils aged 11 to 19).

Placement into these specialist provisions is agreed by the Council's Directorate of Education and Inclusion Services Access and Inclusion Service Panels.

There are currently 670 pupils (Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC), 2023) accessing four special schools across RCT with a range of needs, these are:

- Maesgwyn Special School, Cwmdare, Aberdare
- Park Lane Special School, Trecynon, Aberdare
- Ysgol Hen Felin, Ystrad, Tonypany
- Ysgol Ty Coch, Tonteg, Pontypridd
 - Buarth y Capel, Ynysybwl, Pontypridd (satellite site of Ysgol Ty Coch).

To note, despite data and information from Maesgwyn Special School being included within this document for consistency, given the age range of the pupils at the school and the education provided which differs from the other special schools, Maesgwyn is not considered to be affected by these proposals.

RCT has an excellent range of special schools. However, it has become increasingly apparent that the special schools currently available are disproportionate to the demand for them. In view of this, a data analysis exercise has been undertaken. This Consultation Document provides an overview of each special school site, including property condition information and suitability ratings along with a range of data, including the:

- Total number of pupils who accessed their education in all special schools between the academic years 2013 and 2023

- Total number pupils who accessed their education in all special schools between the academic years 2017 and 2023 separated by each special school
- National curriculum year of pupils who accessed their education in all special schools during the academic year 2023.

The capacity of each special school is not included. Measuring the Capacity of Schools in Wales (021/2011) outlines the capacity assessment method for calculating school capacities. This capacity assessment method applies to all English, Welsh, dual language or voluntary aided mainstream primary and secondary schools in Wales, it does not apply to nursery and special schools, or Pupil Referral Units. Pupils are placed in special schools by the Council's Directorate of Education and Inclusion Services Access and Inclusion Service Panels based on an assessment of their need; as such, special schools can never be classed as 'at capacity'.

Likewise, pupil projections have not been included. It should be noted that it is difficult to project demand for special schools, as projections are dependent on several factors and historical trends and birth rates are not dependable factors. Variations in the range of needs of pupils can develop and alter over time and special schools have seen a significant growth in the complexity of the ALN of pupils.

Special Schools Across RCT

Maesgwyn Special School

Maesgwyn Special School is in the Cwmdare area of Aberdare. It is a special school for pupils aged 11 to 19 with a range of ALN including severe learning difficulties, social, emotional, and behavioural difficulties, and autistic spectrum disorders.

Pupils are taught through a bespoke curriculum with a balance between academic, life and vocational skills options that enable pupils to mature into adult life.

Maesgwyn Special School is graded as a B for condition and a B for suitability and it has a backlog maintenance figure of £11,850. The school building consists of a CLASP type construction main block.

Over the last five years, approximately £944,000 has been invested into Maesgwyn Special School. Recent works to the site include extensive remodelling of the external area providing a new Multi-Use Games Area, the addition of a skill centre for teaching construction skills, an allotment for horticulture and an animal care centre. Future works to the site include the addition of a three-classroom extension by the academic year 2024.

As previously reported, this special school is not considered to be affected by this proposal.

Park Lane Special School

Park Lane Special School is in the Trecynon area of Aberdare. It is a special school for pupils aged 3 to 19 with a range of ALN including autistic spectrum disorders, severe learning difficulties, profound and multiple learning difficulties, social, emotional, and behavioural difficulties, and sensory impairment.

Pupils are taught a wide and varied curriculum, enabling them to experience a range of skills, the emphasis being on life and vocational skills. Pupils are regularly taken into the community where they apply the skills, they learn to real life situations. Pupils gain accreditation and qualifications from their vocational studies.

Park Lane Special School is graded as a C for condition and a B for suitability and it has a backlog maintenance figure of £238,800. The school building consists of a CLASP type construction main block together with a small extension that was added in 2011 to provide additional space for post 16 pupils. The site is very constrained with access and onsite parking limited.

Over the last five years, approximately £495,000 has been invested into Park Lane Special School. Future works to the site include the addition of a two-classroom mobile accommodation by the academic year 2023. Once completed there are limited options to further expand the existing site.

Ysgol Hen Felin

Ysgol Hen Felin is in the Ystrad area of Rhondda. It is a special school for pupils aged 3 to 19 with a range of ALN including autistic spectrum disorders, severe learning difficulties, profound and multiple learning difficulties, social, emotional, and behavioural difficulties, and sensory impairment.

Pupils are taught a wide and varied curriculum, enabling them to experience a range of skills, the emphasis being on life and vocational skills. Pupils are regularly taken into the community where they apply the skills, they learn to real life situations. Pupils gain accreditation and qualifications from their vocational studies.

There are also several pupils who attend Ysgol Hen Felin who should attend Buarth y Capel, however, the travelling distance and established relationships with staff at Ysgol Hen Felin discourages pupils from attending Buarth y Capel.

Ysgol Hen Felin is graded as a B for condition and an A for suitability and it has a backlog maintenance figure of £58,000. It is a single storey building situated in a residential area in the same grounds as a leisure centre. The school has an all-weather playing surface within a large sensory garden, kitchen, coffee shop, sensory facilities and hydrotherapy pool.

Over the last five years, approximately £495,000 has been invested into Ysgol Hen Felin. Works to the site include significant investment in the external play areas and several adaptations to allow more generic teaching spaces to be created, that unfortunately has been to the detriment of specialist teaching and learning areas. There are no further options or alternatives to expand the existing site.

Ysgol Ty Coch

Ysgol Ty Coch is in the Tonteg area of Pontypridd. It is a special school for pupils aged 3 to 19 with a range of ALN including autistic spectrum disorders, severe learning difficulties, profound and multiple learning difficulties, social, emotional, and behavioural difficulties, and sensory impairment.

Pupils are taught a wide and varied curriculum, enabling them to experience a range of skills, with an emphasis placed on developing life and vocational skills. Pupils are regularly taken into the community where they apply the skills, they learn to real life situations. Pupils gain accreditation and qualifications from their vocational studies.

Ysgol Ty Coch is graded as an A for condition and a B for suitability and it has a backlog maintenance figure of £227,661. The original site, which is a brick built, single storey building is situated in a residential area. The facilities available to pupils include a fully functioning kitchen, hairdressing salon, workshop, horticulture training, café, and car washing.

Over the last five years, approximately £946,000 has been invested into Ysgol Ty Coch. Works to the site include the addition of a classroom extension which has increased the size of the school but reduced the amount of outside play area. The site is very constrained with access and onsite parking limited, as such there are no further options or alternatives to expand the existing site.

Buarth y Capel

Buarth y Capel is a satellite site of Ysgol Ty Coch and is in the Ynysybwl area of Pontypridd, approximately seven miles from Ysgol Ty Coch. It was established in September 2014 to meet the needs of pupils aged 14 to 19 with a diagnosis of severe/profound autistic spectrum disorders who had previously met generic special school criteria and who require specialist and bespoke provision.

Pupils are taught a wide and varied curriculum, devised from the 14 to 19 Learning Pathways, enabling them to experience a range of skills. The emphasis of these skills includes life and vocational skills. Pupils gain accreditation and qualifications from their vocational studies.

Buarth y Capel is graded as a B for condition and a B for suitability and it has a backlog maintenance figure of £214,570. The site is a single-story building, set in grounds.

Over the last five years, approximately £335,000 has been invested into Buarth y Capel. Works to the site include a complete refurbishment to suit the needs of older pupils with autistic spectrum disorders, which include specialist therapy areas. Further options or alternatives to expand the existing site, may be proposed separately at a later date in accordance with the School Organisation Code 2018 (011/2018).

Post 16 Specialist Provision

In addition to the four special schools across RCT, the Council also works in partnership with Coleg y Cymoedd to provide specialist provisions for post 16 pupils. This specialist post 16 provision frees up much needed space across the four special schools whilst also providing pupils with the opportunity to gain experience of college life and to transition into this setting at post 16.

The Council, in partnership with Coleg y Cymoedd, currently provide three separate specialist provisions for post 16 pupils, one for pupils at Maesgwyn Special School at Coleg y Cymoedd's Aberdare campus, one for pupils at Ysgol Hen Felin at Coleg y Cymoedd's Llwynypia campus, and one for pupils from Ysgol Ty Coch at Coleg Y Cymoedd's Nant Garw campus.

Further options to expand the partnership with Coleg y Cymoedd may be proposed separately in accordance with the School Organisation Code 2018 (011/2018).

Out of County Specialist Provision

In addition to the four special schools across RCT and the Council's partnership with Coleg y Cymoedd to provide specialist provisions for post 16 pupils, a number of pupils attend out of county specialist provision. This is due to the lack of highly specialist provision available across RCT. The table that follows outlines the total number and cost of pupils who accessed their education in out of county specialist provision between the academic years 2020 and 2022.

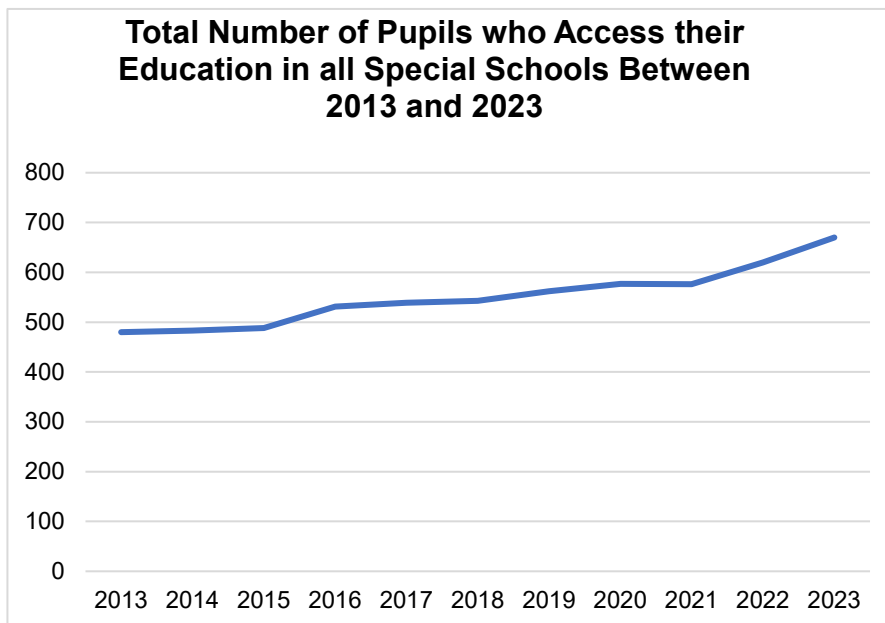
Total Number and Cost of Pupils who Accessed their Education in Out of County Specialist Provision Between the Academic Years 2020 and 2022		
Academic Year	Total	Cost
2020	93	£2,323,397
2021	97	£2,490,591
2022	85	£2,209,137

Data Analysis

The following data analysis is based on data derived from the PLASC unless otherwise stated. It is intended to outline the children and young people with ALN in RCT.

The table that follows outlines the total number of pupils who accessed their education in all special schools between the academic years 2013 and 2023.

Total Number of Pupils who Accessed their Education in all Special Schools Between the Academic Years 2013 and 2023											
	Academic Year (PLASC)										
	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Total	480	483	488	531	539	543	562	577	576	620	670



The graph above outlines the same trend.

- The data and graph demonstrate an increase in the number of pupils who accessed their education in all special schools between the academic years 2013 and 2023.
- The total number of pupils who accessed their education in all special schools between the academic years 2013 and 2023 has increased by 39.5%. This is an increase of 190 pupils from 480 pupils to 670 pupils.

The table that follows outlines the total number pupils who accessed their education in all special schools between the academic years 2017 and 2023 separated by each special school.

Total Number of Pupils who Accessed their Education in all Special Schools Between the Academic Years 2017 and 2023 Separated by Each Special School						
Academic Year	Special School (PLASC 2023)					Total
	Maesgwyn Special School	Park Lane Special School	Ysgol Hen Felin	Ysgol Ty Coch	Buarth y Capel	
2017	132	101	169	126	11	539
2018	130	93	178	134	8	543
2019	127	97	179	153	6	562
2020	130	88	186	159	14	577
2021	119	93	184	171	9	576
2022	125	109	194	179	13	620
2023	126	123	211	197	13	670

The data above indicated that:

- Pupil numbers at Maesgwyn Special School have remained consistent between the academic years 2017 and 2023

- **Since the academic year 2020, pupil number at Park Lane have increased by 39.7%.** This is an increase of 35 pupils from 88 pupils to 123 pupils
- Since the academic year 2017, pupil numbers at Ysgol Hen Felin have increased by 24.8%. This is an increase of 42 pupils from 169 pupils to 211 pupils
- **Since the academic year 2017, pupil numbers at Ysgol Ty Coch have increased by 56.3%.** This is an increase of 71 pupils from 126 pupils to 197 pupils
- Pupil numbers at Buarth y Capel have remained consistent between the academic years 2017 and 2023
- **The total number of pupils who accessed their education in all special schools between the academic years 2017 and 2023 has increased by 24.8%.** This is an increase of 131 pupils from 539 pupils to 670 pupils.

Over the previous ten academic years, the total number of pupils who accessed their education in all special schools has increased by 39.5% and following this trend over the next five to ten academic years, the number of pupils who access their education in all special schools is expected to increase.

The table that follows outlines the national curriculum year of pupils who accessed their education in all special schools during the academic year 2023.

National Curriculum Year of Pupils who Accessed their Education in all Special Schools During the Academic Year 2023							
Year Groups	National Curriculum Year	Special School (PLASC 2023)				Total	
		Maesgwyn Special School	Park Lane Special School	Ysgol Hen Felin	Ysgol Ty Coch (Including Buarth y Capel)		
Nursery - Year 2	Pre-Nursery	N/A	0	1	0	1	120
	Nursery	N/A	7	6	7	20	
	Reception	N/A	9	14	13	36	
	1	N/A	8	15	8	31	
	2	N/A	9	11	12	32	
Years 3 - 6	3	N/A	14	18	13	45	154
	4	N/A	9	12	9	30	
	5	N/A	5	11	25	41	
	6	N/A	7	15	16	38	
Years 7 - 9	7	17	9	22	18	66	171
	8	14	16	13	17	60	
	9	15	2	18	10	45	
Years 10 - 11	10	22	4	11	19	56	94
	11	12	5	10	11	38	
Years	12	8	7	8	10	33	131

National Curriculum Year of Pupils who Accessed their Education in all Special Schools During the Academic Year 2023						
Year Groups	National Curriculum Year	Special School (PLASC 2023)				Total
		Maesgwyn Special School	Park Lane Special School	Ysgol Hen Felin	Ysgol Ty Coch (Including Buarth y Capel)	
12 - 14	13	21	4	10	14	49
	14	17	8	16	8	49
Total		126	123	211	210	670

The data indicates:

- The national curriculum year with the highest percentage of pupils was year seven with 9.8% (9.8%) of pupils
- This was closely followed by national curriculum year eight with 8.9% (60%) of pupils
- The year groups with the highest percentage of pupils were years 7 to 9 with 25.5% (171%) of pupils.

It is difficult to provide a breakdown of the needs of pupils who accessed their education in all special schools given the complex nature of any ALN diagnosis, and the range of needs that the 3 to 19 schools in RCT cater for. It is proposed that the new school opens for pupils with a range of ALN including autistic spectrum disorders, severe learning difficulties, profound and multiple learning difficulties, social, emotional, and behavioural difficulties, and sensory impairment. For consistency, this then provides the same provision as the other 3 to 19 special schools in RCT offering parity of provision across all 4 schools.

What is the basis for the proposal?

Over the last five years, the Council has invested approximately £3.28 million into all special schools to maximise the space available. By the academic year 2023, a two-classroom mobile accommodation will be added to Park Lane Special School and by the academic year 2024, a three-classroom extension will be added to Maesgwyn Special School. Once completed, there will be no further options or alternatives to expand the existing special school sites.

Over the previous ten academic years, between the academic years 2013 and 2023, the total number of pupils who accessed their education in all special schools has increased by 39.5%. Apart from the academic year 2021, the total number of pupils who have accessed their education in all special schools between the academic years 2013 and 2023 has increased year on year. Over the next five to ten academic years, the number of pupils who access their education in all special schools is expected to increase. However, it should be noted that it is difficult to project demand for special schools, as projections are dependent on several factors and historical trends and birth rates are not dependable factors. Variations in the range of needs of the pupils can develop and alter over time and special schools have seen a significant growth in the complexity of the ALN of pupils.

Options and alternatives to expand the existing special school sites have been exhausted and the only feasible alternative is to build a new English medium 3 to 19 special school in RCT on a new site, significantly growing the special school provision within RCT and increasing the number of special schools from four to five. Creating a highly specialist 21st century special school environment will enable the Council to meet the needs of pupils requiring access to highly specialist therapeutic facilities, equipment and resources required to meet all ALN, including complex medical and health needs.

Pupils are placed in special schools by the Council's Directorate of Education and Inclusion Services Access and Inclusion Service Panels based on an assessment of their need; as such, special schools can never be classed as 'at capacity'. When analysing each special school, the highest percentage of pupils reside in the area that special school is located in. However, to better manage the allocation of special school places across RCT, it is proposed to introduce catchment areas for all 3 to 19 special schools across RCT.

Given the considerable changes in Wales in relation to the statutory provision required to meet the needs of pupils with ALN with the implementation of the ALNET Act 2018, building a new 3 to 19 special school in RCT, and creating further capacity in our current provision, will ensure that the Council can continue to meet its statutory obligations.

The Council believes that the proposal represents the best opportunity to safeguard and sustain educational standards for the future and provides a platform for further improvement through significant investment in permanent and fit for purpose facilities.

What alternative options have been considered?

Options and alternatives to expand the existing special school sites have been exhausted and the only feasible alternative is to build a new 3 to 19 special school in RCT on a new site.

It is proposed that the new 3 to 19 special school in RCT be built on the soon to be vacated Council Headquarters in the Clydach Vale area of Tonypany. This site is proposed as the preferred location following an appraisal of other sites. Each site was appraised on its ability to meet the following criteria:

- Ownership
- Have an adequate site area
- Have satisfactory access which is capable of being improved
- Is free from any visual incumbents
- Is a viable development opportunity subject to a detailed feasibility study.

On applying the appraisal criteria to the identified sites, and following several site visits undertaken by Officers from the Council's Directorate of Corporate Estates and the Directorate of Education and Inclusion Services, all the other sites were

discounted with the Council Headquarters in Clydach Vale, Tonypany, being identified as the preferred location for the new 3 to 19 special school in RCT.

Further feasibility focussed on the preferred site resulted in it being identified as the chosen location for the new 3 to 19 special school in RCT and the site to be taken forward to consultation.

In accordance with the School Organisation Code 2018, alternative options were also 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 capital investment required by the Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council cannot meet its statutory obligations in relation to the statutory provision required to meet the needs of pupils with ALN with the implementation of the ALNET Act 2018 • Children and young people with ALN will not have their needs met • Increased pressure on parents/carers • Increase ALN educational tribunals • Increase in cost of placing pupils in specialist provisions out of county
Expansion of existing special schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less capital investment required by the Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council cannot meet its statutory obligations in relation to the statutory provision required to meet the needs of pupils with ALN with the implementation of the ALNET Act 2018 • Children and young people with ALN will not have their needs met • Increased pressure on parents/carers • Increase ALN educational tribunals • Increase in cost of placing pupils in specialist provisions out of county • Options and alternatives to expand the existing special

Option	Benefit	Disadvantages
		school sites have been exhausted
Expansion of Post 16 Provision to alleviate pressures on existing specials schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More Post 16 pupils with ALN will have their needs met • Frees up much needed space across the four special schools • Provides pupils with the opportunity to gain experience of college life 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May not be opportunities to expand Post 16 Provision
Out of county specialist provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some children and young people with ALN will have their needs met 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in cost of placing pupils in specialist provisions out of county • Does not provide a long term solution

Benefits and Disadvantages, Risks and Mitigation Factors

The benefits and disadvantages of the proposal are highlighted below, as is information as to how any identified risks can be managed by the Council.

Benefits
A new 3 to 19 special school in RCT could deliver a significant improvement in the quality of the educational provision, having a significant positive impact upon the educational performance of the pupils and staff morale.
The new 3 to 19 special school in RCT will be designed to be energy efficient and will include renewable energy systems including photovoltaic panels and rainwater harvesting. The new 3 to 19 special school in RCT will be built to achieve net Zero Carbon in operation, be built to BREEAM Excellent standards, contributing to both the Council's commitment to becoming a 'carbon free Council by 2050' and the Welsh Government's Climate Change Strategy.
The new 3 to 19 special school in RCT would be built in accordance with current requirements of planning and building control legislation and will be fully accessible and compliant with the Equality Act 2010.
The new school will be a fully accessible and fully integrated community school. A dedicated area will be designed within so that the local community will be allowed to safely use the facilities, both during and after the school day.
The external areas will allow staff, pupils, and the community to experience a greater breadth of teaching and learning experiences.

Disadvantages			
The capital cost of the new school will be significant. The Council and the Welsh Government via the Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme will fund this with a more favorable intervention rate afforded to special schools at 75.0%.			
The new 3 to 19 special school in RCT could cause some anxiety for some pupils, staff and parents/carers.			
Risks	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating Action(s)
Approval – Parents/carers choose not to send their children to the new 3 to 19 special school in RCT	Low	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Councils 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
Proposal to introduce catchment areas for all 3 to 19 special schools across RCT – Parents/carers choose not to send their children to their catchment 3 to 19 special school in RCT.	Low	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See above
Home to School Transport – Increased home to school transport costs	Medium	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any revenue implications resulting as a consequence of the new 3 to 19 special school, including the schools' delegated budget and any potential increases in

			home to school transport costs will be identified as the proposal is develops
Staff – Cannot appoint staff to the new 3 to 19 special school in RCT	Low	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The needs of all special schools will be prioritised. The Council is committed to retaining staff and will, as has been the case with the delivery of other 21st century schools previously throughout RCT, work with staff and Trade Unions to ensure the change process is dealt with sympathetically and supportively and that there will be opportunities to engage with staff as the proposal progresses

Where we'd like to be...

It is proposed to open a new English medium, 3 to 19 special school in RCT for 180 pupils, however this will be subject to undertaking further feasibility and progressing with the detailed design of the new school. The new school will provide education for pupils with a range of ALN including autistic spectrum disorders, severe learning difficulties, profound and multiple learning difficulties, social, emotional, and behavioural difficulties, and sensory impairment.

It is proposed that the new 3 to 19 special school in RCT will be built in the Clydach Vale area of Tonypany, and it will open no later than the 2026 academic year. The new school is in addition to the four special schools across RCT.

The new 3 to 19 special school in RCT would be built in accordance with current requirements of planning and building control legislation and will be fully accessible and compliant with the Equality Act 2010.

Accommodation will consist of:

- Modern, flexible learning environments for all pupils, a hall/dining area, and specialist teaching and learning areas to cater for the needs of all pupils.
- A hydro-therapy pool plus other therapy, sensory and stimulating specialist equipment.
- A dedicated area within so that the local community will be allowed to safely use the facilities, both during and after the school day.
- Enhanced outdoor spaces to support the full range of curriculum activities.

- Traffic management systems including on-site pupil bus drop off, and on-site staff parking.



Example of a typical multi-purpose learning resource area.



Example of external play area.



Example of outdoor learning area.

The Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP)

All Local Authorities in Wales must produce a 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, the Council aims to contribute significantly to achieving the vision of one million people in Wales being Welsh speakers by 2050 as set out in Cymraeg 2050. The Council's current WESP can be viewed and downloaded from the Council website via:

[Welsh in Education Strategic Plan \(WESP\) 2022 – 2032 | Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council \(rctcbc.gov.uk\)](https://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/welsh-in-education-strategic-plan-wesp-2022-2032)

There are seven outcomes within the Council's WESP, two of which are:

- More opportunities for pupils to use Welsh in different contexts in school
- An increase in the provision of Welsh medium education for pupils with ALN in accordance with the duties imposed by the ALNET Act 2018.

Although the new school will be English medium, Welsh is taught as part of the curriculum and all pupils will benefit from having the opportunity to be taught in brand new facilities fit for the 21st century.

The aim is to embed positive habits and attitudes towards the Welsh language through purposeful planning to promote the informal use of the Welsh language amongst pupils inside and outside schools. Facilitating the use of the Welsh language across the curriculum and in wider contexts in schools, to ensure a continuum of linguistic progression to support pupils in the transition between year groups, offers all pupils the opportunity to become fully bilingual and aligns with the Curriculum for Wales 2022. The new school will be encouraged and supported to do this through the achievement of the 'Cymraeg Campus' Welsh Language Charter, a framework to promote and increase the use of Welsh.

In addition, the new school will be a fully accessible and fully integrated community school. A dedicated area will be designed within so that the local community will be allowed to safely use the facilities, both during and after the school day. Use of the facilities could include opportunities for third parties to offer Welsh medium learning classes for adults. An example of this can be seen in Tonyrefail Community School, where Welsh medium learning classes for adults are held in the community facilities. This could contribute towards the Welsh Government's ambitious goal of creating a million Welsh speakers in Wales by 2050 and the WESP.

Admission Arrangements

Pupils are placed in special schools by the Council's Directorate of Education and Inclusion Services Access and Inclusion Service Panels based on an assessment of their need; as such, special schools can never be classed as 'at capacity', and there is no published admission number. When analysing each special school, the highest percentage of pupils reside in the area that the special school is located in. However, to better manage the allocation of special school places across RCT, it is proposed to introduce catchment areas for all 3 to 19 special schools across RCT.

The proposed catchment areas for all 3 to 19 special schools across RCT are based on existing secondary school catchment areas (with a few exceptions). As previously reported, this special school is not considered to be affected by this proposal.

As well as the new 3 to 19 special school in RCT, the proposed new catchments will cover Park Lane Special School, Ysgol Hen Felin and Ysgol Ty Coch. These are proposed as:

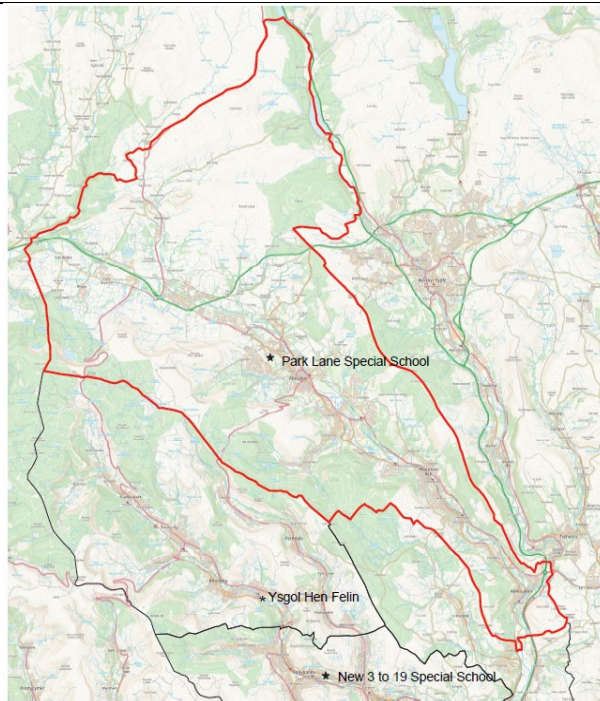
- **New 3 to 19 Special School in RCT** – Combining the catchment areas of Porth Community School, Tonyrefail Community, Ysgol Nant Gwyn (minus Pontrhondda Primary) and Coedylan Primary School and Trehopcyn Primary School
- **Park Lane Special School** – Combining the catchment areas of Aberdare Community School and Mountain Ash Comprehensive School
- **Ysgol Hen Felin** – Combining the catchment areas of Ferndale Community School, Treorchy Comprehensive, Pontrhondda Primary
- **Ysgol Ty Coch** – Combining the catchment areas of Bryncelynnog Comprehensive, Hawthorn High, Pontypridd High (minus Coedylan Primary School and Trehopcyn Primary school) and Y Pant Comprehensive.

The table that follows outlines maps identifying the proposed 3 to 19 special school catchment areas.

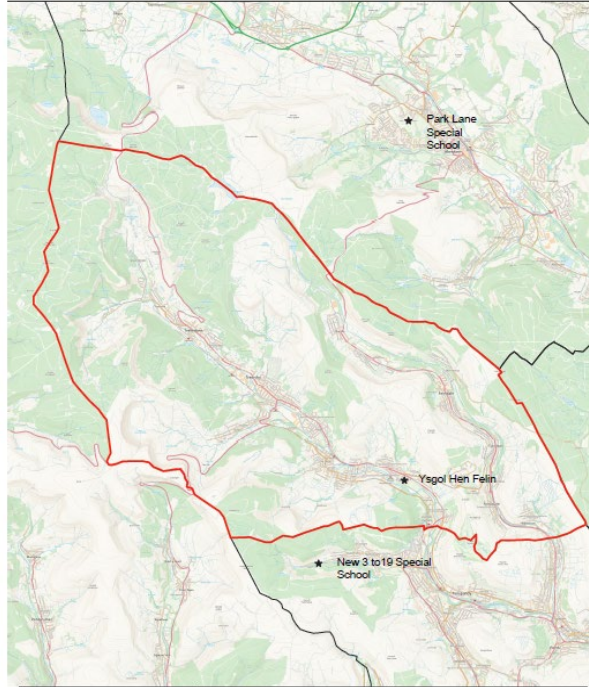
Maps Identifying the Proposed 3 to 19 Special School Catchment Areas



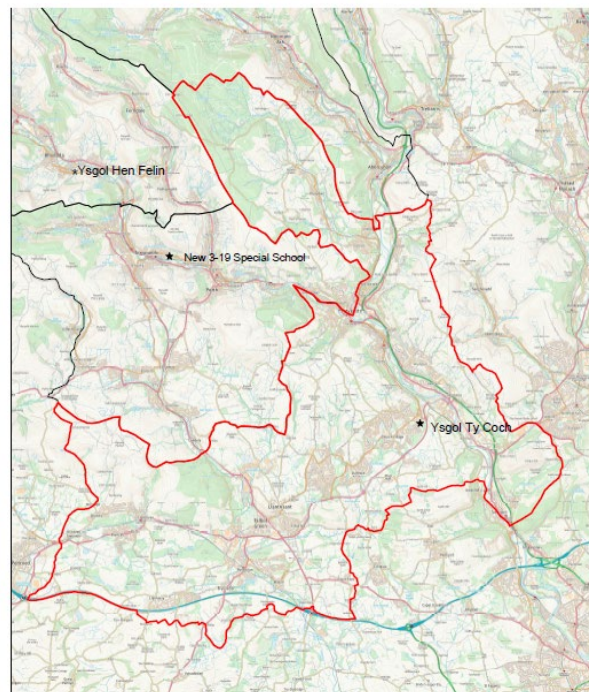
New 3 to 19 Special School.



Park Lane Special School.



Ysgol Hen Felin.



Ysgol Ty Coch.

On opening, pupils already attending other 3 to 19 special schools that will then reside within the catchment area of the new special school, will be given the option to relocate to the new school. To note this will not be mandatory and this will be down to parental/carers choice. However, once the catchment changes come into effect, the Directorate of Education and Inclusion Services Access and Inclusion Service Panel will place new pupils into specialist provision according to the newly defined catchment boundaries.

Section Two – The Likely Impact of the Proposal

The educational case for the proposal

The proposal forms a part of the Council's wider Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme and contributes to the delivery of sustainable schools fit for the 21st century and supports the better strategic management of the Council's education estate.

In addition to this, school organisational proposals should highlight 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.

Park Lane Special School

Parklane Special School's most recent Estyn Inspection was in March 2017. The table that follows summarises the outcomes of this inspection.

Estyn Inspection Outcomes: Park Lane Special School	
Inspection Area	Judgment
Date of Inspection	March 2017
The School's Current Performance	Good
The School's Prospects for Improvement	Adequate
Key Question 1: How Good are Outcomes	Good
Key Question 2: How Good is Provision	Good
Key Question 3: How Good are Leadership and Management	Good

Estyn set out several recommendations to implement to make improvements to the quality of the education provision on offer. The points that follow summarise the recommendations made by Estyn.

1. **Recommendation One** – Increase the opportunities for pupils who are more able to access accredited courses that provide them with suitable challenge.
2. **Recommendation Two** – Implement effective procedures for moderating pupils' work.
3. **Recommendation Three** – Address the safety issue related to traffic management noted during the inspection.
4. **Recommendation Four** – Strengthen self-evaluation to ensure that it effectively identifies all areas for improvement.
5. **Recommendation Five** – Engage all staff in evaluating the work of the school and planning the improvements needed.

Ysgol Hen Felin

Ysgol Hen Felin's most recent Estyn Inspection was in January 2015. The table that follows summarises the outcomes of this inspection.

Estyn Inspection Outcomes: Ysgol Hen Felin	
Inspection Area	Judgment
Date of Inspection	January 2015
The School's Current Performance	Good
The School's Prospects for Improvement	Good
Key Question 1: How Good are Outcomes	Good
Key Question 2: How Good is Provision	Good
Key Question 3: How Good are Leadership and Management	Good

Estyn set out several recommendations to implement to make improvements to the quality of the education provision on offer. The points that follow summarise the recommendations made by Estyn.

1. **Recommendation One** – Address fully the safeguarding concerns identified by the inspection team.
2. **Recommendation Two** – Improve the use of data to analyse and compare the performance of all groups of pupils, track progress and inform planning.
3. **Recommendation Three** – Make sure that the school's self-evaluation is more evaluative and clearly identifies the school's strengths and weaknesses.
4. **Recommendation Four** – Improve the school's policies and plans by making them more robust, in line with current government guidelines and linked effectively together.

Ysgol Ty Coch

Ysgol Ty Coch's most recent Estyn Inspection was in March 2017. The table that follows summarises the outcomes of this inspection.

Estyn Inspection Outcomes: Ysgol Ty Coch	
Inspection Area	Judgment
Date of Inspection	June 2017
The School's Current Performance	Excellent
The School's Prospects for Improvement	Excellent
Key Question 1: How Good are Outcomes	Excellent
Key Question 2: How Good is Provision	Excellent
Key Question 3: How Good are Leadership and Management	Excellent

Estyn set out several recommendations to implement to make improvements to the quality of the education provision on offer. The points that follow summarise the recommendations made by Estyn.

1. **Recommendation One** – Improve the provision for developing pupils' Welsh language development.

2. **Recommendation Two** – Ensure that teachers provide specific feedback to pupils to help them improve their work.
3. **Recommendation Three** – Strengthen a very few areas of self-evaluation processes to ensure sufficient focus on the progress that pupils make.

Impact on ALN Provision

It is the Council’s view that a new 3 to 19 special school in RCT could have a major positive impact on all five Estyn inspection areas, as well as more generally in enhancing the quality of education and support for children with ALN, this is detailed as follows:

<p>1. Standards</p>	<p>The new 3 to 19 special school in RCT would be built in accordance with current requirements of planning and building control legislation and will be fully accessible and compliant with the Equality Act 2010. Accommodation will consist of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modern, flexible learning environments for all pupils • A hydro-pool and specialist teaching and learning areas • Specialist equipment • A dedicated area within so that the local community will be allowed to safely use the facilities, both during and after the school day • Enhanced outdoor spaces to support the full range of curriculum activities • Traffic management systems including on-site pupil bus drop off, and on-site staff parking. <p>All of which would support the new 3 to 19 special school in RCT to raise standards and make progress against Estyn’s inspection areas.</p>
<p>2. Wellbeing and Attitudes to Learning</p>	<p>The new 3 to 19 special school in RCT would be built in accordance with current requirements of planning and building control legislation and will be fully accessible and compliant with the Equality Act 2010. Accommodation will consist of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modern, flexible learning environments for all pupils • A hydro-pool and specialist teaching and learning areas • Specialist equipment • A dedicated area within so that the local community will be allowed to safely use the facilities, both during and after the school day • Enhanced outdoor spaces to support the full range of curriculum activities • Traffic management systems including on-site pupil bus drop off, and on-site staff parking.

	All of which would support the new 3 to 19 special school in RCT to raise standards and make progress against Estyn's inspection areas.
3. Teaching and Learning Experience	A new 3 to 19 special school in RCT would ensure that staff are able to provide a balanced curriculum at all stages in line with the new Curriculum for Wales – 2022. A 21 st century learning environment could also provide pupils with greater flexibility and therefore greater choice and opportunities in their learning experience.
4. Care, Support and Guidance	<p>A new 3 to 19 special school in RCT could build upon the good working practices and initiatives already have in place.</p> <p>Enhanced outdoor spaces to support the full range of curriculum activities could provide opportunities to further develop extra-curricular activities to encourage healthy lifestyles for the school community.</p> <p>The new school will be a fully accessible and fully integrated community school. A dedicated area will be designed within so that the local community will be allowed to safely use the facilities, both during and after the school day.</p>
5. Leadership and Management	A new 3 to 19 special school in RCT, would remove the burden of time consuming and expensive maintenance issues, which could allow staff to focus on delivering the best teaching and learning and outcomes for their pupils.

What is the likely impact of the proposals on pupils?

It is anticipated that the proposed changes will not adversely impact upon pupils as this is creating a new school which can only enhance the current ALN provision on offer. Numerous benefits can be realised – the principal change will be to create a new 3 to 19 special school which will be built to 21st century school standards that should have a significantly positive impact upon the pupils who will attend.

The Welsh Government and the Council 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.

The Council considers that the proposal benefits the children and young people who will attend the new 3 to 19 special school in RCT in accordance with the seven core aims set out above.

Further information relating to the impact of the proposal on pupils, including how the proposal contributes to all seven goals of the Well-Being 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 which is at Appendix B.

What is the likely impact of the proposal on staff?

We anticipate that the new 3 to 19 special school in RCT, and the modern 21st century learning environments, will have a positive impact on staff morale, well-being, and retention.

As this will be a new school provision, a temporary governing body will be established if a decision to proceed with the opening is agreed. The main role of this temporary governing body will be to establish a staffing structure for the new school, appoint its senior management team and make decisions about the method of recruiting other staff to the posts that are available in the new school.

The number of staff required for the new school is likely to increase over time. The staffing requirements would align according to the increased school population which we anticipate will grow organically. Once open, the Governing Body of the new 3 to 19 special school in RCT would be responsible for the staffing structure which would be determined primarily by the numbers and educational needs of the pupils at the school and the budget available.

The Council has well established Human Resource policies and procedures that give reassurance to staff and employers about the management of organisational change. The Council is committed to working with staff and Trade Unions to ensure the process is dealt with sympathetically and supportively and there will be numerous opportunities to engage with staff as the proposal progresses.

Financial implications of the proposal

The estimated capital cost of this proposal is £53.3 million. The Council and the Welsh Government via the Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme will jointly fund this project, with the Welsh Government funding up to 75.0% of project costs, and up to 100% of costs directly associated with making the school Net Zero Carbon in operation. Detailed costs will be developed alongside the consultation process and approvals sought in line with the Council's decision-making procedures.

Any revenue implications resulting as a consequence of the new 3 to 19 special school, including the schools' delegated budget and any potential increases in home to school transport costs will be identified as the proposal is developed.

Home to School Transport Provision

There is a statutory duty placed upon all local authorities 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 compulsory school age receiving primary education and three miles for pupils of compulsory school age receiving secondary education.

The 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 pupils. The relevant information in relation to the new 3 to 19 special school in RCT is set out below:

- The eligibility criterion for walking distance for pupils receiving compulsory primary education at their nearest suitable school has been set at one and a half miles, instead of two miles as required by the Measure
- Free transport to their nearest suitable school, where places are available, is provided to pupils who meet the one and a half mile eligibility criterion from nursery (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 pupils receiving compulsory secondary education at their nearest suitable school has been set at two miles instead of three miles as required by the Measure
- Free transport is provided to post 16 pupils until the end of the academic year in which they attain their 19th birthday who meet the two mile eligibility criterion.

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

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

Any revenue implications resulting as a consequence of the new 3 to 19 special school, including the school's delegated budget and any potential increases in home to school transport costs will be identified as the proposal is developed.

Land and buildings information

It is proposed that the new 3 to 19 special school in RCT could be built on the soon to be vacated Council Headquarters in the Clydach Vale area of Tonypany. This site is proposed as the preferred location following an appraisal of other sites and is in the ownership of RCT Council, so no land acquisitions are required.

Consultation Response Form

To comply with its legal duty under the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013, and help the Council reach a decision on the proposal, 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 Report Forms should be returned to:

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

or

Email: schoolplanning@rctcbc.gov.uk

The proposal:

To open a new English medium 3 to 19 special school in RCT and the introduction of catchment areas for the 3 to 19 special schools.

Do you agree with the proposal? Yes No Not sure

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)?

Do you think the proposal in any way treats the Welsh Language less favourably than the English Language?



Name (optional):



Please provide contact details if you wish to be notified of the publication of the Consultation Report.

Please forward completed questionnaires to the above address no later than no later than 17:00 on 14th September 2023.

The Council is committed to keeping your personal information safe and secure and keeping you informed about how we use your information. To learn about how your privacy is protected and how and why we use your personal information to provide you with services, please visit our Consultation privacy notice:

<https://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/EN/Council/DataProtectionandFreedomofInformation/DataProtection/serviceprivacynotices/ChiefExecutives/ConsultationPrivacyNotice.aspx>

and

<https://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/EN/Council/DataProtectionandFreedomofInformation/DataProtection/DataProtection.aspx>

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21ST CENTURY SCHOOLS

APPENDIX B - EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

CONSULTATION ON A PROPOSAL TO OPEN A NEW 3 TO 19 SPECIAL SCHOOL IN RHONDDA CYNON TAF



The Consultation Document and Appendices are also available on the 'Get Involved' page on the Council website.

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



EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT FORM INCLUDING SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY

(Revised March 2021)

Please refer to the current Equality Impact Assessment guidance when completing this document. If you would like further guidance, please contact the Diversity and Inclusion Team on (01443) 444529.

An Equality Impact Assessment **must** be undertaken at the outset of any proposal to ensure robust evidence is considered in decision making. This documentation will support the Council in making informed, effective and fair decisions whilst ensuring compliance with a range of relevant legislation, including:

- Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011.
- Socio-economic Duty – Sections 1 to 3 of the Equality Act 2010.

This document will also contribute towards our duties to create a More Equal Wales within the:

- Well-being of Future Generation (Wales) Act 2015.

The 'A More Equal Wales – Mapping Duties' guide highlights the alignment of our duties in respect of the above-mentioned legislation.

SECTION 1 – PROPOSAL DETAILS

Lead Officer: Lisa Howell.

Service Director: Andrea Richards.

Service Area: Directorate of Education and Inclusion Services 21st Century Schools Team.

Date: 19th May 2023.

1.a) What are you assessing for impact?

Strategy/Plan	Service Model/Discontinuation of Service	Re- Policy/Procedure	Practice	Information/Position Statement
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

1.b) What is the name of the proposal?

To open a new English medium 3 to 19 special school in Rhondda Cynon Taf (RCT) and the introduction of catchment areas for all 3 to 19 special schools.

1.c) Please provide an overview of the proposal providing any supporting links to reports or documents.

The proposal is to open a new English medium 3 to 19 special school in RCT for 180 pupils however this will be subject to undertaking further feasibility and progressing with the detailed design of the new school. The new school will provide education for pupils with a range of additional learning needs (ALN) including autistic spectrum disorders, severe learning difficulties, profound and multiple learning difficulties, social, emotional, and behavioural difficulties, and sensory impairment.

It is proposed that the new school will be built in the Clydach Vale area of Tonypany, and it will open no later than the 2026 academic year. The new school is in addition to the four special schools already open in RCT.

In addition, it is proposed to introduce catchment areas for all 3 to 19 special schools across RCT, these are:

- Park Lane Special School.
- Ysgol Hen Felin.
- Ysgol Ty Coch.

The new 3 to 19 special school in RCT would be built in accordance with Building Bulletin 104, current requirements of planning and building control legislation and will be fully accessible and compliant with the Equality Act 2010.

Accommodation will consist of:

- Modern, flexible learning environments for all pupils, a hall/dining area, and specialist teaching and learning areas to cater for the needs of all pupils.
- A hydro-therapy pool plus other sensory and stimulating specialist equipment.
- A dedicated area within so that the local community will be allowed to safely use the facilities, both during and after the school day.
- Enhanced outdoor spaces to support the full range of curriculum activities.
- Traffic management systems including on-site pupil bus drop off, and on-site staff parking.

The proposal will also include a review of safe routes to school and, if required, an investment in improvements to walkways, road crossings and traffic calming measures to ensure the required safety standards are met. This is the approach we have implemented within other communities through the delivery of the Band B Sustainable Communities for Learning programme, which has seen significant improvements being made.

1.d) Please outline where delivery of the proposal is affected by legislation or other drivers such as code of practice.

In developing the proposal, consideration has been given to the following:

1. Section 315 of the **Education Act 1996** requires Councils to ensure that ALN provision is kept under review.
2. The **Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018** (The ALNET Act 2018) requires Councils to keep under review the arrangements for supporting pupils with ALN within their area and consider whether these are sufficient. The ALNET Act 2018 is supported by the statutory **Additional Learning Needs Code 2021**.

3. Powers for Councils to develop school organisation proposals are governed by the **School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013** which is supported by a statutory **School Organisation Code (2nd Edition) (011/2018)**.
4. The new school will be built in accordance with the **Building Bulletin 104**, current requirements of **planning and building control legislation** and will be fully accessible and compliant with the **Equality Act 2010**.

1.e) Please outline who the proposal affects:

- Service users
- Employees
- Wider community

SECTION 2 – SCREENING TEST – IS A FULL EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT REQUIRED?

Screening is used to determine whether the initiative has positive, negative, or neutral impacts upon protected groups. Where negative impacts are identified for protected groups then a full Equality Impact Assessment is required.

Please provide as much detail as possible of how the proposal will impact on the following groups, this may not necessarily be negative, but may impact on a group with a particular characteristic in a specific way.

Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011

The Public Sector Equality Duty requires the Council to have “due regard” to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimisation, advance equality of opportunity between different groups, and foster good relations between different groups. Please take an intersectional approach in recognising an individual may have more than one protected characteristic.

<u>Protected Characteristics</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative, or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
Age <i>(Specific age groups i.e., young people or older people).</i>	Positive.	RCT has an excellent range of special schools. However, it has become increasingly apparent that the special schools currently	Delivery of new school buildings previously throughout RCT and their positive impact on pupils, parents/carers, staff and the wider community. These positive

	<p>available are disproportionate to the demand for them.</p> <p>The Council's school modernisation programme has been successfully making excellent progress in modernising our school estate, meeting demand for places and expanding pupil places where required. The Council has been building new schools, remodelling, and redeveloping schools across RCT providing 21st century learning environments for our pupils, staff, parents/carers, and the wider community.</p> <p>As part of the continuation of the Council's school modernisation programme, investment is needed to provide a new school.</p> <p>Given the considerable changes in Wales in relation to the statutory provision required to meet the needs of pupils with ALN, with the implementation of the ALNET Act 2018, building a new school and creating further capacity in our current provision,</p>	<p>impacts can be requested via the Council's 21st Century Schools Team.</p> <p>An example of this can be seen at Y Pant Comprehensive School where the sporting facilities are being used by Pontyclun Athletics Club and by local netball clubs for training, whilst the indoor community facilities are being used the Community Wind Band and Rhondda Symphony Orchestra.</p> <p>Similarly, the sporting facilities at Tonyrefail Community School are being used for basketball tournaments and for training by local rugby and football clubs, whilst the indoor community facilities are being used by local choirs, for Welsh medium learning classes for adults, community coffee mornings and art classes.</p>
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		<p>will ensure that the Council can continue to meet its statutory obligations. The Council believes that the proposal represents the best opportunity to safeguard and sustain educational standards for the future and provides a platform for further improvement through significant investment in permanent and fit for purpose facilities.</p> <p>The new 3 to 19 special school in RCT would be built in accordance with Building Bulletin 104, current requirements of planning and building control legislation and will be fully accessible and compliant with the Equality Act 2010. Accommodation will consist of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Modern, flexible learning environments for all pupils, a hall/dining area, and specialist teaching and learning areas to cater for the needs of all pupils.• A hydro-therapy pool plus other sensory and stimulating specialist equipment.	
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A dedicated area within so that the local community will be allowed to safely use the facilities, both during and after the school day. • Enhanced outdoor spaces to support the full range of curriculum activities. • Traffic management systems including on-site pupil bus drop off, and on-site staff parking. 	
<p>Disability (<i>People with visible and non-visible disabilities or long-term health conditions</i>).</p>	Positive.	<p>The new 3 to 19 special school in RCT would be built in accordance with planning and building control legislation and will be fully accessible and compliant with the Equality Act 2010. Accommodation will consist of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modern, flexible learning environments for all pupils, a hall/dining area, and specialist teaching and learning areas to cater for the needs of all pupils. • A hydro-therapy pool plus other sensory and stimulating specialist equipment. • A dedicated area within so that the local community will 	<p>RCT has an excellent range of special schools. However, it has become increasingly apparent that the special schools currently available are disproportionate to the demand for them. In view of this, a data analysis exercise has been undertaken. The Consultation Document provides an overview of each special school site, including property condition information and suitability ratings along with a range of data. Pupil projections have not been included. It should be noted that it is difficult to project demand for special schools, as projections are dependent on several factors and historical trends and birth</p>

		<p>be allowed to safely use the facilities, both during and after the school day.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhanced outdoor spaces to support the full range of curriculum activities. • Traffic management systems including on-site pupil bus drop off, and on-site staff parking. <p>The new school will be a fully accessible and fully integrated community school. A dedicated area will be designed within so that the local community will be allowed to safely use the facilities, both during and after the school day.</p>	<p>rates are not dependable factors. Variations in the range of needs of pupils can develop and alter over time and special schools have seen a significant growth in the complexity of the ALN of pupils.</p> <p>The proposal is to open a new English medium 3 to 19 special school in RCT for 180 pupils. The new school will provide education for pupils with a range of ALN including autistic spectrum disorders, severe learning difficulties, profound and multiple learning difficulties, social, emotional, and behavioural difficulties, and sensory impairment.</p>
<p>Gender Reassignment <i>(Anybody who's gender identity or gender expression is different to the sex they were assigned at birth including non-binary identities).</i></p>	<p>Positive.</p>	<p>Gender neutral toilet facilities will be available in the new school.</p>	<p>Research demonstrates school toilets have been identified by sexuality and gender diverse (SGD) pupils as the least safe spaces in schools. They are sites of verbal, physical and sexual victimisation. Providing gender-neutral toilet facilities in and schools may reduce the bullying and victimisation of SGD pupils, particularly those who are transgender or gender diverse.</p>

			Delivery of new school buildings previously throughout RCT and the inclusion of toilets which are gender neutral with full height cubicles for privacy and shared hand wash facilities have been welcomed.
Marriage or Civil Partnership <i>(People who are married or in a civil partnership).</i>	Neutral.	Proposed changes are not expected to impact on this group. While impact on characteristics relating to marriage or civil partnership is not expected, this proposal will be monitored regularly. Should an impact arise, needs will be addressed, and this Equality Impact Assessment updated where necessary.	There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will have an impact on people that share this characteristic.
Pregnancy and Maternity <i>(Women who are pregnant/on maternity leave).</i>	Positive.	The new school will be thermally comfortable with ease of internal temperature regulation which will be of benefit to staff who are pregnant by providing a more comfortable environment to work in. Rest facilities will also be available if required via a dedicated hygiene/medical room.	Delivery of new school buildings previously throughout RCT and their positive impact on pupils, parents/carers, staff and the wider community due to them being naturally ventilated and having energy efficient heating systems.
Race	Positive.	The proposal will have a positive impact on children and young	When looking at ethnicity data, 2022 PLASC data shows 93.9%

<i>(Ethnic and racial groups i.e., minority ethnic groups, Gypsy, Roma, and Travellers).</i>		people between the ages of 3 to 19 with ALN. As a result of the proposal, the Council is expected to deliver increased ALN provision.	of statutory school aged pupils where white British, 5.9% where classified as any other ethnic background whilst 0.2% where unknown.
Religion or Belief <i>(People with different religions and philosophical beliefs including people with no beliefs).</i>	Positive.	The new school will be a fully accessible and fully integrated community school. A dedicated area will be designed within so that the local community will be allowed to safely use the facilities, both during and after the school day. This could include local community religious groups.	Delivery of new school buildings previously throughout RCT and their positive impact on pupils, parents/carers, staff and the wider community. These positive impacts can be requested via the Council's 21 st Century Schools Team.
Sex <i>(Women and men, girls, and boys).</i>	Positive.	The new 3 to 19 special school in RCT will be built in accordance with current requirements of planning and building control legislation and will be fully accessible and compliant with the Equality Act 2010. It will be thermally comfortable with ease of internal temperature regulation which will be of benefit to staff with menopausal symptoms by providing a more comfortable environment to work in. Rest facilities will also be available if required via a	Delivery of new school buildings previously throughout RCT and their positive impact on pupils, parents/carers, staff and the wider community due to them being naturally ventilated and having energy efficient heating systems.

		dedicated hygiene/medical room.	
Sexual Orientation <i>(Bisexual, gay, lesbian, straight).</i>	Neutral.	Proposed changes are not expected to impact on this group. While impact on characteristics relating to Sexual Orientation is not expected, this proposal will be monitored regularly. Should an impact arise, needs will be addressed, and this Equality Impact Assessment updated where necessary.	There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will have an impact on people that share this characteristic.

In addition, due to Council commitments made to the following groups of people we would like you to consider impacts upon them:

<u>Group of People</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative, or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
Armed Forces Community <i>(Anyone who is serving, has served, family members and the bereaved).</i>	Positive.	Additional capacity of the new school could ensure sufficient places to accommodate families who may move into the area midway through an academic year (due to a change in circumstances).	The new school would result in the ability to accommodate more pupils with ALN.
Carers <i>(Anyone of any age who provides unpaid care).</i>	Positive.	Additional capacity of the new school could ensure sufficient places to accommodate families who may move into the area	The new school would result in the ability to accommodate more pupils with ALN.

		<p>midway through an academic year (due to a change in circumstances).</p> <p>The introduction of catchment areas for special schools could encourage more parents/carers to choose their catchment special school as opposed to special schools outside of their catchment area, reducing the time, cost and environmental impacts of longer journeys.</p>	
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If the initial screening test has identified negative impacts, then a full Equality Impact Assessment (Section 4) **must** be undertaken. However, if after undertaking the above screening test you determine a full Equality Impact Assessment is not relevant, please provide an adequate explanation below:

No negative impacts have been identified for protected groups. All impacts on protected groups will be either neutral or positive.

Are you happy you have sufficient evidence to justify your decision? Yes No

Name: Lisa Howell.

Position: 21st Century Schools Business and School Organisation Manager.

Date: 19th May 2023.

Please forward a copy of this completed screening form to the Diversity and Inclusion Team.

PLEASE NOTE – there is a separate impact assessment for Welsh Language. This must also be completed for proposals.

Section 3 Socio-Economic Duty needs only to be completed if proposals are of a strategic nature or when reviewing previous strategic decisions. Definition of a 'strategic nature' is available on page 6 of the [Preparing for the Commencement of the Socio-economic Duty Welsh Government Guidance](#).

SECTION 3 – SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY (STRATEGIC DECISIONS ONLY)

The Socio-Economic Duty gives us an opportunity to do things differently and put tackling inequality genuinely at the heart of key decision making. Socio-economic disadvantage means living on a low income compared to others in Wales, with little or no accumulated wealth, leading to greater material deprivation, restricting the ability to access basic goods and services.

Please consider these additional vulnerable groups and the impact your proposal may or may not have on them:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single parent and vulnerable families. • Pensioners. • Looked after children. • Homeless people. • Students. • Single adult households. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People living in the most deprived areas in Wales. • People with low literacy and numeracy. • People who have experienced the asylum system. • People misusing substances. • People of all ages leaving a care setting. • People involved in the criminal justice system.
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<u>Socio-Economic Disadvantage</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative, or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
Low Income/Income Poverty <i>(Cannot afford to maintain regular payments such as bills, food, clothing, transport etc.).</i>	Positive.	The new 3 to 19 special school in RCT would be built in accordance with current requirements of planning and building control legislation and will be fully accessible and compliant with the Equality Act 2010. Accommodation will consist of:	Delivery of new school buildings previously throughout RCT and their positive impact on pupils, parents/carers, staff and the wider community. These positive impacts can be requested via the Council's 21 st Century Schools Team.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modern, flexible learning environments for all pupils, a hall/dining area, and specialist teaching and learning areas to cater for the needs of all pupils. • A hydro-therapy pool plus other sensory and stimulating specialist equipment. • A dedicated area within so that the local community will be allowed to safely use the facilities, both during and after the school day. • Enhanced outdoor spaces to support the full range of curriculum activities. • Traffic management systems including on-site pupil bus drop off, and on-site staff parking. 	<p>An example of this can be seen at Y Pant Comprehensive School where the sporting facilities are being used by Pontyclun Athletics Club and by local netball clubs for training, whilst the indoor community facilities are being used by the Community Wind Band and Rhondda Symphony Orchestra.</p> <p>Similarly, the sporting facilities at Tonyrefail Community School are being used for basketball tournaments and for training by local rugby and football clubs, whilst the indoor community facilities are being used by local choirs, for Welsh medium learning classes for adults, community coffee mornings and art classes.</p>
<p>Low and/or No Wealth (Enough money to meet basic living costs and pay bills but have no savings to deal with any unexpected spends and no provisions for the future).</p>	Positive.	<p>The new school will have a modern, flexible learning environments for all pupils, a hall/dining area, and a multi-purpose learning resource area. The hall/dining area could create capacity for breakfast club which is utilised by many families who are on low incomes or who are just above the poverty threshold.</p>	<p>PLASC 2023 data demonstrates that 47.6% of pupils attending special schools in RCT are entitled to free school meals, compared to the all RCT figure of 21.9%.</p> <p>Delivery of new school buildings previously throughout RCT and their positive impact on pupils,</p>

		<p>PLASC 2023 data demonstrates that 47.6% of pupils attending special schools in RCT are entitled to free school meals, compared to the all RCT figure of 21.9%.</p> <p>The new school will also have facilities that could assist with storage of school uniforms for uniform recycling schemes whereby parents/carers on lower incomes will be able to benefit from good quality uniforms free of charge.</p>	<p>parents/carers, staff and the wider community.</p>
<p>Material Deprivation (Unable to access basic goods and services i.e., financial products like life insurance, repair/replace broken electrical goods, warm home, hobbies etc.).</p>	<p>Positive.</p>	<p>The new school will offer improved facilities for pupils, parents/carers, staff and the wider community users. The new school will have a have modern, flexible learning environments for all pupils, a hall/dining area, and a multi-purpose learning resource area. The hall/dining area could have a positive impact upon free school meals uptake as a modern dining environment will be provided.</p> <p>The Welsh Government have announced plans to phase the</p>	<p>Delivery of new school buildings previously throughout RCT and their positive impact on pupils, parents/carers, staff and the wider community. These positive impacts can be requested via the Council's 21st Century Schools Team.</p> <p>An example of this can be seen at Y Pant Comprehensive School where the sporting facilities are being used by Pontyclun Athletics Club and by local netball clubs fro training, whilst the indoor community facilities</p>

		<p>expansion of free school meals for primary school aged pupils. The new catering facilities will be designed to accommodate increased uptake of free school meals following the introduction of the expansion.</p>	<p>are being used the Community Wind Band and Rhondda Symphony Orchestra.</p> <p>Similarly, the sporting facilities at Tonyrefail Community School are being used for basketball tournaments and for training by local rugby and football clubs, whilst the indoor community facilities are being used by local choirs, for Welsh medium learning classes for adults, community coffee mornings and art classes.</p>
<p>Area Deprivation <i>(Where you live (rural areas), where you work (accessibility of public transport)).</i></p>	<p>Positive.</p>	<p>As well as delivering a brand new school with modern facilities, this proposal will also include a review of safe routes to school and, if required, an investment in improvements to walkways, road crossings and traffic calming measures to ensure the required safety standards are met. This is the approach we have implemented within other communities through the delivery of the Band B Sustainable Communities for Learning programme, which has seen significant improvements being made.</p>	<p>Delivery of new school buildings previously throughout RCT and their positive impact on pupils, parents/carers, staff and the wider community. These positive impacts can be requested via the Council's 21st Century Schools Team.</p> <p>An example of this can be seen at Y Pant Comprehensive School where the sporting facilities are being used by Pontyclun Athletics Club and by local netball clubs for training, whilst the indoor community facilities are being used the Community</p>

		<p>It is proposed that the new school will be built in the Clydach Vale area of Tonypany. In addition, it is proposed to introduce catchment areas for special schools. Whilst some pupils will live further away from the new school, the site is conveniently located.</p> <p>The private sector contractor involved in the creation of the new school will be delivering community benefits by means of apprenticeships, training and job opportunities, bringing local jobs for local people and opportunities for the long term unemployed. They will also engage in community volunteering and in kind donations to the benefit of the local community. They will also engage with the school community, giving pupils the opportunity to engage with the contractor in activities.</p>	<p>Wind Band and Rhondda Symphony Orchestra.</p> <p>Similarly, the sporting facilities at Tonyrefail Community School are being used for basketball tournaments and for training by local rugby and football clubs, whilst the indoor community facilities are being used by local choirs, for Welsh medium learning classes for adults, community coffee mornings and art classes.</p> <p>There is a statutory duty placed upon all Local Authorities in Wales to provide pupils with free transport to their nearest suitable school if they reside beyond safe 'walking distance' to that school. The Council has exercised the discretionary powers afforded to it under the provisions of the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008 (2008 Measure) to make a more generous provision to pupils.</p> <p>Many pupils (75.9%) currently accessing the special schools</p>
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			<p>across RCT use home to school transport.</p> <p>The proposal will include a review of safe routes to school and, if required, an investment in improvements to walkways, road crossings and traffic calming measures to ensure the required safety standards are met. This is the approach we have implemented within other communities through the delivery of the Band B Sustainable Communities for Learning programme, which has seen significant improvements being made.</p>
<p>Socio-Economic Background (<i>Social class i.e., parents'/carers education, employment, and income</i>).</p>	Positive.	<p>The new school will provide the opportunity for more pupils with ALN to benefit from having the opportunity to be taught in brand new facilities fit for the 21st century.</p> <p>The new school will be built in accordance with the current requirements of planning and building control legislation and will be fully accessible and</p>	<p>Delivery of new school buildings previously throughout RCT and their positive impact on pupils, parents/carers, staff and the wider community. These positive impacts can be requested via the Council's 21st Century Schools Team.</p>

		<p>compliant with the Equality Act 2010. Accommodation will consist of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Modern, flexible learning environments for all pupils, a hall/dining area, and a multi-purpose learning resource area.• A dedicated area within so that the local community will be allowed to safely use the facilities, both during and after the school day.• Enhanced outdoor spaces to support the full range of curriculum activities.• Traffic management systems including on-site pupil bus drop off, and on-site staff parking. <p>The new school will be a fully accessible and fully integrated community school. A dedicated area will be designed within so that the local community will be allowed to safely use the facilities, both during and after the school day.</p>	
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		<p>The private sector contractor involved in the creation of the new school will be delivering community benefits by means of apprenticeships, training and job opportunities, bringing local jobs for local people and opportunities for the long term unemployed. They will also engage in community volunteering and in kind donations to the benefit of the local community. They will also engage with the school community, giving pupils the opportunity to engage with the contractor in activities.</p>	
<p>Socio-economic disadvantage <i>(What cumulative impact will the proposal have on people or groups because of their protected characteristic(s) or vulnerability or because they are already disadvantaged).</i></p>	<p>Positive.</p>	<p>It is proposed that the new school will be built in the Clydach Vale area of Tonypany. In addition, it is proposed to introduce catchment areas for special schools. Whilst some pupils will live further away from the new school, the site is conveniently located.</p> <p>The new school will positively impact any individual who may be financially or materially disadvantaged, as it will afford more opportunities for pupils,</p>	<p>Delivery of new school buildings previously throughout RCT and their positive impact on pupils, parents/carers, staff and the wider community. These positive impacts can be requested via the Council's 21st Century Schools Team.</p>

		parents/carers, staff and the wider community.	
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SECTION 4 – FULL EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

You should use the information gathered at the screening stage to assist you in identifying possible negative/adverse impacts and clearly identify which groups are affected.

4.a) In terms of disproportionate/negative/adverse impacts that the proposal may have on a protected group, outline the steps that will be taken to reduce or mitigate the impact for each group identified. Attach a separate action plan where impacts are substantial.

There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will have a disproportionate/negative/adverse impact on a protected group.

4.b) If ways of reducing the impact have been identified but are not possible, please explain why they are not possible.

There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will have a disproportionate/negative/adverse impact on a protected group.

4.c) Give sufficient detail of data or research that has led to your reasoning the sources used for establishing the demographics of service users/staff.

- Data analysis is based on data derived from the PLASC unless otherwise stated.
- Qualitative reasoning gathered from the Councils Directorate of Education and Inclusion Services 21st Century Schools Team and Access and Inclusion Team and the Council's Corporate Estates Team.
- Delivery of new school buildings previously throughout RCT and their positive impact on pupils, parents/carers, staff and the wider community. These positive impacts can be requested via the Council's 21st Century Schools Team.

4.d) Give details of how you engaged with service users/staff on the proposals and the steps taken to avoid any disproportionate impact on a protected group. Explain how you have used feedback to influence your decision.

The consultation will start on 4th July 2023 and will be completed at 17:00 on 15th September 2023.

Face to face meetings will be arranged with the staff, School Councils and Governing Bodies of the special schools across RCT.

A Consultation Response Form will also be available at on the Council'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 the Council's Cabinet.

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

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

Or

E-mail: schoolplanning@rctcbc.gov.uk

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, the Councils 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.

A drop in session will also be arranged so that members of the public can discuss the proposal with Officers from the Councils Directorate of Education and Inclusion Services and provide any feedback at the session.

The Councils Directorate of Education and Inclusion Services 21st Century Schools Team and the Council's Corporate Estates Team will monitor this proposal throughout the design development period, construction period and operational period holding monthly review meetings.

4.e) Are you satisfied that the engagement process complies with the requirements of the Statutory Equality and Socio-economic Duties?

There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will have a disproportionate/negative/adverse impact on a protected group.

Yes

No

SECTION 5 – MONITORING, EVALUATING AND REVIEWING

5a) Please outline below how the implementation of the proposal will be monitored:

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

- The opening of a maintained school (including special school).
- The closing of a maintained school (including special school).

The consultation will start on 4th July 2023 and will be completed at 17:00 on 15th September 2023.

Face to face meetings will be arranged with the staff, School Councils and Governing Bodies of the special schools across RCT.

A Consultation Response Form will also be available at on the Council'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 the Council's Cabinet.

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

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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, the Councils 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.

A drop in session will also be arranged so that members of the public can discuss the proposal with Officers from the Councils Directorate of Education and Inclusion Services and provide any feedback at the session.

The Councils Directorate of Education and Inclusion Services 21st Century Schools Team and the Council's Corporate Estates Team will monitor this proposal throughout the design development period, construction period and operational period holding monthly review meetings.

5b) When is the evaluation of the proposal due to be reviewed?

The Council'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 the Council's Cabinet decides not to proceed, that will be the end of the proposal.

If the Council's Cabinet decide to proceed with the proposal, a Statutory Notice will be published providing a 28 day notice period for objections. The School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2018 requires that anyone wishing to make objections to a school organisation proposal can do so. To be considered as statutory objections, objections **must** be made in writing or by email, and sent to the Council within 28 days of the date on which the Statutory Notice was published.

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

If there are objections, the Council's Director of Education and Inclusion Services will publish an Objection Report providing a summary of the objections and the response to them within seven days of the day of the determination of the proposal.

If the Council's Cabinet approve the proposal, it will be implemented in accordance with the date stated in the Statutory Notice or any subsequently modified date. In the case of the proposal, the implementation date will be no later than the 2026 academic year.

5c) Who is responsible for the monitoring and review of the proposal?

The Councils Directorate of Education and Inclusion Services 21st Century Schools Team and the Council's Corporate Estates Team will monitor this proposal throughout the design development period, construction period and operational period.

5d) How will the results of the monitoring be used to develop future proposals?

Each 21st Century Schools project undergoes a 'Lessons Learnt' review at the end of the construction phase and this feeds into future projects so that each project improves and benefits from lessons learnt (positive and negative) during previous projects.

SECTION 6 – REVIEW

For all policy proposals, whether it is a Significant Key Decision or not, you are required to forward this Impact Assessment to Diversity and Inclusion Team – equality@rctcbc.gov.uk and the Consultation and Engagement Team – consultation@rctcbc.gov.uk in the first instance for some initial guidance and feedback.

As part of the Welsh Language, Equalities and Socio Economic Duty Impact Assessment Process all proposals that fall within the definition of Significant Key Decision should be presented at the Officer Review Panel. This Panel is made up of officers from across Council Services and acts as a critical friend before your report is finalised and published for Senior Leadership Team (SLT)/Cabinet approval.

If the proposal is a Key Strategic Decision please forward your completed Impact Assessment, policy proposal/report and consultation report to CouncilBusiness@rctcbc.gov.uk for an Officer Review Panel to be organised to discuss your proposal. See our guidance document for more information on what a Significant Key Decision is.

It is important to keep a record of this process so that we can demonstrate how we have considered and built-in equality/socio

economic considerations wherever possible. Please ensure you update the relevant sections below in collaboration with the relevant departments.

Diversity and Inclusion Team Comments	Date Considered	Brief description of any amendments made following Officer Review Panel considerations
TBC.	TBC.	TBC.
Consultation Comments	Date Considered	Brief description of any amendments made following consultation
TBC.	TBC.	TBC.
Officer Review Panel Comments	Date Considered	Brief description of any amendments made following Officer Review Panel considerations
TBC.	TBC.	TBC.

SECTION 7 – SUMMARY OF IMPACTS FOR THE PROPOSAL

Provide below a summary of the Impact Assessment, to include some of the main positive and negative impacts along with an overview of actions taken since the Impact Assessment to better contribute to more positive impacts. This summary must be included in the Equality Considerations section of the SLT/Cabinet report template. It is not suitable to only write 'please see full report at Appendix x' in the body of the report. The Impact Assessment must be published alongside the report.

An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed and the main findings are as follows:

In summary, the Equality Impact Assessment identifies both positive and neutral impacts, and no negative impacts upon the protected characteristics.

- The new school will be built in accordance with the Building Bulletin 104, current requirements of planning and building control legislation and will be fully accessible and compliant with the Equality Act 2010.
- The new school and the way in which it will be used will bring positive socio-economic impacts across all of the vulnerable groups identified under the protected characteristic headings.
- Additional capacity of the new school could ensure sufficient places to accommodate families who may move into the area midway through an academic year (due to a change in circumstances), this could include the armed forces community and carers.

- The new school and the way in which it will be used will bring positive socio-economic impacts across all of the vulnerable groups identified under the socio-economic disadvantage headings.

SECTION 8 – AUTHORISATIONS

Lead Officer:

Name: Lisa Howell.

Position: 21st Century Schools Business and School Organisation Manager.

Date: 19th May 2023.

I recommend that the proposal:

- Is implemented with no amendments
- Is implemented taking into account the mitigating actions outlined
- Is rejected due to disproportionate negative impacts on protected groups or socio-economic disadvantage

Head of Service/Director Approval:

Name: Gaynor Davies.

Position: Director of Education and Inclusion Services.

Date: 19th May 2023.

Please submit this impact assessment with any SLT/Cabinet Reports.

21ST CENTURY SCHOOLS

APPENDIX C – WELSH LANGUAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

CONSULTATION ON A PROPOSAL TO OPEN A NEW 3 TO 19 SPECIAL SCHOOL IN RHONDDA CYNON TAF AND THE INTRODUCTION CATCHMENT AREAS FOR SPECIAL SCHOOLS



The Consultation Document and Appendices are also available on the 'Get Involved' page on the Council website.

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



WELSH LANGUAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT TOOL

This Welsh Language Impact Assessment (WLIS) tool enables RCT Council to consider the principles and requirements of the [Welsh Language Standards \(No.1\) Regulations 2015](#) to ensure compliance with the [Welsh Language \(Wales\) Measure 2011](#).

Stage 1 – Information Gathering	
NOTE: As you complete this tool you will be asked for evidence to support your views . Please see Welsh Language Impact Assessment Guidance for more information on data sources.	
Proposal Name	To open a new 3 to 19 special school in Rhondda Cynon Taf (RCT) and the introduction of catchment areas for special schools.
Department	Directorate of Education and Inclusion Services – 21 st Century Schools Team.
Service Director	Andrea Richards.
Officer Completing the WLIA	Lisa Howell.
Email	Lisa.J.Howell@rctcbc.gov.uk
Phone	N/A.
Brief Description	<p>The Council wishes to seek the views of stakeholders on the proposal to open a new English medium 3 to 19 special school in Rhondda Cynon Taf (RCT) for 180 however this will be subject to undertaking further feasibility and progressing with the detailed design of the new school pupils. The new school will provide education for pupils with a range of ALN including autistic spectrum disorders, severe learning difficulties, profound and multiple learning difficulties, social, emotional, and behavioural difficulties, and sensory impairment.</p> <p>It is proposed that the new school will be built in the Clydach Vale area of Tonypany, and it will open no later than the 2026 academic year. The new school is in addition to the four special schools already open in RCT.</p> <p>It is also proposed to introduce catchment areas for all 3 to 19 special schools across RCT, these are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Park Lane Special School. • Ysgol Hen Felin. • Ysgol Ty Coch <p>The new 3 to 19 special school in RCT would be built in accordance with current requirements of planning and building control legislation and will be fully accessible and compliant with the Equality Act 2010. Accommodation will consist of:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modern, flexible learning environments for all pupils, a hall/dining area, and specialist teaching and learning areas to cater for the needs of all pupils. • A hydro-therapy pool plus other sensory and stimulating specialist equipment. • A dedicated area within so that the local community will be allowed to safely use the facilities, both during and after the school day. • Enhanced outdoor spaces to support the full range of curriculum activities. • Traffic management systems including on-site pupil bus drop off, and on-site staff parking. <p>The new school will be a fully accessible and fully integrated community school. A dedicated area will be designed within so that the local community will be allowed to safely use the facilities, both during and after the school day.</p> <p>The proposal will also include a review of safe routes to school and, if required, an investment in improvements to walkways, road crossings and traffic calming measures to ensure the required safety standards are met. This is the approach we have implemented within other communities through the delivery of the Band B Sustainable Communities for Learning programme, which has seen significant improvements being made.</p>
Date	17 th May 2023.
<p>Please outline who this proposal affects? (Service Users, Employees, Wider Community)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Governing Bodies of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Park Lane Special School. ○ Ysgol Hen Felin. ○ Ysgol Ty Coch including Buarth y Capel. • Parents/carers, prospective parents/carers (where possible), and staff members of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Park Lane Special School. ○ Ysgol Hen Felin. ○ Ysgol Ty Coch including Buarth y Capel. • Pupils and staff of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Park Lane Special School. ○ Ysgol Hen Felin. ○ Ysgol Ty Coch including Buarth y Capel. • Local community in the Clydach Vale area of Tonypany.
<p>What are the aims of the policy, and how do these relate to the Welsh Language?</p>	<p>RCT has an excellent range of special schools. However, it has become increasingly apparent that the special schools currently available are disproportionate to the demand for them.</p> <p>Given the considerable changes in Wales in relation to the statutory provision required to meet the needs of pupils with ALN, with the implementation of the Additional Learning Needs and Educational Tribunal Act (Wales) 2018 (ALNET Act 2018), building a new 3 to 19 special school in RCT and creating further capacity in our current provision, will ensure that the Council can continue to meet its statutory obligations.</p>

The Council believes that the proposal represents the best opportunity to safeguard and sustain educational standards for the future and provides a platform for further improvement through significant investment in permanent and fit for purpose facilities.

Although the new school will be English medium, Welsh is taught as part of the curriculum and all pupils will benefit from having the opportunity to be taught in brand new facilities fit for the 21st century.

The aim is to embed positive habits and attitudes towards the Welsh language through purposeful planning to promote the informal use of the Welsh language amongst pupils inside and outside schools. Facilitating the use of the Welsh language across the curriculum and in wider contexts in schools, to ensure a continuum of linguistic progression to support pupils in the transition between key stages, offers all pupils the opportunity to become fully bilingual and aligns with the Curriculum for Wales 2022. The new school will be encouraged and supported to do this through the achievement of the 'Cymraeg Campus' Welsh Language Charter, a framework to promote and increase the use of Welsh.

In addition, the new school will be a fully accessible and fully integrated community school. A dedicated area will be designed within so that the local community will be allowed to safely use the facilities, both during and after the school day. Use of the facilities could include opportunities for third parties to offer Welsh medium learning classes for adults. An example of this can be seen in Tonyrefail Community School, where Welsh medium learning classes for adults are held in the community facilities. This could contribute towards the Welsh Government's ambitious goal of creating a million Welsh speakers in Wales by 2050 and the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP).

**Who will benefit / Could the policy affect Welsh language groups?
If so, list them here.**

- The Governing Bodies of:
 - Park Lane Special School.
 - Ysgol Hen Felin.
 - Ysgol Ty Coch including Buarth y Capel.
- Parents/carers, prospective parents/carers (where possible), and staff members of:
 - Park Lane Special School.
 - Ysgol Hen Felin.
 - Ysgol Ty Coch including Buarth y Capel.
- Pupils and staff of:
 - Park Lane Special School.
 - Ysgol Hen Felin.
 - Ysgol Ty Coch including Buarth y Capel.
- Local community in the Clydach Vale area of Tonypandy.

We are also seeking the views of several stakeholders including the following Welsh language groups:

- Mudiad Meithrin.
- Menter Iaith.
- Welsh Language Commissioner.

Any impact on Welsh language groups should be positive as the new school will be a fully accessible and fully integrated community school. A dedicated area will be designed within so that the local community will be allowed to safely use the facilities, both during and after the school day. Use of the facilities could include opportunities for third parties to offer Welsh medium learning classes for adults.

Current linguistic profile of the geographical area(s) concerned

The 2021 Census figures regarding the Welsh language show a decrease in the percentage of Welsh speakers across Wales to 17.8%. There was, however, a small increase in RCT – the percentage of the population of the County Borough who can speak Welsh increased from 12.3% to 12.4%. Numerically, RCT saw a 2.8% increase in the number of Welsh speakers in the County Borough, from 27,779 speakers to 28,556 speakers. RCT was also one of only four Local Authorities in Wales to see an increase in the percentage of Welsh speakers – the others were Cardiff, Merthyr Tydfil and the Vale of Glamorgan. All of these are neighbouring County Boroughs, which could demonstrate that our region is seeing some positive trends in terms of increases in Welsh speakers, and that there may be a resulting increase in demand for services through the medium of Welsh. As further, more detailed, data from the Census becomes available for RCT (e.g., LSOA data), we will need to consider what impact it may have on the services we provide.

The table that follows outlines the Welsh language skills of residents living in RCT and Wales and is obtained from the 2011 Census.

Welsh Language Skills of Residents (2011 Census)			
Welsh Language Skill	RCT	Wales	
Can speak, read and write Welsh	9.7%	14.6%	
Can speak and read but cannot write Welsh	0.9%	1.5%	
Can speak but cannot read or write Welsh	1.6%	2.7%	

Can understand spoken Welsh only	4.2%	5.3%
Other combination of Skills	3.3%	2.5%
No skills	80.4%	73.3%
Total	100.0%	100.0%

The data demonstrates that the Welsh language skills level of residents living in RCT is lower than the all Wales Welsh language skills level.

The table that follows outlines the Welsh language skills of residents living in RCT and Wales and is obtained from the 2021 Census.

Welsh Language Skills of Residents (2021 Census)		
Welsh Language Skill	RCT	Wales
Can speak, read and write Welsh	9.8%	13.8%
Can speak and read but cannot write Welsh	0.7%	1.1%
Can speak but cannot read or write Welsh	1.4%	2.2%
Can understand spoken Welsh only	3.9%	5.0%
Other combination of Skills	5.5%	5.2%
No skills	78.7%	72.7%
Total	100.0%	100.0%

The data demonstrates that the Welsh language skills level of residents living in RCT is lower than the all Wales Welsh language skills level.

The data demonstrates the Welsh language skills level of residents living in RCT and the all Wales Welsh language skills level are lower in 2021 than 2011.

The Welsh Language Use Survey for the years 2013 to 2015, contains detailed information about Welsh speaker's fluency and their use of the Welsh language in a range of settings. When looking where respondents living in Wales learned to speak Welsh, the majority, 45.0%, learned to speak Welsh at home, followed by 26.0% who learned to speak Welsh at nursery and primary school between the ages of 2 to 10 and 14.0% who learned to speak Welsh at secondary school at the age of 11 plus. The remaining 2.0% learned to speak Welsh in other settings, including at Welsh medium learning classes for adults.

The data demonstrates that the Welsh language skills level of residents living in RCT is lower than the all-Wales Welsh language skills level. Proposals such as this significantly improve the learning environment and the opportunities available for pupils. The headteacher of the new school will be encouraged and supported to consider using these facilities to increase participation in the Welsh language by offering the opportunity to parents/carers and other members of the community to attend Welsh medium learning classes for adults and/or other opportunities for community engagement through the medium of Welsh. In recent years, support has been given to promote and increase pupils use of the Welsh language in primary and secondary schools and in social contexts. This has been done through the Welsh Language Charter (Siarter Iaith), developed by Gwynedd Council, and various other projects, in partnership with the Central South Consortium Joint Education Service (CSCJES) and the Urdd. This could contribute towards the Welsh Government's ambitious goal of creating a million Welsh speakers in Wales by 2050 and the WESP.

Other relevant data or research

What is the language category of the school?

The proposed language category of the school is English. For pupils with significant needs who experience difficulties in coping with mainstream education, specialist provisions are required. The Council has a range of specialist provisions which include:

- Forty-five Learning Support Classes.
 - One Key Stage Three Welsh Medium Learning Support Class.
 - One Key Stage Four Welsh Medium Learning Support Class.
- Two Pupil Referral Units.
- Four Special Schools.

Placement into these specialist provisions is agreed by the Council's Directorate of Education and Inclusion Services Access and Inclusion Service Panels.

In addition to these the Council is currently consulting on opening more LSCs in RCT including 2 Welsh medium primary LSCs within the new Welsh medium school Ysgol Awel Taf, which is due to open in September 2024.

Welsh medium pupils with ALN who experience difficulties coping with mainstream education are supported through an inclusive delivery model by a specialist peripatetic team, the Welsh Complex Needs Team (WCNT), which is made up of a Welsh medium specialist teacher and two learning support assistants. Analysis suggests that pupils accessing support from the WCNT are making progress that is comparable to that of their peers in equivalent English medium schools.

The Council has recently approved proposals to realign the provision of Learning Support Classes across RCT and, in accordance with the School Organisation Code 2018 (011/2018), approved the relevant and required statutory consultation to establish two Welsh medium primary school Learning Support Classes at the new Welsh medium primary school in Rhydyfelin for pupils with significant ALN. The proposal will take effect from the 2024 academic year.

This ensures that an improved continuum of Welsh medium ALN provision can be achieved in RCT, and that the Council undertakes its statutory duties in relation to the ALNET Act 2018 whilst also contributing towards the Welsh Government's ambitious goal of creating a million Welsh speakers in Wales by 2050 and the WESP.

What facilities are there for members of the community to learn Welsh or undertake activities through the medium of Welsh?

The new school will be a fully accessible and fully integrated community school. A dedicated area will be designed within so that the local community will be allowed to safely use the facilities, both during and after the school day.

The headteacher of the new school will be encouraged and supported to consider using these facilities to increase participation in the Welsh language by offering the opportunity to parents/carers and other members of the community to attend Welsh medium learning classes for adults and/or other opportunities for community engagement through the medium of Welsh.

Is it appropriate to provide additional after school facilities at any alternative school to further secure standards in the Welsh language?

The new school will be a fully accessible and fully integrated community school. A dedicated area will be designed within so that the local community will be allowed to safely use the facilities, both during and after the school day.

The headteacher of the new school will be encouraged and supported to consider using these facilities to increase participation in the Welsh language by offering the opportunity to parents/carers and other members of the

community to attend Welsh medium learning classes for adults and/or other opportunities for community engagement through the medium of Welsh.

How parents/carers and pupils' engagement with any alternative school and any specific language enhancement it offers could be supported?

The Council has developed and updated a Being Bilingual booklet which was first published in March 2016. It was designed to give information on the benefits of being bilingual, outline the pathway to Welsh medium education and answer frequently asked questions on choosing Welsh medium education. It is distributed via Flying Start provisions and through the community in dental surgeries, doctors' surgeries, hospitals, leisure centres and libraries.

The Council's Starting School booklet also provides parents/carers with a range of information including advice on choosing a school, the provision of home to school transport and a directory of schools.

In addition, the local Cymraeg i Blant Officer runs weekly bilingual baby massage, baby yoga and Welsh rhyme time sessions across RCT. This ensures that parents/carers receive key early messages during the ante-natal and post-natal period and are made aware of the bilingual pathway available for their child.

The Council's Youth Engagement and Participation Service work with Menter Iaith and the Urdd to deliver bespoke language awareness sessions for young people, highlighting the value of having the Welsh language as a skill.

The Council recognises the importance of immersion in the Welsh language for pupils who wish to transition from English to Welsh medium education. In July 2022 funding was approved by the Welsh Government to establish Welsh language immersion provision for latecomers to the language. The provision will adopt a peripatetic model of delivery with the immersion lead travelling to the home schools of pupils accessing the service to immerse pupils in the Welsh language. The provision is currently being rolled out and actively marketed and will continue to evolve as demand for it grows. When demand for it increases, the Council will consider creating a dedicated Welsh Language Immersion Unit for latecomers alongside the development of its Band B Sustainable Communities for Learning programme.

Information on how the proposal fits with the WESP and any future actions that will be needed in consequence of the change to continue to comply with the scheme or meet targets in the scheme

All Local Authorities in Wales must produce a 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, the Council aims to contribute significantly

to achieving the vision of one million people in Wales being Welsh speakers by 2050 as set out in Cymraeg 2050. The WESP can be viewed and downloaded from the Council website via:

[Welsh in Education Strategic Plan \(WESP\) 2022 – 2032 | Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council \(rctcbc.gov.uk\)](https://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/welsh-in-education-strategic-plan-wesp-2022-2032)

There are seven outcomes within the WESP, two of which are:

- More opportunities for pupils to use Welsh in different contexts in school.
- An increase in the provision of Welsh medium education for pupils with ALN in accordance with the duties imposed by the ALNET Act 2018.

In recent years, support has been given to promote and increase pupils use of the Welsh language in primary and secondary schools and in social contexts. This has been done through the Welsh Language Charter (Siarter Iaith), developed by Gwynedd Council, and various other projects, in partnership with the CSCJES and the Urdd. This could contribute towards the Welsh Government's ambitious goal of creating a million Welsh speakers in Wales by 2050 and the WESP.

Welsh medium pupils with ALN who experience difficulties coping with mainstream education are supported through an inclusive delivery model by a specialist peripatetic team, the WCNT, which is made up of a Welsh medium specialist teacher and two learning support assistants. Analysis suggests that pupils accessing support from the WCNT are making progress that is comparable to that of their peers in equivalent English medium schools.

The Council has recently approved proposals to realign the provision of Learning Support Classes across RCT and, in accordance with the School Organisation Code 2018 (011/2018), approved the relevant and required statutory consultation to establish two Welsh medium primary school Learning Support Classes at the new Welsh medium primary school in Rhydyfelin, Ysgol Awel Taf, for pupils with significant ALN. The proposal will take effect from the 2024 academic year.

This ensures that an improved continuum of Welsh medium ALN provision can be achieved in RCT, and that the Council undertakes its statutory duties in relation to the ALNET Act 2018 whilst also contributing towards the Welsh Government's ambitious goal of creating a million Welsh speakers in Wales by 2050 and the WESP.

No changes to these proposals are required to comply with the WESP.

In this section you need to consider the impact, the evidence and any action you are taking for improvement. This is to ensure that the opportunities for people who choose to live their lives and access services through the medium of Welsh are not inferior to what is afforded to those choosing to do so in English, in accordance with the requirement of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011.

Please note there is a separate impact assessment for Equality and Socio-Economic duty that must also be completed for policy proposals.

Remember that effects that are positive for some groups could be detrimental to others - even among Welsh language groups. Consider the effects on different groups. For example, a proposal may be beneficial to Welsh learners, but not to Welsh speakers.

Previous Welsh Language Impact Assessments can be found on Inform by [clicking here](#).

Will the proposed action affect any or all of the following?

	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts?	Describe why it will have a positive/negative or neutral impact on the Welsh language.	What evidence do you have to support this view?	What action(s) can you take to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
<p>Opportunities for persons to use the Welsh language</p> <p>e.g., staff, residents and visitors</p> <p>The rights of Welsh speakers and learners to use Welsh when dealing with the council and for staff to use Welsh at Work</p>	<p>Positive</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The new school will be a fully accessible and fully integrated community school. A dedicated area will be designed within so that the local community will be allowed to safely use the facilities, both during and after the school day. 2. All signage produced will be bilingual and in adherence to the most recent guidelines available and 'Welcome to use Welsh' signs will be placed in the new school reception to make people 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. An example of this can be seen in Tonyrefail Community School, where Welsh medium learning classes for adults are held in the community facilities. 2. The Annual Population Survey collects information about respondents' Welsh speaking ability and includes a question on respondent's Welsh language skills level. The most recent Annual Population Survey, for the quarter ending June 2022, 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The headteacher of the new school will be encouraged and supported to consider using these facilities to increase participation in the Welsh language by offering the opportunity to parents/carers and other members of the community to attend Welsh medium learning classes for adults and/or other opportunities for community engagement through the medium of Welsh.

		<p>aware that they are welcome to use Welsh if desired.</p> <p>Any Welsh speaking members of staff should also wear badges/lanyards that show that they speak Welsh.</p> <p>3. The Council will continue to adhere to The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011, which requires the Council to produce a five year strategy to facilitate and promote the Welsh language. The second five year strategy, for the years between 2022 to 2027, was approved in 2022 and outlines several key policy areas to maintain and increase the number of Welsh speakers during its lifecycle. In developing this proposal, the RCT – Welsh Language Promotion Strategy and associated documents have been taken into consideration to encourage and facilitate long term growth in Welsh medium and Welsh language education and the Council has and will continue to ensure there is a clear alignment with it.</p>	<p>reported that 17.9% of respondents living in RCT said they could read Welsh, compared to the all Wales percentage of 26.0% of respondents.</p> <p>3. The Annual Population Survey collects information about respondents' Welsh speaking ability and includes a question on respondent's Welsh language skills level. The most recent Annual Population Survey, for the quarter ending June 2022, reported that 24.1% of respondents living in RCT said they could speak Welsh, compared to the all Wales percentage of 33.4% of respondents.</p> <p>4. All newly recruited Council staff are required to undertake Welsh language Level 1 training and those staff who obtain Level 1 will be encouraged to further their skills by undertaking levels 2 and 3 .</p> <p>5. The number of school based staff completing the Welsh Governments Welsh</p>	<p>Ensure that parents/carers, and the wider community are signposted to Welsh medium learning classes for adults and/or other opportunities for community engagement through the medium of Welsh via the Council's website and corporate social media platforms.</p> <p>2. All processes associated with the new school will be in accordance with the Council's Welsh Language Standards.</p> <p>3. The Council's Welsh Language Services Team are working to develop technological support for Welsh speakers and learners within the Council to be able to deliver services through the medium of Welsh.</p> <p>4. All newly recruited Council staff are required to undertake Welsh language Level 1 training and those staff who obtain Level 1 will be encouraged to further their skills by undertaking levels 2 and 3 .</p>
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		<p>4. The Council has opportunities for internal staff across all services to access free training to improve their Welsh language skills. The Council's Welsh Language Services Team are working to develop technological support for Welsh speakers and learners within the Council to be able to deliver services through the medium of Welsh.</p> <p>All newly recruited Council staff are required to undertake Welsh language Level 1 training and those staff who obtain Level 1 will be encouraged to further their skills by undertaking levels 2 and 3. This will support the opportunities available for the Council to create a bilingual workforce with the ability to work and deliver services bilingually.</p> <p>5. The Councils must work to ensure a school based workforce of sufficient size and capability. To create more Welsh speakers, our education system is dependent on its school based workforce.</p>	<p>Language Sabbatical Scheme, which is offered at various language levels, providing opportunities for specialised and continual professional development with the aim of increasing number of school based staff who can teach bilingually or through the medium of Welsh.</p> <p>The number of teaching staff able to teach Welsh (as a subject) and teach through the medium of Welsh.</p>	<p>5. We must work locally, regionally, and nationally to ensure a workforce with robust linguistic skills with the ability to inspire and motivate pupils in Welsh medium education.</p> <p>A WESP Subgroup has been established to work towards the achievement of outcome 7 of the WESP, it includes local, regional, and national officers who are working collaboratively to implement strategies to work towards creating more Welsh speakers to ensure we have a school based workforce of sufficient size and capability.</p>
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		Outcome 7 of the WESP works towards providing more opportunities to increase the number of teaching staff able to teach Welsh (as a subject) and teach through the medium of Welsh.		
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Stage 2 – Impact Assessment

Will the proposed action affect any or all of the following?

	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts?	Describe why it will have a positive/negative or neutral impact on the Welsh language.	What evidence do you have to support this view?	What action(s) can you take to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
<p>Numbers and / or percentages of Welsh speakers e.g., Welsh Medium Education / Study Opportunities. Links with the Welsh Government's Cymraeg 2050 Strategy / RCTCBC Five Year Welsh Language Strategy</p>	Positive	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The new school will be a fully accessible and fully integrated community school. A dedicated area will be designed within so that the local community will be allowed to safely use the facilities, both during and after the school day. 2. The Council aims to embed positive habits and attitudes towards the Welsh language through purposeful planning to promote the informal use of the Welsh language amongst pupils inside and outside schools. Facilitating the use of 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. An example of this can be seen in Tonyrefail Community School, where Welsh medium learning classes for adults are held in the community facilities. 2. As of April 2023, all Welsh medium primary schools have achieved the bronze award and 3 have achieved the silver award for the 'Cymraeg Campus' Welsh Language Charter. Whilst 2 Welsh medium secondary schools have achieved the bronze and silver awards for the 'Cymraeg Campus' Welsh Language Charter 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The headteacher of the new school will be encouraged and supported to consider using these facilities to increase participation in the Welsh language by offering the opportunity to parents/carers and other members of the community to attend Welsh medium learning classes for adults and/or other opportunities for community engagement through the medium of Welsh.

		<p>the Welsh language across the curriculum and in wider contexts in schools, to ensure a continuum of linguistic progression to support pupils in the transition between key stages, offers all pupils the opportunity to become fully bilingual and aligns with the Curriculum for Wales 2022. The new school will be encouraged and supported to do this through the achievement of the 'Cymraeg Campus' Welsh Language Charter, a framework to promote and increase the use of Welsh.</p>	<p>As of April 2023, 43 English medium primary schools have achieved the bronze award and 9 have achieved the silver award for the 'Cymraeg Campus' Welsh Language Charter. Whilst 2 English medium secondary schools have achieved the bronze award for the 'Cymraeg Campus' Welsh Language Charter.</p>	<p>Ensure that parents/carers, and the wider community are signposted to Welsh medium learning classes for adults and/or other opportunities for community engagement through the medium of Welsh via the Council's website and corporate social media platforms.</p> <p>2. The new school will be encouraged and supported to do this through the achievement of the 'Cymraeg Campus' Welsh Language Charter, a framework to promote and increase the use of Welsh.</p>
<p>Opportunities to promote the Welsh language e.g., status, use of Welsh language services, use of Welsh in everyday life in work and in the community</p> <p>Actively encourage and promote the use of our services in Welsh to see an increase in demand over time</p>	<p>Positive</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The new school will be a fully accessible and fully integrated community school. A dedicated area will be designed within so that the local community will be allowed to safely use the facilities, both during and after the school day. 2. All signage produced will be bilingual and in adherence to the most recent guidelines 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. An example of this can be seen in Tonyrefail Community School, where Welsh medium learning classes for adults are held in the community facilities. 2. The Annual Population Survey collects information about respondents' Welsh speaking ability and includes a question on respondent's Welsh language skills level. The most recent Annual Population 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The headteacher of the new school will be encouraged and supported to consider using these facilities to increase participation in the Welsh language by offering the opportunity to parents/carers and other members of the community to attend Welsh medium learning classes for adults and/or

		<p>available and 'Welcome to use Welsh' signs will be placed in the new school reception to make people aware that they are welcome to use Welsh if desired.</p> <p>Any Welsh speaking members of staff should also wear badges/lanyards that show that they speak Welsh.</p> <p>3. The Council will continue to adhere to The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011, which requires the Council to produce a five year strategy to facilitate and promote the Welsh language. The second five year strategy, for the years between 2022 to 2027, was approved in 2022 and outlines several key policy areas to maintain and increase the number of Welsh speakers during its lifecycle. In developing this proposal, the RCT – Welsh Language Promotion Strategy has been taken into consideration to encourage and facilitate long term growth in Welsh medium and Welsh language education and the Council has and will continue to ensure</p>	<p>Survey, for the quarter ending June 2022, reported that 17.9% of respondents living in RCT said they could read Welsh, compared to the all Wales percentage of 26.0% of respondents.</p> <p>3. The Annual Population Survey collects information about respondents' Welsh speaking ability and includes a question on respondent's Welsh language skills level. The most recent Annual Population Survey, for the quarter ending June 2022, reported that 24.1% of respondents living in RCT said they could speak Welsh, compared to the all Wales percentage of 33.4% of respondents.</p> <p>4. The development of opportunities for pupils and the wider community to use the Welsh language</p>	<p>other opportunities for community engagement through the medium of Welsh.</p> <p>Ensure that parents/carers, and the wider community are signposted to Welsh medium learning classes for adults and/or other opportunities for community engagement through the medium of Welsh via the Council's website and corporate social media platforms.</p> <p>2. All processes associated with the new school will be in accordance with the Council's Welsh Language Standards.</p> <p>3. The Council's Welsh Language Services Team are working to develop technological support for Welsh speakers and learners within the Council to be able to deliver services through the medium of Welsh.</p>
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		<p>there is a clear alignment with it.</p> <p>4. Outcome 5 of the WESP works towards providing more opportunities for pupils to use Welsh in different contexts in school.</p> <p>The Council's Welsh Language Services, Youth Services, Leisure Services, Arts and Cultural Services and Musical Services are all working proactively towards developing opportunities for pupils and the wider community to use the Welsh language.</p>		<p>4. A WESP Subgroup has been established to work towards the achievement of this outcome, it includes local, regional, and national officers who are working collaboratively to implement strategies to work towards providing more opportunities for pupils to use Welsh in different contexts in school. Strategies include:</p> <p>Welsh Language Services – Developing materials to provide to school based staff to support with their Welsh language skills.</p> <p>Youth Services - Running trips for Welsh medium pupils to provide opportunities to use Welsh in different contexts, creating promotional materials to be placed in youth clubs throughout RCT, working in partnership with the Urdd and Menter Iaith to develop Welsh Language Youth</p>
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				<p>Forums in all Welsh and English medium secondary schools along with the local college.</p> <p>Leisure Services – Working with the Urdd to deliver sport activities for Welsh medium schools and exploring extending this to incorporate English medium schools on a bilingual model of delivery. Working with Menter Iaith to develop opportunities to introduce the Welsh language into leisure sessions.</p> <p>Arts and Cultural Services – Collaborating with Youth Services on a programme of provision across RCT’s cultural venues to encourage the use of the Welsh language and incorporating the Welsh language into community based events.</p> <p>Musical Services – Engaging with both</p>
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Welsh and English medium schools to encourage uptake in musical services for pupils who show an aptitude for any instruments with pupils being encouraged and supported to take part in the Eisteddfod.

Stage 2 – Impact Assessment

Will the proposed action affect any or all of the following?

	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts?	Describe why it will have a positive/negative or neutral impact on the Welsh language.	What evidence do you have to support this view?	What action(s) can you take to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
<p>Compliance with the Council's Statutory Welsh Language Standards e.g. increasing or reducing the Council's ability to deliver services through the Medium of Welsh.</p> <p>Consider the rights of Welsh speakers to use Welsh when dealing with the Council and for staff to use Welsh at Work</p>	<p>Positive.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. All relevant and required statutory consultation associated with this proposal will be in accordance with the Council's Statutory Welsh Language Standards. 2. The Council will work with the CSCJES to incorporate their Welsh Language Competency Framework with the school based staff at the new school. Staff will be supported to participate in Welsh language courses at different levels of the 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The relevant and required statutory consultation will be undertaken bilingually and all public correspondence in relation to the proposal will be produced bilingually. 2. The number of school based staff at the new school participating in Welsh language courses at different levels to improve their Welsh language skills and the number applying to undertake the CSCJES Welsh Language Sabbatical Scheme which 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The relevant and required statutory consultation will be undertaken bilingually and all public correspondence in relation to the proposal will be produced bilingually. 2. Ensure the Council and the CSCJES actively market and promote the support available to school based staff who are looking to improve their Welsh language skills.

Treating the Welsh language, no less favourably than the English language

		<p>framework to improve their Welsh language skills.</p> <p>3. All signage associated with this proposal will be in accordance with the Council's Statutory Welsh Language Standards.</p>	<p>develops practitioners' Welsh language skills and ability to teach through the medium of Welsh.</p> <p>3. Bilingual signage in accordance with the Council's Statutory Welsh Language Standards.</p>	<p>3. Instil contractor awareness of the Council's Statutory Welsh Language Standards and ensure compliance with these standards.</p>
		<p>1. Although the new school will be English medium, Welsh is taught as part of the curriculum and all pupils will benefit from having the opportunity to be taught in brand new facilities fit for the 21st century. The new school will be part of the Council's Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme which is jointly funded by the Council and the Welsh Government. The purpose of the Programme is to ensure there are good schools so all children and young people, whatever their learning need is, have equitable access to good Welsh and English medium education. This purpose will be fulfilled by constructing this new special school for pupils with ALN in RCT.</p>	<p>1. The Council's Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme contains a wide range of schools, both Welsh and English medium, in various parts of RCT. Although the new school will be English medium, Welsh is taught as part of the curriculum and all pupils will benefit from having the opportunity to be taught in brand new facilities fit for the 21st century.</p> <p>2. An example of this can be seen in Tonyrefail Community School, where Welsh medium learning classes for adults are held in the community facilities.</p>	<p>1. Welsh is taught as part of the curriculum and all pupils will benefit from having the opportunity to be taught in brand new facilities fit for the 21st century.</p> <p>2. The headteacher of the new school will be encouraged and supported to consider using these facilities to increase participation in the Welsh language by offering the opportunity to parents/carers and other members of the community to attend Welsh medium learning classes for adults and/or other opportunities for community engagement through the medium of Welsh.</p>

		2. The new school will be a fully accessible and fully integrated community school. A dedicated area will be designed within so that the local community will be allowed to safely use the facilities, both during and after the school day.		Ensure that parents/carers, and the wider community are signposted to Welsh medium learning classes for adults and/or other opportunities for community engagement through the medium of Welsh via the Council's website and corporate social media platforms.
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Stage 3 - Strengthening the proposal

Having listed actions in section 2 which may mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts – please record below which ones you will imbed into the policy proposal and who will be responsible for them.

Also consider is the proposal necessary? Would it be possible to meet demand without any new developments? Could other existing provision be used? Where should the development be?

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What are you going to do?	When are you going to do it?	Who is responsible?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with the new school and to offer Welsh medium learning classes for adults and/or other opportunities for community engagement through the medium of Welsh. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When the proposed new 3 to 19 special school opens. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Councils Directorate of Education and Inclusion Services 21st Century Schools Team.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that parents/carers of the new school, and the wider community are signposted to Welsh medium learning classes for adults and/or other opportunities for community engagement through the medium of Welsh via the Council's website and corporate social media platforms. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When the proposed new 3 to 19 special school opens. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Councils Directorate of Education and Inclusion Services 21st Century Schools Team.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Councils must work to ensure a school based workforce of sufficient size and capability. To create more Welsh speakers, our education system is dependent on its school based workforce. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work ongoing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Councils Directorate of Education and Inclusion Services. The CSCJES.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council aims to embed positive habits and attitudes towards the Welsh language through purposeful planning to promote the informal use of the Welsh language amongst pupils inside and outside schools. Facilitating the use of the Welsh language across the curriculum and in wider contexts in schools, to ensure a continuum of linguistic progression 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work ongoing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Councils Directorate of Education and Inclusion Services. The CSCJES.

to support pupils in the transition between key stages, offers all pupils the opportunity to become fully bilingual and aligns with the Curriculum for Wales 2022. The new school will be encouraged and supported to do this through the achievement of the 'Cymraeg Campus' Welsh Language Charter, framework to promote and increase the use of Welsh.		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The WESP Co-ordinator will continue to collaborate with partners in developing and implementing strategies in line with the WESP to contribute towards the Welsh Government's ambitious goal of creating a million Welsh speakers in Wales by 2050. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work ongoing for duration of the WESP between 2022 and 2032. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Councils Directorate of Education and Inclusion Services WESP Co-Ordinator.

If ways of reducing the impact have been identified but are not possible to implement, please explain why. Give sufficient detail of data or research that has led to your reasoning.

What was identified?	Why is it not possible?
N/A.	N/A.

Stage 4 – Review

For all policy proposals, whether it is a Significant Key Decision or not, you are required to forward this assessment to Welsh Language services – welshlanguageofficer@rctcbc.gov.uk and the Consultation and Engagement team – consultation@rctcbc.gov.uk in the first instance for some initial guidance and feedback.

As part of the Welsh Language, Equalities and Socio Economic Duty Impact Assessment Process all proposals that fall within the definition of Significant Key Decision should present at the Officer Review Panel. This panel is made up of officers from across Council Services and acts as a critical friend before your report is finalised and published for SLT/Cabinet approval.

If this proposal is a Key Strategic Decision please forward your completed (Stage 1>6) impact assessment, policy proposal/report and consultation report to CouncilBusiness@rctcbc.gov.uk for an Officer Review Panel to be organised to discuss your proposal. [See our guidance document](#) for more information on what a Significant Key Decision is.

It is important to keep a record of this process so that we can demonstrate how we have considered and built in sustainable Welsh language considerations wherever possible. Please ensure you update the relevant sections below in collaboration with the relevant departments.

Welsh Language Services Comments	Date Considered	Brief description of any amendments made following Welsh Language Services feedback
TBC.	TBC.	TBC.
Officer Review Panel Comments	Date Considered	Brief description of any amendments made following Officer Review Panel considerations
TBC.	TBC.	TBC.

Consultation Comments	Date Considered	Brief description of any amendments made following consultation
TBC.	TBC.	TBC.
<u>Stage 5 – Monitoring, Evaluating and Reviewing</u>		
How and who will you monitor the impact and effectiveness of the proposal?		
The Councils Directorate of Education and Inclusion Services 21 st Century Schools Team and the Council’s Corporate Estates Team will monitor this proposal throughout the design development period, construction period and operational period holding monthly review meetings.		
<u>Stage 6 – Summary of Impacts for the Proposal</u>		
Provide below a summary of the impact assessment, to include some of the main positive and negative impacts along with an overview of actions taken since the impact assessment to better contribute to more positive impacts. This summary must be included in the Welsh Language Considerations section of the SLT/Cabinet report template. It is not suitable to only write ‘please see full report at Appendix x’ in the body of the report. The impact assessment must be published alongside the report.		
<i>A Welsh Language Impact Assessment has been completed and the main findings are as follows:</i>		
<p>The proposal is to open a new 3 to 19 special school in RCT with a capacity for 180 pupils however this will be subject to undertaking further feasibility and progressing with the detailed design of the new school. It is proposed that the new school will be built in the Clydach Vale area of Tonypany, and it will open no later than the 2026 academic year. The new school is in addition to the four special schools across RCT. In addition, it is proposed to introduce catchment areas for special schools.</p>		
The new school will be built in accordance with the current requirements of planning and building control legislation and will be fully accessible and compliant with the Equality Act 2010. Accommodation will consist of:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modern, flexible learning environments for all pupils, a hall/dining area, and specialist teaching and learning areas to cater for the needs of all pupils. • A hydro-therapy pool plus other sensory and stimulating specialist equipment. • A dedicated area within so that the local community will be allowed to safely use the facilities, both during and after the school day. • Enhanced outdoor spaces to support the full range of curriculum activities. • Traffic management systems including on-site pupil bus drop off, and on-site staff parking. 		
The new school will be a fully accessible and fully integrated community school. A dedicated area will be designed within so that the local community will be allowed to safely use the facilities, both during and after the school day.		
Although the new school will be English medium, Welsh is taught as part of the curriculum and all pupils will benefit from having the opportunity to be taught in brand new facilities fit for the 21 st century.		

The Council aims to embed positive habits and attitudes towards the Welsh language through purposeful planning to promote the informal use of the Welsh language amongst pupils inside and outside schools. Facilitating the use of the Welsh language across the curriculum and in wider contexts in schools, to ensure a continuum of linguistic progression to support pupils in the transition between key stages, offers all pupils the opportunity to become fully bilingual and aligns with the Curriculum for Wales 2022. The new school will be encouraged and supported to do this through the achievement of the 'Cymraeg Campus' Welsh Language Charter, a framework to promote and increase the use of Welsh.

The new school will be a fully accessible and fully integrated community school. A dedicated area will be designed within so that the local community will be allowed to safely use the facilities, both during and after the school day. The headteacher of the new school will be encouraged and supported to consider using these facilities to increase participation in the Welsh language by offering the opportunity to parents/carers and other members of the community to attend Welsh medium learning classes for adults and/or other opportunities for community engagement through the medium of Welsh.

This could contribute towards the Welsh Government's ambitious goal of creating a million Welsh speakers in Wales by 2050 and the WESP.

Stage 7 – Sign Off

Name of Officer completing the WLIA	Lisa Howell,	Service Director Name:	Andrea Richards.
Position	21 st Century Schools Business and School Organisation Manager.	I recommend that the proposal: (Highlight decision)	Is implemented with no amendments
			Is implemented taking into account the mitigating actions outlined
			Is rejected due to disproportionate negative impacts on the Welsh language
Signature		Service Director Signature	
Date	07.06.2023.	Date	



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

MUNICIPAL YEAR 2023-24

EDUCATION AND INCLUSION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

14TH SEPTEMBER 2023

CONSULTATION ON THE PROPOSALS TO REALIGN ADDITIONAL LEARNING NEEDS MAINSTREAM LEARNING SUPPORT CLASS PROVISION WITHIN RHONDDA CYNON TAF

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES AND COMMUNICATION

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To pre-scrutinise the outcome of the recent consultation in respect of the proposal to realign the mainstream Learning Support Class (LSC) provision within Rhondda Cynon Taf (RCT).

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

- 2.1 Members undertake pre scrutiny of the report (attached at **Appendix A & 1**), thus providing Scrutiny with an opportunity to comment upon this matter prior to consideration by the Cabinet.
- 2.1. Request the Service Director for Democratic Services & Communications to feedback the comments, observations and/or recommendations of members to Cabinet Committee.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To provide Scrutiny with the opportunity to undertake pre-scrutiny of the outcome of the recent consultation in respect of the proposal to realign the mainstream LSC provision within RCT, prior to its consideration by Cabinet.
- 3.2 The need to provide Members with information on the outcome of the recent consultation in respect of the proposal to realign the mainstream LSC provision within RCT, in order to progress the proposal in accordance with the process outlined in Welsh Government legislative guidance (School Organisation Code

(2nd Edition) (011/2018) so that an improved continuum of ALN provision can be achieved in RCT.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1. At the meeting of Cabinet held on 3rd May 2023, approval was given to begin a process of formal consultation on a proposal to realign the mainstream Learning Support Class (LSC) provision within Rhondda Cynon Taf (RCT).
- 4.2. The consultation in respect of these proposals was undertaken between 5th June and 14th July 2023 under the arrangements outlined in the Welsh Government's School Organisation Code. These arrangements stipulate that a Consultation Report must be prepared prior to the publication of any statutory notices which will progress the proposal. It further states that this Report must be published within 26 weeks of the end of the consultation period, which is 12th January 2024 in this instance.
- 4.3. The Cabinet report appended at **Appendix A**, includes the Consultation Response Report at **Appendix 1** which provides details on the purpose of the Consultation Report, who was consulted with, what was consulted on, the consultation process, the summary of responses to the consultation, summary of key these raised and LA responses, Estyn's response to the proposal from RCT regarding LSCs, which would take affect from April 2024 and the conclusion.
- 4.4. It is Estyn's expectation that the inspection report is scrutinised in full by the Education and Inclusion Scrutiny Committee, so that the necessary support and challenge can be provided.

5. PRE-SCRUTINY

- 5.1. Members are reminded that the purpose of pre scrutiny activity is to influence the decisions before they are made. The Education and Inclusion Services Scrutiny Committee continues to have the opportunity to explore and comment on a number of reports in advance of Cabinet's consideration to bring a different perspective to the decisions made and enabling Cabinet decisions to be more informed.

6. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS/SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY

- 6.1. An Equality Impact Assessment is not needed because the contents of this report are for information purposes only.

7. WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1. There are no Welsh language implications arising from this report.

8. CONSULTATION/INVOLVEMENT

- 8.1. The involvement of the Education and Inclusion Scrutiny Committee in the pre-scrutiny exercise will contribute to the quality and robustness of Cabinet decision-making.

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1. There are no financial implications aligned to this report.

10. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

- 10.1. The report has been prepared in accordance with paragraph Part 4 of the Constitution (Overview & Scrutiny Procedure Rules).

11. CONCLUSION

- 11.1. The undertaking of pre scrutiny by the Education and Inclusion Scrutiny Committee in respect of the outcome of the recent consultation in respect of the proposal to realign the mainstream LSC provision within RCT, will ensure that the Education and Inclusion Scrutiny Committee fully evaluates the effectiveness of its overview and scrutiny function.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

as amended by

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS:

EDUCATION AND INCLUSION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

**CONSULTATION ON THE PROPOSALS TO REALIGN ADDITIONAL LEARNING
NEEDS MAINSTREAM LEARNING SUPPORT CLASS PROVISION WITHIN
RHONDDA CYNON TAF**

14TH SEPTEMBER 2023

**REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR DEMOCRATIC SERVICES &
COMMUNICATIONS**



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

PRIVATE CABINET

11TH SEPTEMBER 2023

CONSULTATION ON THE PROPOSALS TO REALIGN ADDITIONAL LEARNING NEEDS MAINSTREAM LEARNING SUPPORT CLASS PROVISION WITHIN RHONDDA CYNON TAF

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND INCLUSION SERVICES IN DISCUSSION WITH THE CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION, YOUTH PARTICIPATION AND WELSH LANGUAGE (COUNCILLOR R LEWIS)

AUTHOR: Ceri Jones, Head of Inclusion Services

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to advise Members of the outcome of the recent consultation in respect of the proposal to realign the mainstream Learning Support Class (LSC) provision within Rhondda Cynon Taf (RCT).

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Cabinet:

- 2.1 Note the information contained within the attached consultation report, which includes a summary of items of correspondence received during the consultation exercise and notes of the various meetings held.
- 2.2 Agree to progress the following proposals to realign the mainstream Learning Support Class (LSC) provision within Rhondda Cynon Taf (RCT) by issuing the appropriate statutory notices.
- 2.2.1 **Proposal 1 (amended):** To relocate the Observation and Assessment LSC at Penrhiwceiber Primary School to Abercynon Community Primary School taking effect from September 2024. *(Amended from April 2024).*
- 2.2.2 **Proposal 2 (amended):** To transfer the LSC for pupils in Years 3-6 with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) at Abercynon Community Primary School to create a through provision in the Primary Phase at Perthcelyn Primary School taking effect from September 2024. *(Amended from April 2024).*
- 2.2.3 **Proposal 3:** To establish one Early Years Assessment and Intervention LSC for pupils under statutory school age with significant presenting needs at Abercynon Primary School taking effect from April 2024.

2.2.4 **Proposal 4:** To establish two Welsh medium primary phase LSCs at the new Welsh medium primary school in Rhydyfelin for pupils with significant ALN taking effect from September 2024.

2.2.5 **Proposal 5:** To establish one LSC for pupils in years 7-11 with ASD at the new 3-16 school on the Hawthorn Primary/High School site taking effect from September 2024.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 To progress the proposal in accordance with the process outlined in Welsh Government legislative guidance (School Organisation Code (2nd Edition) (011/2018)) so that an improved continuum of ALN provision can be achieved in RCT.

3.2 To ensure that the Council undertakes its statutory duties in relation to the ALNET Act (2018) that requires local authorities to keep under review the arrangements for supporting pupils with ALN within their area and consider whether these are sufficient, including a statutory requirement to take all reasonable steps to create a bilingual system of support for pupils with ALN.

3.3 To support the Council's delivery of its Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) and the Education Directorate Strategic Plan 2022-2025.

4. BACKGROUND

4.1 Members will recall that, at the meeting of Cabinet held on 3rd May 2023, approval was given to begin a process of formal consultation on a proposal to realign the mainstream Learning Support Class (LSC) provision within Rhondda Cynon Taf (RCT).

4.2 For pupils with more significant needs for whom it is challenging to make appropriate learning provision within mainstream education, more specialist placements are required. RCT has a range of specialist provisions which includes: 45 LSCs, 2 Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) and 4 Special Schools. RCT has an excellent range of LSC provisions attached to mainstream schools. However, it has become increasingly apparent that the range of LSC provisions currently available is disproportionate to the level of need in some areas.

4.3 Data analysis confirms that:

- there is currently insufficient provision in the secondary sector for pupils with ASD;
- the absence of cross phase specialist provision on some school sites means that some learners experience unnecessary transitions;
- one LSC would benefit from relocation to fully accessible schools that have benefited from the Sustainable Communities for Learning investment;
- there is insufficient provision to meet the needs of learners in the early years.

In light of these findings, the proposals for change seek to achieve the following aims:

- developing a robust continuum of provision that effectively addresses a wide range of need across all year groups;

- avoiding unnecessary transition across schools by establishing cross phase specialist provisions within individual schools where possible;
 - establishing LSC provisions in fully accessible settings that provide a learning environment fit for the 21st Century.
- 4.4 Implementing this proposal will be of benefit to Welsh medium pupils with significant ALN across RCT and will ensure greater equality and access to specialist provision. The priority for the Education and Inclusion Service Directorate is to continue to focus on driving up standards in schools and to improve the outcomes for all children and young people. In light of the Welsh Government ALN Transformation Agenda and the Council's vision to increase the number of Welsh medium learners in its schools by responding proactively to both national and local strategies, such as the Welsh Government Welsh Language Strategy: Cymraeg 2050, Rhondda Cynon Taf's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan and the current 21st Century Schools plan to increase and improve Welsh medium provision RCT, it is essential to enhance current Welsh medium ALN provision within RCT.
- 4.5 There is a clear need to expand our Early Years and Key Stage 3/4 ASD provisions. In addition, the current location of the Penrhiwceiber LSC is felt to be no longer suitable to meet the needs of the new curriculum within a fully accessible environment. The proposed relocation of Penrhiwceiber LSC will ensure that pupils have access to premises which are more accessible and better equipped to meet a range of needs. The proposal will ensure greater compliance with the Equality Act 2010 and access to significantly improved premises which have benefited from the Council's School Modernisation Programme and investment.
- 4.6 The relocation of the LSC for pupils with ASD from Abercynon Community Primary to Perthcelyn Community Primary will eliminate unnecessary transition for pupils needing specialist LSC provision throughout the primary phase, providing equity for them to remain in one setting until transition to secondary provision in line with mainstream peers.
- 4.7 In Abercynon LSC, the number of pupils attending the LSCs in September 2023 that will be affected by the proposed relocation is very low: 6 pupils (1 x year 6, 5 x year 4). This age profile of these learners by September 2024, the proposed implementation date of these proposals, will be 5 x Year 5 learners. In the event of parental opposition to a relocation of their children's provision to the proposed Perthcelyn LSC, supported mainstream placements in the existing settings can be explored in partnership with the school and Access and Inclusion Service staff.

In Penrhiwceibr LSC there are currently 9 pupils (1 x year 1, 4 x reception, 4 x nursery). However, placements at Penrhiwceibr Observation and Assessment Class are intended to be short-term and it is highly likely that the majority of the 9 pupils referenced above will have moved on to their long-term educational placement before the proposed implementation date of September 2024.

5. CONSULTATION

- 5.1 The consultation in respect of these proposals was undertaken between 5th June and 14th July 2023 under the arrangements outlined in the Welsh Government's School Organisation Code. These arrangements stipulate that a Consultation Report must be prepared prior to the publication of any statutory notices which will

progress the proposal. It further states that this Report must be published within 26 weeks of the end of the consultation period, which is 12th January 2024 in this instance.

- 5.2 The Consultation Report in respect of this particular proposal is attached at Appendix 1. A number of key issues that were raised in the consultation feedback have been identified as recurring themes to which the LA has provided a collective response in section 6 of the Consultation Report. For details of correspondence received please refer to Appendix 1a. Information in respect of meetings held to discuss the proposals, with copies of the notes taken at these meetings that outline the main areas of discussion are included at Appendix 1b.
- 5.3 It is noted that there has been a good response to this consultation which consisted of 127 completed questionnaires in relation to all proposals, 12 letters/emails and 3 petitions were received in relation to Proposal 2 (the relocation of the Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Learning Support Class at Abercynon Community Primary School to Perthcelyn Primary School). A further online petition in relation to Proposal 2 was submitted after the deadline and has not been accounted for. 53 Pupil School Council representatives attended meetings with Access and Inclusion Service staff and approximately 20 parents attended open evenings held to provide further information.
- 5.4 Responses to the consultation are summarised below. All responses have been shared with Cabinet for full disclosure and transparency. For further detail refer to the Consultation Response Report:
- **Proposal 1** - To relocate the Observation and Assessment LSC at Penrhiwceiber Primary School to Abercynon Community Primary School of the 126 submissions received in relation to this proposal: 28 responders agreed to the proposal, 85 disagreed and 13 were unsure how to respond.
 - **Proposal 2** - To transfer the LSC for pupils in years 3-6 with ASD at Abercynon Community Primary School to create a through provision in the Primary Phase at Perthcelyn Primary School of the 127 submissions received in relation to this proposal: 45 responders agreed to the proposal, 88 disagreed and 9 were unsure how to respond.
 - **Proposal 3** - To establish one Early Years Assessment and Intervention LSC for pupils under statutory school age with significant presenting needs at Abercynon Primary School of the 121 submissions received in relation to this proposal 45 responders agreed to the proposal, 52 disagreed and 24 were unsure how to respond.
 - **Proposal 4** - To establish two Welsh medium primary phase LSCs at the new Welsh medium primary school in Rhydyfelin for pupils with significant ALN of 120 submissions received in relation to this proposal 54 responders agreed to the proposal, 36 disagreed and 30 were unsure how to respond.
 - **Proposal 5** - To establish one LSC for pupils in years 7-11 with ASD at the new 3-16 school on the Hawthorn Primary/High School site of the 119 submissions received in relation to this proposal 54 responders agreed to the proposal, 37 disagreed and 28 were unsure how to respond.

5.5 The following key themes emerged from the consultation for further detail and responses refer to the Consultation Response Report:

- **Proposal 1:** Observation and Assessment LSC at Penrhiwceiber Primary School to relocate to Abercynon Community Primary School.
 - The proposal was seen as positive with the proposed move providing access to enhanced facilities and resources for pupils in the LSC;
 - Concerns were raised regarding the number of transitions pupils need to undertake. However, it is highly likely that existing learners placed in short-term placements in the Penrhiwceiber LSC will have secured long term placements by the proposed implementation date.
- **Proposal 2:** LSC for pupils in years 3-6 with ASD at Abercynon Primary Community School to relocate to Perthcelyn Primary School to create a through Primary Phase provision.
 - Parents felt that pupils attending the LSC in Abercynon Community Primary School had access to a variety of community resources that would be lost should the proposal be progressed;
 - Much praise has been given to the current provision and support within both Abercynon and Perthcelyn Learning Support Classes;
 - Through provision for pupils with ASD provision were widely welcomed however the location of the class was questioned. Parents of pupils currently attending the LSC in Abercynon wish for the LSC to remain and to relocate Perthcelyn LSC to Abercynon. Parents of pupils currently attending the LSC at Perthcelyn are in support of the proposal to relocate the ASD provision from Abercynon to Perthcelyn to ensure through primary phase provision is available to their children without the need to transition further.
- **Proposal 3:** One Early Years Assessment and Intervention LSC for pupils under statutory school age with significant presenting needs at Abercynon Primary School:
 - Positive responses were received regarding the increased capacity the LSC would provide although responders queried whether further capacity was needed;
 - Mixed feedback was received regarding the location of the proposed new LSC provision some responses were in support of the Early Years LSC being established at Abercynon whilst other responses suggested the LSC should be established at a different location.
- **Proposal 4:** Two Primary Phase Welsh medium LSCs at the new Welsh medium primary school at Rhydyfelin for pupils with significant ALN:
 - Welsh medium LSCs are welcomed but concerns were raised relating to the LSC not having a specific ALN designation.
- **Proposal 5:** One ASD LSC provision for pupils in years 7–11 at the new 3-16 school on the Hawthorn Primary/High School site:
 - The increase in Key Stage 3/4 provision was seen as positive, however responders felt further LSCs are needed.

6. THE STATUTORY PROCESS

6.1 The statutory notices for this proposal will refer to the:

- **Proposal 1:** Relocation of the Observation and Assessment LSC at Penrhiwceiber Primary School to Abercynon Community Primary School taking effect from September 2024.
- **Proposal 2:** Transfer of the LSC for pupils in years 3-6 with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) at Abercynon Community Primary School to create a through provision in the Primary Phase at Perthcelyn Primary School taking effect from September 2024.
- **Proposal 3:** Establishment of one Early Years Assessment and Intervention LSC for pupils under statutory school age with significant presenting needs at Abercynon Primary School. The proposal will take effect from April 2024.
- **Proposal 4:** Establishment of two Welsh medium primary phase LSCs at the new Welsh medium primary school in Rhydyfelin for pupils with significant ALN. The proposal will take effect from September 2024.
- **Proposal 5:** Establishment of one LSC for pupils in years 7-11 with ASD at the new 3-16 school on the Hawthorn Primary/High School site taking effect from September 2024.

6.2 The Statutory Notices will, if agreed, be published on 9th October 2023 and will allow for a 28 day period for objections, ending on 5th November 2023. If any objections are received, in accordance with the aforementioned Code an Objections Report will be prepared. This matter will then be reported to a future meeting of Cabinet, possibly in December 2023, for Members to receive and consider the Objections Report and to make a final decision on this proposal.

7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

7.1 The relevant Equality Impact Assessment and Community Impact Assessment were published on the Council's website together with the consultation document that outlined the proposal in detail. The assessments have been updated following the consultation. Copies of the updated assessments are attached as Appendix 2 and 3 to this report.

8. WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS

8.1 A Welsh Language Impact Assessment has been prepared in respect of this proposal and published on the Council's website as a part of the Consultation Documentation in accordance with the requirements of Welsh Government's School Organisation Code (2nd Edition) (011/2018) (the "Code"). A copy of the updated assessment is attached as Appendix 4.

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 If the proposal to realign LSC provision within RCT is authorised to proceed, resources will be directed to address the identified gaps in existing provision.

9.2 The proposals will address capacity pressures in relation to pupils with significant ALN in the Early Years and years 7-11 (formerly Key Stage 3/4), reduce the

number of transitions necessary for pupils accessing Primary Phase LSC provision and ensure a higher number of LSCs are situated within 21st Century School environments. The proposals also seek to address the need to create additional Welsh medium specialist LSC provision, in line with the requirements of the Additional Learning Needs Education Tribunal (ALNET) Act (2018) to develop a bilingual Additional Learning Needs (ALN) system.

- 9.3 Secondary schools hosting LSCs for pupils with ASD are funded via the Council for one specialist teacher and two learning support assistants at an approximate cost of £131,500k per annum per class. Primary schools hosting Early Years LSC's are funded for one teacher and one learning support assistant at an approximate cost of £97,600k per annum. Primary phase Welsh provisions will be funded for one teacher and one learning support assistant at an approximate cost of £97,600k each per annum. To ensure the LA is able to meet the needs of its ALN pupils, funding of approximately £424k is required annually and will be incorporated in the Council's Medium Term Financial Planning arrangements.
- 9.4 The creation and relocation of the LSCs will incur a transportation cost in line with the Council's Learner Travel Policy, however this increase in cost is seen as a necessity in order to enhance provision for RCT's most vulnerable pupils. Costs cannot be quantified at this time as placements are pupil led however given that there will be a net increase in the number of LSC provisions additional funding is likely to be required and will be incorporated in the Council's Medium Term Financial Planning arrangements.

10. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

- 10.1 Section 316A of the Education Act 1996 specifies that children with SEN/ALN should normally be educated in mainstream schools if this is compatible with them receiving the special educational/additional learning provision that their learning difficulty requires; the efficient education of other children, and the efficient use of resources.
- 10.2 Section 315 of the Education Act 1996 also requires local authorities to ensure that SEN/ALN provision is kept under review. The ALN Code for Wales (2021) places a statutory duty upon the LA to keep under review the overall Additional Learning Provision (ALP) available in its area and supporting arrangements, to ensure provision is sufficient to meet the overall needs of its population of learners with ALN and that provision is available in Welsh.

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

- 11.1 The proposals will ensure that two of the Council's three key priorities will be met. These include:
- Economy: Building a strong economy.
 - People: Promoting independence and positive lives for everyone.
- 11.2 There are links to RCTCBC's Education and Inclusion Services Strategic Plan for 2022 to 2025 and its mission: '*To deliver equity and excellence in Education and enhanced well-being for all*'. The proposal will also support delivery against the five strategic priorities, most notably:

- Strategic Priority 2: Supporting educational settings to deliver a transformational curriculum, high quality teaching and learning and improved outcomes for all.
 - Strategic Priority 3: Ensuring equity and support for vulnerable learners and their families.
 - Strategic Priority 5: Delivering 21st Century Learning Environments and innovative services for our learners and communities.
- 11.3 The proposals will ensure there is renewed capacity to focus on prevention which is a key statutory requirement of the Wellbeing and Future Generations Act and a key element of the Council's Corporate Plan.
- 11.4 Due regard has been made to all seven wellbeing goals and the five ways of working, as contained within the [Wellbeing of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#) which requires the Council to think about the long-term impact of decisions on communities to prevent consistent issues such as poverty, health inequalities and climate change.
- 11.5 The proposal could contribute towards achieving some of the seven wellbeing goals by:
- **A Healthier Wales** – Accommodation at the proposed host schools will continue to support opportunities for enhanced outdoor spaces. As well as supporting the full range of curriculum activities these facilities are also available for community use.
 - **A More Equal Wales** – Providing enhanced opportunities for pupils to access specialist provision.
 - **A Wales of More Cohesive Communities** – All host schools are fully accessible and integrated community school with a dedicated area designed within so that the local community can safely use the facilities, both during and after the school day.
 - **A Wales of Vibrant Culture and Thriving Welsh Language** – establishing new primary phase Welsh medium LSC provision will support of the Council's WESP.
 - **A Globally Responsive Wales** – pupils will have access to extra-curricular activities which encourage healthy lifestyles for the school and wider community.
- 11.6 The proposal could contribute towards achieving some of the five ways of working by:
- **Long Term** – To ensure that the Council undertakes its statutory duties in relation to the ALNET Act (2018) that requires local authorities to keep under review the arrangements for supporting pupils with ALN within their area and consider whether these are sufficient, including a statutory requirement to take all reasonable steps to create a bilingual system of support for pupils with ALN.
 - **Prevention** – The Council believes that the proposal represents the best opportunity to safeguard and sustain educational standards for the future and provides a platform for further improvement.

- **Integrations** – Host schools are fully accessible and integrated community schools.
- **Collaboration** – The Council will continue to work effectively with internal and external partners to ensure the changes brought about by these proposals will meet the short and long term needs of pupils, parents/carers, staff and the wider community.
- **Involvement** –The proposal is made in accordance with the [School Organisation Code \(2nd Edition\) \(011/2018\)](#) and seeks the views of a prescribed list of stakeholders including pupils, parents/carers, staff and the wider community. As such face to face meetings will be arranged with the staff, school councils and governing bodies.

11.7 As stated in 7.1, an Equality Impact Assessment which further details the contribution of the proposal to the [Wellbeing of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#) is being prepared.

11.8 The information in the report contributes to the priorities within RCTCBC's Corporate Plan, 'Making a Difference'.

11.9 The proposals will also assist the directorate in achieving Outcome 6 of the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP), which is to increase the provision of Welsh medium education for learners with ALN.

12. STRATEGIC OR RELEVANT TO ELECTORAL WARDS

12.1 Given the considerable changes in Wales in relation to the statutory provision required to meet the needs of learners with the implementation of the ALNET Act (2018) and the ALN Code (2021) the above proposals to secure additional capacity and resources will ensure that the Council successfully delivers on its statutory obligations, and as such is a strategic proposal relevant to all wards.

13. CONCLUSION

13.1 The proposals to realign LSC provision will ensure that RCT has undertaken its statutory duty under the ALNET Act (2018) to review arrangements for supporting pupils with ALN within the county borough and has identified necessary steps to ensure the sufficiency of its provision for pupils with significant ALN who require specialist placement.

13.2 The proposals support the delivery of the RCT WESP and one of the core aims of the ALNET Act by working towards the development of a fully bilingual ALN system within the county borough.

13.3 The proposals will ensure greater compliance with the Equality Act 2010 and access to significantly improved premises which have benefited from the 21st Century Schools Modernisation Programme and investment.

13.4 Following consideration of the responses to the consultation, it is recommended that Members agree to the immediate publication of the attached Consultation Report and agree to give officers approval to publish the appropriate Statutory Notices to progress with the proposals, noting the modification made to the implementation dates of Proposals 1 and 2.

Other Information:

Relevant Scrutiny Committee:

Education and Inclusion Scrutiny Committee

Contact Officer:

Ceri Jones, Head of Inclusion Services

DRAFT

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

A DISCUSSION PAPER FOR A PRIVATE MEETING OF THE CABINET

11TH SEPTEMBER 2023

**Item: CONSULTATION ON THE PROPOSALS TO REALIGN ADDITIONAL
LEARNING NEEDS MAINSTREAM LEARNING SUPPORT CLASS
PROVISION WITHIN RHONDDA CYNON TAF**

**Background Papers
Appendix 1 – Consultation Report**

**Officer to contact:
Ceri Jones, Head of Inclusion Services**

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CYFLAWNI **TEGWCH** A RHAGORIAETH MEWN **ADDYSG** A **GWELL LLES** I BAWB
EQUITY AND **EXCELLENCE** IN **EDUCATION** AND **ENHANCED WELLBEING** FOR ALL

**CONSULTATION ON THE PROPOSALS TO REALIGN
ADDITIONAL LEARNING NEEDS MAINSTREAM
LEARNING SUPPORT CLASS PROVISION WITHIN
RHONDDA CYNON TAF**

JULY 2023

Proposal: to re-align Learning Support Class (LSC) provision within Rhondda Cynon Taf

1. Purpose of the Consultation Report

This report is prepared in accordance with the Welsh Government's School Organisation Code. Its purpose is to inform the outcome of the consultation held during the period 7th June and 14th July 2023 between all stakeholders and interested parties listed below.

2. Who did we consult?

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 Abercynon Community Primary School, Penrhiwceiber Primary School, Perthcelyn Primary School
- The Temporary Governing Body of the new 3-16 school on the Hawthorn Primary/High site and the new Welsh medium through school.
- Other Governing Bodies of neighbouring primary and secondary schools
- School Councils of Abercynon Community Primary, Perthcelyn Primary, Penrhiwceiber Primary, Heol-Y-Celyn, Hawthorn Primary, Hawthorn High
- The Church in Wales and Roman Catholic Diocesan Authorities
- The Governing Body of Coleg Y Cymoedd
- The Governing Body of the University of South Wales
- Welsh Minister for Education and Skills
- Assembly Members for all constituencies and regional areas serving Rhondda Cynon Taf
- Members of Parliament for the Rhondda, Pontypridd and Cynon Valley
- Estyn
- Cwm Taf Local Health Board
- Teaching and Support staff trade unions
- Central South Consortium Joint Education Service
- South Wales Police and Crime Commissioner
- The Early Years and Childcare Partnership
- South East Wales Transport Association
- The local Communities First Partnerships
- The Welsh Language Commissioner
- Neighbouring local authorities

3. What did we consult on?

The proposals consulted on included:

Relocating key LSC provisions to ensure cross phase provisions in single sited, accessible school buildings. It was proposed that the following relocations take effect from April 2024:

- **Proposal 1:** Observation and Assessment LSC at Penrhiwceiber Primary School to relocate to Abercynon Community Primary School.
- **Proposal 2:** LSC for pupils Years 3-6 with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) at Abercynon Primary Community School to relocate to Perthcelyn Primary School to create a through Primary Phase provision.

Developing new LSC provisions. It was proposed that the new LSCs established from September 2024:

- **Proposal 3:** One Early Years Assessment & Intervention LSC for pupils under statutory school age with significant presenting needs at Abercynon Primary School.
- **Proposal 4:** Two Primary Phase Welsh medium LSCs at the new Welsh medium primary school at Rhydyfelin for pupils with significant ALN.
- **Proposal 5:** One ASD LSC provision for pupils in Years 7–11 at the new 3-16 school on the Hawthorn Primary/High School site.

4. The consultation process

All stakeholders identified in section 2 were sent electronic copies of the consultation documentation with the consultation proforma link and those that requested paper copies received them. All feedback received are detailed in Appendix 1a. Consultation meetings were held for the staff, parents and pupils of the affected schools, the details and dates of these meetings are attached as Appendix 1b. Summary notes taken during a range of consultation events are detailed in Appendix 1c. These provide a record of questions raised, comments and statements made, with responses provided where appropriate.

5. Summary of responses to consultation

It is noted that there has been a good response to this statutory consultation process; 127 completed questionnaires, 12 letters/emails and 3 petitions. A further online petition was submitted by the Perthcelyn Community, however it has not been considered as it was received after the deadline.

Table 1 below reports the number of responses received to each element of the proposal, please note that the number of disagree responses relating to the LSC for Key Stage 3/4 ASD pupils, the 2 proposed Welsh medium provisions and the relocation of

Penrhiwceiber LSC could potentially be distorted as nearly all comments received relate to the proposed changes to the LSCs at Abercynon Community Primary and Perthcelyn Primary Schools and not the proposed addition of Welsh medium and a Key Stage 3/4 ASD provision.

In accordance with the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duties, the Council has a legal duty to look at how its decisions impact on people because they may have particular characteristics. So as part of seeking views on the school organisation proposals, the consultation also included a question in compliance with the Council's statutory obligations asking 'how would the Council's proposal affect you? All those that responded to this question stated that there would be a positive or no impact on them as a result of implementing the proposals.

In addition, the consultation survey, in accordance with the Welsh Standards (No.1) Regulations 2015, also included further questions in compliance with the Council's statutory obligations which asked could the proposals impact opportunities for people to use and promote the Welsh Language (Positive or Negative) and if in any way, they treat the Welsh Language less favourably than the English Language? Also asked were how positive effects could be increased, or negative effects be decreased? All those that responded to these questions stated that there would be a positive or no impact on the Welsh Language as a result of implementing the proposals.

Table1: Responses to the proposed realignment of LSC provision within RCT

Proposal	Communication Received			Nature of Responses		
	Online Questionnaire	Letter/ Email	Petition	Agree	Disagree	Not Sure
Observation and Assessment LSC at Penrhiwceiber Primary School to relocate to Abercynon Community Primary School.	126	0	0	28	85	13
LSC for pupils Years 3-6 with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) at Abercynon Primary Community School to relocate to Perthcelyn Primary School to create a through Primary Phase provision.	127	12	3	45	88	9
One Early Years Assessment & Intervention LSC for pupils under statutory school age with significant presenting needs at Abercynon Primary School.	121	0	0	45	52	24
Two Primary Phase Welsh medium LSCs at the new Welsh medium primary school at Rhydyfelin for pupils with significant ALN.	120	0	0	54	36	30
One Autistic Spectrum Disorder LSC provision for pupils in Years 7-11 at the new 3-16 school on the Hawthorn Primary/High School site.	119	0	0	54	37	28

The table below reports the number and type of responses received for each individual proposal within the consultation document:

6. Summary of Key Themes Raised and LA Responses

In accordance with the Code, a summary of the responses received are detailed in the table below and where issues have been raised, these have been responded to, where applicable, by means of clarification with supporting reasons. The key themes emerging from this analysis are detailed as follows:

- **Proposal 1:** Observation and Assessment LSC at Penrhiwceiber Primary School to relocate to Abercynon Community Primary School

Comments/Issue raised	Response to comments/issued raised
Suggested the LSC at Penrhiwceiber Primary School is moved to Perthcelyn Primary School.	This was considered however not all pupils in the Observation and Assessment class would require long term placement in an ASD LSC and would therefore not transition into the ASD LSC in Perthcelyn. In addition, this would mean that pupils in Perthcelyn ASD LSC would still need to transition from Perthcelyn to the ASD LSC at Abercynon Primary School. One of the underpinning aims of the proposal is to reduce the number of transitions incurred by pupils in ASD LSCs.
Positive proposal to move the LSC from Penrhiwceiber to Abercynon due to the availability of enhanced facilities and resources for pupils in the LSC.	Positive comments are noted and reflect the rationale for the proposed relocation.
Suggested that the relocation is not undertaken.	The facilities at Penrhiwceiber LSC are not appropriate to meet the requirements of the new curriculum for Wales and are not sited within a 21 st Century learning environment.
Number of transitions pupils are required to make.	Concerns have been raised that the proposals will have a negative impact on pupils and may require some pupils to undertake additional transitions to another setting. However, it is important to highlight that all learners accessing Observation and Assessment placements do so on a short term basis whilst their needs are being assessed and identified to inform a longer term placement. Robust transition plans will be put in place for any pupils directly affected by the proposals, which will be planned collaboratively with parents and staff and involve additional support

	from specialist members of staff from Access and Inclusion.
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- **Proposal 2:** LSC for pupils Years 3-6 with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) at Abercynon Primary Community School to relocate to Perthcelyn Primary School to create a through Primary Phase provision.

Comments/Issue raised	Response to comments/issued raised
Impact of proposals upon pupils due to transfer in September 2023 to the LSC currently based at Abercynon Community Primary School in September.	The proposed change in provision has some implications for a small number of pupils (currently 3 pupils) who currently attend an affected LSC but were due to transfer to Abercynon LSC in September 2023. To minimise any potential negative impact upon individual pupils, parents have been provided with the option to move to Abercynon LSC or to remain in Perthcelyn with additional support provided within the current Perthcelyn ASD LSC in September 2023. These arrangements will remain in place until a decision regarding the proposal has been reached, parents have been made fully aware of the implications of the option they have chosen.
Positive provision and support within both Abercynon and Perthcelyn Learning Support Classes.	The LA has been delighted to receive such positive feedback on the LSC provisions at Abercynon Community School and Perthcelyn Primary School. It is evident that both classes are an integral part of the school community, staff and pupils are valued and that parents are delighted with the progress pupils are making.
Community resources available within Abercynon Community Primary School.	Significant emphasis has been raised in relation to the perceived advantages of one community to another. All schools are required within the new Curriculum for Wales to develop their individual curriculum building on the opportunities available in the school's locality. Due to this requirement each curriculum will be unique to each setting but there is an expected consistency in the range of learning opportunities and the specialist provision available in LSCs. It must be noted that both LSCs are thriving and as noted above it has been pleasing to receive such positive feedback regarding both provisions during this consultation.
Perception within community that the proposals are as a result of letter submitted to the LA.	The proposals have been undertaken in line with the Welsh Government requirement for each LA to review the sufficiency of its ALN provision and whilst feedback from the community is always welcomed and

	considered the proposals have not been unfairly influenced by specific community representations. A balanced and measured approach has been adopted with full transparency.
Concerns regarding the quality of relocated LSC provision where LSC provision has currently been considered to be effective.	The LA has no evidence to suggest that the mainstream school to which the LSCs is proposed to relocate will not be able to provide high quality, inclusive educational and extra-curricular opportunities to the pupils in the LSC. The school currently successfully hosts a LSC and the proposed relocation would merely enhance their LSC provision. The proposed mainstream host school has a strong leadership team with established quality assurance processes within RCT and the wider Central South Consortium. Access and Inclusion also has well established Quality Assurance processes for monitoring and challenging the performance of all of its individual LSCs and this process would continue following the proposed relocation of provision.
Through provision for pupils with ASD provision were widely welcomed however the location of the class was questioned.	The proposed relocation will ensure that pupils will be able to have cross phase provisions within a setting that has well established LSC provision. The proposal will also create enhanced opportunities for collaborative working between the LSCs within different phases which will benefit both pupils and staff in sharing expertise.
Specific questions were raised in one consultation response: 1. How will their children continue to have the same opportunities that they enjoy now? Such as weekly library visits, trips to the local shops, time at the organics garden, swimming once a week, horse riding attended through use of private minibus. 2. What plans do the authority have to support children who have had negative experiences of Perthcelyn school in the past?	In line with new curriculum for Wales, the curriculum is designed by the school to build on the opportunities available in the school's locality. This will be unique to each setting but there is an expected consistency in the range of learning opportunities and the specialist provision available in LSCs and beyond. As the current LSC staff will be moving with the pupils they will work with Access & Inclusion to ensure a robust transition process will be put in place. This will ensure there is continuity in staffing and support for pupils to support both their educational provision and wellbeing. The LSC will continue to be monitored collaboratively by school and the LA through its

<p>3. What impact assessment has been done on the children with ASD who would be expected to move from their current school? (This is a small group of children who will be negatively impacted by the proposed changes and the parents felt very passionately that the proposals will have a devastating effect on this small group of children.)</p> <p>4. What provision for 7-11 year olds will be made at the new provision in Perthcelyn school?</p> <p>5. Will the children have the same yard opportunities and space and open access to outdoors?</p> <p>6. Will the children still have open access to a Sensory room?</p> <p>7. How are the local authority consulting children and young people's views?</p>	<p>quality assurance protocol. No issues have been raised with the LA regarding negative experiences of pupils. Perthcelyn is recognised as a good school by the LA and Central South Consortium.</p> <p>All the required impact assessments have been undertaken, LSC re-alignment will inevitably cause some disruption and uncertainty for parents and pupils for a period of time, although experience from previous LSC realignments has been positive. Access & Inclusion will provide support to eradicate or minimise any potential negative impact. This will involve collaboration between current LSC staff, Access and Inclusion staff, pupils and their families to ensure a person-centred approach is taken to meeting the educational and wellbeing needs of pupils.</p> <p>The new LSC will be established and resourced in line with other LSC provisions within RCT. A broad and balanced curriculum together with specialist additional learning provision will be provided to pupils in line with the requirements of the new Curriculum for Wales and ALN legislation and a consistent approach to LSC provision across the County Borough.</p> <p>There is a quality assurance process in place to ensure there is equity between the different LSCs although this is delivered in different ways in line with the characteristics of the school the class is placed in. Pupils will have the same opportunities to access yard and outdoor learning environments. Perthcelyn has the capacity to accommodate another LSC provision.</p> <p>Yes, there is a sensory room in Perthcelyn Primary School that can be utilised by all LSC pupils as required.</p> <p>7 sessions were held with the relevant School Councils throughout the consultation process. 4 parents also submitted their child's views (included in appendix 1a)</p>
<p>Feedback regarding this proposal has been mixed.</p>	<p>All possible connotations of the proposal were considered prior to publication of the consultation report. The option presented are</p>

<p>Parents of pupils currently attending the LSC in Abercynon wish for the KS2 LSC to remain and to relocate Perthcelyn FP LSC to Abercynon.</p> <p>Parents of pupils currently attending the LSC at Perthcelyn are in support of the proposal to relocate the ASD provision from Abercynon to Perthcelyn to ensure through primary phase provision is available to their children without the need to transition further.</p>	<p>believed by officers to be the most appropriate use of resources to realign LSC provision within RCT.</p>
<p>Number of transitions pupils are required to make.</p>	<p>Concerns have been raised that the proposals will have a negative impact on pupils and may require some pupils to undertake additional transitions to another setting. This has been acknowledged as a potential negative impact but has been mitigated with the very small numbers the proposals will impact (see note above). At the time of the proposed implementation date in September 2024, based on the current intake, a total of 5 year 5 pupils will be potentially affected by the move. To mitigate risks, a person centred approach will be adopted to support the transition. Parents/carers can also opt to keep their children in the same school but within a supported mainstream placement should they wish to do so.</p> <p>However, is important that a longer term view is adopted and a change considered due to the obvious benefits for future generations of learners. In the longer term the proposals will minimise unnecessary transition for pupils with significant needs, provide continuity in their educational placements and ensure that a higher number of specialist LSC provisions provide equity for pupils in LSCs so that they remain in one setting until transition to secondary provision in line with their mainstream peers.</p> <p>Robust transition plans will be put in place for any pupils directly affected by the proposals, which will be planned collaboratively with parents and staff and involve additional support from specialist members of staff from Access and Inclusion.</p>

- **Proposal 3: One** Early Years Assessment & Intervention LSC for pupils under statutory school age with significant presenting needs at Abercynon Primary School.

Comments/Issue raised	Response to comments/issued raised
Positive responses were received regarding the increased capacity the LSC would provide although responders queried as to if further capacity was needed.	Positive comments are noted and reflect the rationale for the proposed enhancement of provision.
Mixed feedback regarding the location of the proposed new LSC provision. Responses were received in support of the Early Years LSC being established at Abercynon. Feedback was also received regarding the LSC being established at different location.	All possible connotations of the proposals were considered prior to publication of the consultation report. The option presented is believed by officers to be the most appropriate use of resources to realign LSC provision within RCT.
Additional transition of pupils was noted as a concern.	Unfortunately, there appears to have been some confusion with the proposed additional LSC at Abercynon. This is establishing a new LSC so therefore no pupils will be impacted by the proposal.

- **Proposal 4:** Two Primary Phase Welsh medium LSCs at the new Welsh medium primary school at Rhydyfelin for pupils with significant ALN.

Comments/Issue raised	Response to comments/issued raised
General agreement with need for Welsh medium LSC provision.	In general responses recognised the need for additional LCS provisions within RCT, although it was evident that some responses confused the different elements of the proposals
Welsh medium LSCs are welcomed but concerns were raised relating to the LSC not having a specific ALN designation.	<p>Comment is noted.</p> <p>The LA is required by Welsh Government and the ALNET Act 2018 to continuously review both the sufficiency of its Additional Learning Provision for both English and Welsh medium learners and work proactively towards developing a fully bilingual ALN system over time.</p> <p>The proposed LSC will support pupils with significant additional learning needs. There will be agreed Placement Criteria which will be written in consultation with the school. It is recognised that the LSC may need more than 1 classroom area for interventions to help support each learner and sufficient support</p>

	and expertise to support pupils with a range of needs. The needs of the pupils attending the provision will be closely monitored by the LA in collaboration with the school.
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- **Proposal 5:** One ASD LSC provision for pupils in Years 7–11 at the new 3-16 school on the Hawthorn Primary/High School site.

Comments/Issue raised	Response to comments/issued raised
The increase in Key Stage 3/4 provision was seen as positive, however responders felt further LSCs are needed.	In line with the ALN Code 2021, the LA has a statutory duty to review the sufficiency of its provision. Therefore, further reviews will be undertaken to ensure LSC provision within RCT meets the demands of pupils with ALN.

The following general themes were raised across all proposals:

Comments/Issue raised	Response to comments/issued raised
Rationale for change.	<p>This is based on:</p> <p>Data analysis of current and projected pupil need to ensure that the number of LSCs meet identified needs.</p> <p>The opportunity to enhance the number of specialist LSC provisions within mainstream settings to minimise unnecessary transition for pupils between specialist settings in different schools which would provide equity for pupils in need of specialist provision to remain in one school setting as is generally available to mainstream peers.</p> <p>To ensure that a larger number of LSCs and their pupils access specialist provision in school settings that have benefited from significant investment from the 21st Century Schools Modernisation Programme.</p>
Proposals are not in the pupil's best interests.	The LA considers that reducing the number of schools transitions is in the pupil's best interests and the enhanced capacity gained from the additional LSCs will ensure more children that require specialist placements can access this in a timely manner. However, we acknowledge there will be some short-term disruption to a small number of pupils during the transition period.

8. Estyn’s response to the proposal from Rhondda Cynon Taf regarding LSCs which will take effect from April 2024.

In compliance with the School Standards and Organisation 2018 School Organisation Code the Estyn’s response to the consultation has been provided in full in Appendix 2. Estyn is not a body which is required to act in accordance with the Code and the Act places no statutory requirements on Estyn in respect of school organisation matters. Therefore, as a body being consulted, Estyn will provide their opinion only on the overall merits of school organisation proposals.

Estyn has considered the educational aspects of the proposal and have produced a response to the information provided by the proposer and other additional information such as data from Welsh Government and the views of the Regional Consortia which deliver school improvement services to the schools within the proposal. The response reports the following as a summary ***‘Estyn welcomes the local authority’s move to improve provision for pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) and recognises the merit of many of the strategies in the consultation. This includes increasing full-time specialist provision for pupils with significant ALN in Welsh medium schools which was an aspect identified in the recent local government education services inspection. Overall, it is Estyn’s view that the information provided suggests that proposals are likely to improve the provision for learners in the local authority. However, there are a few aspects of the proposals that need strengthening and these are identified in our response.***

Additionally, in accordance with the Code, the areas of the response that require clarification are documented in the table below:

Estyn’s comment
<i>It is unclear whether there are any proposed interim arrangements, which might be necessary for their implementation.</i>
Clarification
Perthcelyn LSC – 3 pupils currently placed in Perthcelyn and due to transition to Abercynon in September 2023 are impacted directly by the proposals. Parents were given the option to either stay at Perthcelyn until the outcome of the consultation is known or move to the LSC at Abercynon in September 2023. All 3 parents have opted to remain at the LSC in Perthcelyn, as a result an additional full time Learning Support Assistant (LSA) will be in place to enhance the staffing capacity of the LSC on an interim basis.
Estyn’s comment
<i>There are five separate proposals in the consultation and the document makes only general statements about disadvantages, such as ‘The relocation of the named LSCs could potentially cause some limited disruption to the proposed host schools.’ The consultation is not clear enough about potential risks associated with specific proposals or how the local authority will deal with them. The proposal does not set out clearly how the local authority will ensure that the disruption to learners is minimised,</i>

for example how it will support those pupils currently in any of the settings who are moved to a different provision.

Clarification

General risks are identified in the Consultation documentation and accompanying impact assessments. Overall, the proposal to open/relocate LSCs would deliver a significant improvement in the quality of educational provision for learners with ALN, having a significant positive impact upon the educational performance of pupils and staff morale. The proposals will ensure that all the LSCs will be compliant with current requirements of planning and building control legislation and will be fully accessible and compliant with the Equality Act 2010 in fully integrated community schools.

In response to the queries raised, specific potential risks to each proposal are detailed:

Enhancing Welsh medium provision (opening of 2 primary phase Welsh medium LSCs at Rhydyfelin):

- Difficulty in the recruitment of Welsh medium specialist staff to work in the LSC. The Council is committed to retaining staff and there is a commitment with the Council's WESP to enhance the specialist Welsh medium workforce to meet the needs of ALN learners bi-lingually.
- If the proposal is not progressed RCT will not comply with the statutory duty to provide support for ALN learners through the medium of Welsh
- Potential disruption for pupils who currently access Welsh medium peripatetic service who meet eligibility criteria for placement at LSC who may wish to attend the designated LSC provisions. To minimise this the LA will involve parents/carers and relevant pupils as active participant in discussions regarding change of placement and transition if the proposals are progressed.

Enhancing ASD KS3/4 (opening a LSC at the new Hawthorn Primary/High school site)

- If the proposal is not progressed there will be insufficient ASD KS3/4 provision to meet the needs of learners

Enhancing Early Years Provision (establishing Early Years Assessment LSC for pupils under statutory school age)

- If the proposal is not progressed there will be insufficient Early Years specialist provision to meet the needs of learners

Relocation of Observation and Assessment LSC at Penrhiwceiber:

- Placement in this LSC is designed to be short term, therefore pupils currently accessing the provision are highly likely to have naturally moved on to their long term educational placement by the implementation date. For those that remain in the LSC at the point of implementation, it is recognised that there may be disruption to the pupils moving to the new location. However, to mitigate this, the current staff will be relocating with the class and pupils to provide continuity of care and support and a robust planned enhanced transition process will be implemented. This will also ensure continuity in educational provision
- If the proposal does not progress pupils will be unable to access an appropriate 21st Century environment due to the limitations of the current physical environment

Creation of through ASD primary phase LSC provision (relocation of LSC at Abercynon to Perthcelyn LSC):

- If the proposal does not progress then pupils will continue to have to undertake additional transitions compared to mainstream peers.
- It is recognised that there will be disruption to the pupils moving to the new location. However, to mitigate this the current staff will be relocating with the class and pupils to provide continuity of care and support and a robust planned enhanced transition process will be implemented. This will also ensure continuity in educational provision.
- Alternative arrangements could be considered for individual pupils, including learners remaining in their existing school but in a supported mainstream context – please refer to the conclusion below.
- For pupils who currently attend Abercynon LSC and may need to travel further to Perthcelyn transport will be provided in line with the Learner Travel Policy, it is noted for some pupils the move to the new LSC will be closer to their home address.

Robust transition plans will be put in place for any pupils directly affected by the proposals, which will be planned collaboratively with parents and staff and involve additional support from specialist members of staff from Access and Inclusion.

Estyn's comment

The proposer only states that alternatives have been considered, without giving clear information as to what, or why they were discounted.

Clarification

In light of the requirements of the ALNET Act maintaining the status quo would mean that RCT would not be meeting its statutory duty to review the sufficiency of its ALN provision. This would result in the Council not meeting the needs of children and young people with ALN, increased pressure on parents/carers, increase in ALN tribunals and increase in cost in placing pupils in specialist out of county provisions.

There is clearly identified need for this provision within RCT and it would be in children and young people's best interest to address this. Some consideration was given to re-directing resources to further enhance the capacity of mainstream schools to meet need in local community schools. However, in light of the severity and complexity of pupils' identified needs this was not considered appropriate as the pupils are deemed to require bespoke specialist provision.

Consideration was given to expanding provision within established LSCs, however this was discounted due to a lack of physical capacity.

Consideration was also given to exploring out of county Welsh medium provision however this would incur a significant increase in cost of placements and transport and would not provide a long time solution to the Council meeting its statutory duty to deliver a bi-lingual system.

Historically as an alternative to a Welsh medium LSC the LA has implemented a virtual Welsh medium LSC whereby pupils are supported by peripatetic specialist staff within their mainstream school. In light of feedback from the Welsh medium sector and the

requirement of ALNET to develop a fully bilingual system it is now considered appropriate to establish primary phase Welsh medium LSCs to provide a more equitable provision in line with English medium provision.

The LA implements an Early Years Enhanced Transition Service for pre statutory school aged pupils entering mainstream nursery provision. Whilst acknowledging the success of this approach in building the capacity of mainstream settings to support pupils with emerging ALN many EY pupils have been identified as requiring higher level of Additional Learning Provision (ALP) that can be provided in mainstream. Since the inception of the Early Years Forum in September 2021 to comply with the new statutory requirements of the ALNET Act for children aged 0-3 years data as at 30th January 2023 demonstrates that 294 pupils have been discussed by the Forum. Of these pupils, 40 have been allocated placements within specialist settings and an additional 14 pupils have changed placement from mainstream to specialist provision following a period of assessment.

No alternatives were considered to opening the additional LSC provision at the new Hawthorn site due to the significant demand, severity of needs of pupils and the current capacity issues for specialist ASD placements in the Taf district in comparison to the Rhondda and Cynon districts.

Abercynon was considered the best location to host 2 Early Years LSCs due to its geographical location in relation to other Early Years provisions within the County Borough together with its 21st Century environment. This in turn determined that a through ASD provision would also be proposed on the Perthcelyn school site.

Estyn's comment

There are no projections or estimates for numbers of future pupils with ALN. For example, the local authority is proposing to create 18 Welsh medium places for pupils with ALN at Rhydyfelin but have not identified the demand for those places. Similarly, two of the schools in the proposal are currently being built, but the proposer has not provided an estimate of projected pupil numbers.

Clarification

During the academic year 2022/23, the Welsh Complex Needs Team supported 12 pupils with an age range of Year 2 to Year 11. Pupils currently accessing the Welsh medium virtual class model will be offered a placement within the Welsh medium class, there is evidence of an increase in requests for involvement of Access & Inclusion Staff. 7% of pupils currently accessing English medium LSC provision moved from a Welsh medium school. It is difficult to identify potential demand for a Welsh medium LSC provision as this is a newly established provision, and as such we don't have historical trend data.

Since the inception of the Early Years Forum in September 2021 to comply with the new statutory requirements of the ALNET Act for children aged 0-3 years data as at 30th January 2023 demonstrates that 294 pupils have been discussed by the Forum. Of these pupils, 40 have been allocated placements within specialist settings and an additional 14 pupils have changed placement from mainstream to specialist provision

following a period of assessment. It is important to note that this data related to both English and Welsh medium learners.

Estyn's comment

However, the consultation document does not provide clear enough information on a range of educational aspects of the proposals as identified in the School Organisation Code, such as the impact of the proposals on the quality of teaching, the breadth, balance and appropriateness of the curriculum, and leadership and management.

Clarification

The LSCs are collaboratively line managed by the host headteacher and central Access & Inclusion staff. Roles and responsibilities of the above are clearly defined in the LA School Learning Support Class Agreement, this includes matters relating to the curriculum and the quality of teaching and learning. There is a robust quality assurance process in place to ensure both the school and LSC staff are well supported and that LSC provision meets all necessary statutory requirements.

Standards

The LSCs will be located in modern flexible learning environments and have access to enhanced outdoor spaces to support the full range of curriculum activities. In addition, increasing the number of LSCs will ensure that a greater number of learners with significant and complex ALN have access to additional learning provision that enhances their progress in relation to their individual targets and starting points. This is monitored through the LSC Quality Assurance process in collaboration with the head teacher.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning

Access to specialist learning provisions where the individual needs of learners with complex ALN can be met through individualised additional learning provision within 21st century environments will have a positive impact upon learner and staff wellbeing. Increasing the specialist provision hosted by mainstream schools will enable learners with ALN to play a full part in the life and work of the school alongside their mainstream peers.

LSC provision designed to provide specialist additional learning provision will ensure increased participation and engagement of learners in their learning and promote resilience. This will be achieved by detailed bespoke planning in line with the identified needs of pupils.

Teaching and learning experience

The LSCs will provide a balanced curriculum at all stages in line with the new Curriculum for Wales – 2022. A 21st century learning environment would also provide pupils with greater flexibility and therefore greater choice and opportunities in their learning experience. The LSCs will provide a range of strategies and interventions to meet the needs of individual learners with significant difficulties with access to a wide range of multi-sensory and digital resources to enhance their learning. Bespoke assessment and planning to meet individual needs for example through LA maintained Individual Development Plans (IDPs) will ensure that pupils make progress from individual starting points.

Care, support and guidance

LSCs will have a strong focus upon supporting learners' emotional and social needs and opportunities to work collaboratively with mainstream peers in their host mainstream schools. This will include opportunities to access activities within their local community.

Leadership and management

Leadership and management of LSCs is undertaken collaboratively by the hosting Headteacher and Learner Support Service Co-ordinators in the Access & Inclusion Service to ensure high expectations for learners are achieved. This is supported by a comprehensive quality assurance process and a LA / School LSC agreement that details respective roles and responsibilities of the LA, host schools and LSC staff.

8. Assessment of Consultation

In view of the responses and comments received during the consultation period the proposals have been revisited and the following matters have been reassessed:

- The likely impact of the proposals on the quality and standards of education;
- The likely impact on the community; and
- The likely effect of differing travelling arrangements.

After further consideration, the proposals remain to be the most appropriate and as such minor modifications to Proposal 1 and 2 have been made. The implementation date for both proposals has been amended to September 2024.

9. Conclusion

The proposals to realign LSC provision will ensure that RCT has undertaken its statutory duty under the ALNET Act (2018) to review arrangements for supporting pupils with ALN within the county borough and has identified necessary steps to ensure the sufficiency of its provision for pupils with significant ALN who require specialist placement.

The proposals support the delivery of the RCT WESP and one of the core aims of the ALNET Act by working towards the development of a fully bilingual ALN system within the county borough.

The proposals will ensure greater compliance with the Equality Act 2010 and access to significantly improved premises which have benefited from the 21st Century Schools Modernisation Programme and investment.

Following consideration of the responses to the consultation, it is recommended that Members agree to the immediate publication of the attached Consultation Report and agree to give officers approval to publish the appropriate Statutory Notices to progress with Proposals 1 & 2 with amendments as follows:

Proposal 1 (amended): To relocate the Observation and Assessment LSC at Penrhiwceiber Primary School to Abercynon Community Primary School taking effect from September 2024. *(Amended from April 2024)*

Proposal 2 (amended): To transfer the LSC for pupils in Years 3-6 with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) at Abercynon Community Primary School to create a through provision in the Primary Phase at Perthcelyn Primary School taking effect from September 2024. *(Amended from April 2024)*

This will reduce the number of pupils affected by the proposals.

It is recommended that Members also agree to the publication of Statutory Notices to progress with Proposals 3, 4 & 5 without modifications as follows:

Proposal 3: To establish one Early Years Assessment and Intervention LSC for pupils under statutory school age with significant presenting needs at Abercynon Primary School taking effect from April 2024.

Proposal 4: To establish two Welsh medium primary phase LSCs at Ysgol Awel Taf the new Welsh medium primary school in Rhydyfelin for pupils with significant ALN taking effect from September 2024.

Proposal 5: To establish one LSC for pupils in Years 7-11 with ASD at the new 3-16 school on the Hawthorn Primary/High School site, Ysgol Afon Wen taking effect from September 2024.

**Scanned consultation responses (letters/emails), petitions,
on-line proforma responses**

DRAFT

Timetable of Consultation Events

School Affected	Group-Pupils/ Staff/Parents	Date
Abercynon Primary Community School	School Council	12th June 2023
	Staff	
	Parents	
Perthcelyn Primary School	School Council	13th June 2023
	Staff	
	Parents	
Penrhiwceiber Primary School	School Council	14th June 2023
	Staff	
	Parents	
New 3-16 school on the Hawthorn Primary/High School site	Staff/Temporary Governing Body	15th June 2023
		16th June 2023
New Welsh medium School	Parents	
Heol-y-Celyn Primary School	School Council	15th June 2023
YGG Pontsion Norton	School Council	22nd June 2023
Hawthorn Primary School	School Council	15th June 2023
Hawthorn High School	School Council	15th June 2023

Notes of Consultation Events

Learning Support Class Review Consultation Events 2023			
School Name:	Abercynon Community Primary School		
Venue:	Abercynon Community Primary School		
Date	12/06/2023	Number of School Staff:	23
Number of Pupils	13	Number of Parents:	14
Type of meeting:	School Council, Staff/Governing Body, Parents	Number of Governors:	8
Local Authority Officers in attendance:	Ceri Jones, Lisa Carter, Kate Hill, Iwan Griffiths		
School Council			
<p>Ceri and Lisa provided an overview of the proposals for Abercynon. Below is a summary of the comments made.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A pupil raised concerns that the LSC pupils had spent their school life in Abercynon so doesn't know if they would like a new school. They also said that the LSC pupils could have issues getting to school because of the move. Kate explained the effects of transition on ASD pupils and talked about the importance of reducing transitions and that the pupils may have access to transport under the LA Home School Transport Policy. • All members of the school council thought the proposals were a good idea although they had some concerns. • The pupils talked about friendships with pupils from the ASD class and believed that they might not be able to see them again. • A member of the school council thought the ASD pupils might have problems with settling with new friends and that could mean they won't learn anything. Friends can also support the ASD pupils' education. • The school council said that the ASD pupils show other staff/class their work. • The school council said that ASD pupils also take part in school activities to feel included as well as completing work in classrooms. • The pupils raised concerns around "Comfort teachers" potentially not moving with the children. Kate confirmed that the ASD teachers will be moving with the pupils. • One pupil questioned around "split-placement". Kate talked again about reducing transitions and how a split-placement could disrupt and upset ASD pupils. • The school council mentioned that ASD pupils use the outdoor equipment such as tennis courts and the yards with pupils from the other classes. • The school council feel that opening younger classes is good as they can make friends and keep them across their time in the school. • Including mainstream classes with the ASD pupils is seen as positive as the pupils are a benefit to the school. 			

- Hazel pupils are “very funny” and are characters around the school. All the pupils have particular interests.
- The class pupils are included in gymnastics, meaning they could learn alongside other pupils.
- Pupils from Hazel enjoy activities such as acting/dancing.

Staff/Governing Body

Ceri provided an overview of the proposals. Below is a summary of the comments made.

- A question was raised regarding what will happen to the teachers if the proposals are accepted. Ceri confirmed that permanent LSC staff would be relocating alongside pupils to reduce stress and disruption of pupils transition.
- Has an alternative for Penrhiwceiber been considered? Ceri responded that due to the outdoor environment restrictions then the preferred option is to re-locate the provision to 21st Century School environment.
- Concerns were raised regarding the transition of older pupils currently in the class from Abercynon as there would be an extra transition and the potential negative impact of this. The staff mentioned that pupils will experience anxiety and stress as a consequence of the proposed move.
- There was dialogue around the new Assessment and Observation Foundation Phase LSC, acknowledging placement in this LSC is short-term and that the pupil would be transitioning further once suitable placement had been identified.
- Why can't the class go from Penrhiwceiber to Perthcelyn? Ceri responded that placing the class in Abercynon would result in an increased geographical catchment area to include lower Rhondda, Cynon and Taf. The classroom identified within Perthcelyn is more suited for Key Stage 2 pupils as opposed to Early Years.
- Concerns were raised regarding the transport of pupils, Ceri advised that transport would be provided in line with the LA's Home to School Transport Policy.
- The staff felt that there is an underestimation of how much the Hazel class pupils are included in the school. They feel the LSC is being treated by the LA as a separate entity. The pupils from the LSC benefit from the inclusive practices of the school. A&I officers reiterated that classes are considered as part of the school and bring benefits to mainstream provision.
- The group highlighted the importance and benefits that community-based activities have on Hazel class pupils. The group felt that the community facilities are better in Abercynon than Perthcelyn. Kate responded that in line with new curriculum for Wales, the curriculum is designed by the school to build on the opportunities available in the school's locality. This will be unique to each setting but there is an expected consistency in the range learning opportunities and the specialist provision available in LSCs.
- The staff believe there will be gaps in staff expertise at Abercynon if the LSC staff move. It was highlighted that LSC staff are centrally employed and can be relocated to any LSC as required.
- The group felt that inclusion opportunities for the proposed Early Years Observation class would be different to those currently in place for Hazel class.
- A member of the governing body asked whether the previous relocations been successful? Ceri confirmed they were.
- The group felt that older students are better placed in larger schools as there is the potential for wider opportunities. Kate explained there is a quality assurance process in place to ensure there is equity between the different LSCs although

this is delivered in different way in line with the characteristics of the school the class is placed in. Ceri responded that there is no evidence of school size being detrimental to pupil's learning. It is dependent on the leadership and management of the school working in partnership with the service.

- A teacher felt that Perthcelyn has less to offer to the pupils. A&I officers explained that the expectation of the provision is the same just different classes have different opportunities and experiences in order to meet the pupil's needs. Ceri further expanded that pupils would be developing on the same pathway but there will be a range of opportunities dependent on what is available in the host school.
- LA officers were questioned why the decision has been made to relocate the classes. It was stated that there is an emphasis on through provision, also looking to modernise the classes by moving to modern and appropriate buildings.
- Questions were raised regarding costs of relocating classes as well as making classes fit for purpose. A&I officers replied that the cost of any developments to the classroom or playground of Perthcelyn Community Primary School would be centrally funded.
- Geographical aspect was addressed in relation to placements.
- Staff questioned if the school would be able to have the classroom back if their numbers increased. They commented the spare classroom is being used for a range of activities. Ceri confirmed that research had been undertaken regarding projected pupil numbers and this had been taken into account when considering this proposal.
- Staff commented that they believed that Perthcelyn has a spare classroom that isn't used. Kate advised that the Perthcelyn classroom would be more suitable for Key Stage 2 provision hence the proposal.
- LA officers were questioned if RCT would be considering opening additional classes in the future. It was confirmed that the service has as statutory duty to review the sufficiency of its ALN provision on a regular basis and further reviews would be undertaken.
- A member of the group asked why the proposed move was April and if the proposed move should be in September as a clean start. Staff felt that the changes will cause upheaval for children, staff – and cause anxiety. Officers reiterated that this was a consultation and that their opinions would be considered when developing the final proposals.
- Feels that the cost to the community is not being considered.
- Concerns were raised regarding the increase in traffic should the proposals go ahead with a second LSC at the school.

Parents

Ceri provided an overview of the proposals. Below is a summary of the comments made.

- The parents raised that pupil's needs change across a year. Ceri responded that a pupil's IDP would ensure that their needs and suitable provision were clearly identified and reviewed.
- A parent raised their concern that their child had only been attending LSC for a year and would need to be moved again.
- A parent asked why Abercynon is the only class being moved. Ceri explained that LSC provision is continuously reviewed in line with our statutory duty and further reviews will be undertaken in the future. A continuous aim of the service is to reduce the number of transitions. Ceri also explained the proposed changes to the LSCs were phased over several terms to ensure appropriate support could be provided.

- Parents expressed the pupils benefit from having access to the community and facilities – Perthcelyn has not got a community like Abercynon. They also stressed that being part of the community is important as it can lead to improved social, emotional and communication skills.
- A parent raised a concern that home life can be affected by transitions.
- It was stated by the parents that the inclusion of pupils in mainstream benefits Hazel class pupils.
- Parents believe that Abercynon Community Primary School has better facilities and are more accommodating than Perthcelyn Community Primary School. Parents stressed the importance of the community and friendship aspect. Parents stated that Perthcelyn did not have the facilities in the community to facilitate ASD children development – e.g. café, parks, library.
- The parents stated that children who are younger are less likely to be affected by transition. They felt that older children would be adversely affected and the proposal focuses on the younger pupils. “Children who are older are in their own ways and unlikely to adapt”.
- Parents questioned why the school could not accommodate the 2 ASD classes + the Early Years. Officers explained that there were only 2 classes available to host LSCs.
- Parents asked if the LA had considered moving the quieter Early Years Observation and Assessment LSC to a quieter school. Ceri advised the group that the proposal to host the Early Years Assessment and Observation LSC at Abercynon had been made due to the geographical area which would allow pupils from lower Rhondda, Taf and Cynon to access the provision. Additionally, by hosting both an Early Years Assessment and an Observation and Assessment LSCs it would provide additional opportunities and for pupils to access both provisions in the same setting.
- Parents were concerned that historically that the pupils had not been well supported during transition and what support will be put in place now. LA officers advised by parents that pupils will be supported by the LSC staff as they will be moving with the pupils.
- A parent questioned why the changes are being made in April 2024. Officers reiterated that this was a consultation and that their opinions would be considered when developing the final proposals.
- A parent raised concerns that they felt their private information had been shared inappropriately. Officers encouraged the parent to submit any supporting evidence of their concerns.
- A parent stated they felt the proposal had been influenced by a parent from Perthcelyn. Lisa reassured that the proposals were written by LA officers following of their existing provision.
- Parents feel that the process has not been followed and will raise it. Officers encouraged the parent to submit any supporting evidence of their concerns.

Ceri & Lisa described in detail the process of the consultation

- Parents feel that the outdoor facilities are a reason for the children to remain in current provision.
- Parents feel that as the pupils are more established here, they should remain here and the new classes should be placed elsewhere.
- Parents described the massive benefits in Abercynon Community Primary School compared to being placed in other units.
- Parents feel that disruption is not short term but long term.

- Parents raised concerns that they would not be able to access transport to the proposed school as they would be in the catchment area based off transport policy and how this would affect their child. Ceri described the gatekeeping process and reiterated that transport was provided in line with the LA Home to School Transport Policy. Parents feel that there are financial winners and losers – (if you are outside of X miles you cannot claim amount).
- Accessibility issues raised in terms of walking to proposed school due to hills.
- Parents reiterate that there is no benefit to their children from this proposed change.
- Asked if Education Psychology have reviewed these proposed changes – Could a medical professional make a judgment/have input on these changes? Ceri advised the group that no medical professional could impact on the education placement of a pupil.
- Parents feel that LA is taking children with communication and social disorders and moving them out to the “wilderness”.
- Parents felt that the school has everything here, praised staff, facilities and space. Parents can see the benefits of attending the current class in developing their children.
- Parents felt that there was no reason for pupils to move from Abercynon to the proposed school

Learning Support Class Review Consultation Events 2023			
School Name:	Perthcelyn Primary School		
Venue:	Perthcelyn Primary School		
Date	13/06/2023	Number of School Staff:	4
Number of Pupils:	9	Number of Parents:	6
Type of meeting:	School Council, Staff/Governing Body, Parents	Number of Governors	4
Local Authority Officers in attendance:	Lisa Carter, Kate Hill, Iwan Griffiths		
School Council			
<p>School Council were provided with an overview of the proposals, officers sought their opinions. The following is a summary of their comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All pupils believed the proposals were a good idea. • School council said that the younger ASD pupils can stay in the same school and maintain friendships as well as make new friends across classes. • It was identified that Dosbath Pinc do not go into junior classes but work alongside other infant age classes. Junior pupils enjoy helping Dosbarth Pinc pupils. • Dosbarth Pinc is integrated within the school and included in activities – Sports Day, Eisteddfod, assembly, lunchtimes mix with other pupils in the yard. • It was highlighted that a former pupil of Dosbarth Pinc transitioned to mainstream. • Pupils in the ASD LSC in Abercynon Primary will be reunited with old friends if they move to Perthcelyn. • Pupils queried where the classroom would be placed. It was clarified that it will be joining the classroom which adjoins the Foundation Phase LSC. • Including another class will help them understand what life is like for pupils with ASD as they get older. Including more ASD pupils will teach others that people are different, will add more tolerance to people who are different in the school. • It was suggested that older ASD pupils could help out with younger ASD pupils. • Pupils in the class could access local resources such as the park, community centre (clubs) and the fields. Perthcelyn has lots of countryside surrounding the school and is located close to the local village. A lot of community activities are available including using the paddling pool/pool committee and the church. ASD Rainbows is situated nearby. Pool has recently undergone huge developmental works and has opened. • It was suggested there might be holiday activities and after school at ASD Rainbows • Pupils in the class will also be able join in with school trips such as theme parks, Techniquet, folly farm. • The children look forward to having a new class, they had no concerns. • Questioned who would be in the class. Kate mentioned the ASD class will transition alongside the staff. 			

Staff/Governing Body

Lisa provided an overview of the consultation process.

- A question was raised regarding surveys and feedback, how does this affect the proposals? The answer was provided that Cabinet will review all documentation received during the consultation process. The Access & Inclusion Service have a duty to provide a response to all comments and include them in the consultation response document.
- The general consensus was that there was fear that there would be an imbalance of influence of the petitions due to the different sizes of the impacted communities as Abercynon has a larger community and school population than Perthcelyn. Fears that all changes could be overturned if enough noise is made. Concerns were raised it would set a precedent if proposals can be overturned with no rationale, just a large number of names on a petition.

Kate provided an overview of the consultation proposals.

- Consensus is agreement with the proposals.
- A&I staff encouraged attendees to utilise the survey and provide further correspondence to express their views.
- A&I staff emphasized that anybody who wants to provide feedback can.
- It was identified that considerations need to be made for pupils mentioned in parent meeting who may need to transition to Abercynon then back to Perthcelyn if the proposal is accepted.
- The staff were of the viewpoint that children from a younger age are less likely to deal with transition, one attendee believed that change is easier when older.
- All members believe that the proposed changes are all positive for the younger pupils.
- Staff felt parents prefer to attend the school in general due to the facilities.
- Kate explained the location rationale and adapted classrooms as to part of the rationale for the accessibility aspect of the proposals.
- School is reputable for being inclusive and staff work collectively to incorporate inclusion across the school.
- Some pupils from Abercynon are former pupils so will have experienced the school beforehand.
- Discussion around the importance of variety of provision to meet the demand of different needs across the LA.

Parents

Lisa provided an overview of the consultation process and Kate provided an overview of the consultation proposals.

- Concerns were raised that children are likely to suffer due to transition. Parents felt pupils would be moved from Perthcelyn to Abercynon and then back to Perthcelyn. Parent cited long-term disruption to education and personal development. Could the pupils due to transition in September stay at Perthcelyn if the class is to be moved. Parents discussed the preparation and the negative effect of transitioning. Kate answered that the individual pupil needs would be considered and discussed with parents in preparation for year 3.
- Parents stated that they feel their children are thriving emotionally, academically, and socially and would not want any disruption to impact on progress.
- Parents discussed their children and feel that transitioning will have negative impact on child's learning. Fear of regression and long-term effects of transitioning.

- Parents have raised funding personally to develop the facilities at Perthcelyn and want their children to continue to benefit from it.

Lisa expanded on the consultation process as questions were asked regarding whether the decision has been made already.

- A parent asked about the geographical location of the Early Years LSC. Kate provided explanation as to why the classes have been selected from a geographical perspective as well as a fully accessible environment in a 21st century school.
- A parent raised concerns that the transition between foundation phase and Key Stage 2 had a detrimental effect on the pupil's access to education and therefore supported the case for through provision.
- Parents stated they accepted the place in the LSC as the school is smaller and quieter. The parents believe the pupils have thrived in the current setting and were concerned that moving to a much larger school would have a negative impact.
- A parent questioned if Estyn reports would be taken into consideration. Access & Inclusion staff confirmed that we are required to seek feedback from Estyn and this will be detailed in the consultation response report.
- The parent was pleased with the recognition by Estyn of the work undertaken in Perthcelyn in relation to pupil wellbeing. The parent felt this was the most important factor for her.
- Parents talked about how different community facilities can benefit different children. Kate explained how the new curriculum for Wales should be adapted to build on local available resource. There is an expectation that a commensurate provision is made across all learning support classes of the same designation however this is adapted and developed to capitalise on the resources of the local community.
- Parents raised concerns around public response to the proposed changes and they felt they were experiencing hostility from those objecting to the move from Abercynon. Parents felt that Abercynon are shouting the loudest and causing large disruption which could impact the outcome of the consultation. Parents felt that people could sign petition with no link or understanding of the proposals and influence the decision.

Learning Support Class Review Consultation Events 2023			
School Name:	Penrhiwceiber Primary School		
Venue:	Penrhiwceiber Primary School		
Date	14/06/2023	Number of School Staff:	4
Number of Pupils:	6	Number of Parents:	0
Type of meeting:	School Council, Staff/Governing Body, Parents	Number of Governors	3
Local Authority Officers in attendance:	Lisa Carter, Kate Hill, Iwan Griffiths		
School Council			
<p>Lisa provided overview of the proposal effecting Penrhiwceiber. The following is the summary of the comments made.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussions were held regarding the current outdoor play area and classroom size for the Penrhiwceiber LSC pupils. A pupil thought the outdoor area is too small and that sometimes Dosbarth Chestnut goes on the main yard. A member of the school council thought it would be better for Dosbarth Chestnut to have more space to learn outside. • One pupil believes the pupils should move due to larger space to move around for play. They spoke about a particular pupil who needs additional space. • The school council felt that it would be a big change for Dosbarth Chestnut. • The school council felt that the children may initially find it tricky to settle as they are not used to it. • It was identified that Dosbarth Chestnut pupils do not stay for long but when pupils are in the younger years, they play with Dosbarth Chestnut at break and lunch time. • The school council felt it would be emotional for Dosbarth Chestnut to leave. Lisa confirmed that the current teacher and permanent assistants would move alongside the class to help settle them. • A member said Dosbarth Chestnut could make more friends in a different school. • A suggestion was made by the school council that they could visit the children. • Discussions were held around how the school could use the space freed up from moving the class. Ideas included a reading corner, a homework station or making "the burrow" bigger. • One member asked if we could make the classroom bigger or rearrange other classrooms. The headteacher explained that there would not be enough space for all the current classes and that making the classroom bigger would be difficult due to the slope and the different height of ground outside of the classroom. • All members of the council said they would feel sad if Dosbarth Chestnut moved although they believe the proposal is a good idea. 			
Staff/Governing Body			

Lisa provided an overview of the process; Kate provided an overview of the proposals. The following is a summary of the comments made.

- A Staff member mentioned their concerns regarding school accessibility in the morning. Currently, there are severe disruption to pupils trying to access the school on foot due to taxi's dropping off the LSC pupils and the parent's cars. Alternatives have been previously explored although it is not possible to adapt the drop-off area due to the geography of the site. Particularly, the steep, narrow streets surrounding the school.
- Accessibility issues were raised as current LSC pupils need guidance up and down multiple sets of steps. A&I staff informed the school's staff that more children are being identified with mobility issues. An aim of the proposal is address this by placing the LSC in a 21st century school which is accessible by design.
- Staff said that it will be sad for the class to leave although there is a need for a space for outdoor learning and want what is best for the children.
- Staff pointed out to the credit of the school's pupils that they have been very inclusive to Dosbarth Chestnut.
- Following the school council, on returning to class, the pupils fed back to staff that they will feel sad but recognise the children's needs need to be met.
- Staff raised questions regarding whether the LSC pupils will adapt and if a larger volume of pupils will affect the LSC pupils. The staff report that some pupils currently do not go out if there is too much noise and so a small school is seen as a benefit.
- A member identified the financial impact as the school is centrally funded and the school will lose a percentage of funding which helps cover site costs. This led to a member questioning if developments can be made on the site. Another member addressed this and provided rationale as to why changes could not be made using the same reasons as detailed above.
- A&I staff were questioned as to what would happen to staff working in the LSC. It was highlighted that permanent staff in that class will move alongside the pupils. Staff felt that 3 members are needed to manage the class and talked regarding the Enhanced Capacity Funding currently being received.
- A member believed that it's a struggle to cater for the needs of 7 LSC pupils in their current classroom due to the restriction in size and lack of outdoor space.
- A member identified additional staffing would be needed for larger Early Years classes. A&I officers clarified that pupil numbers would stay the same and the new proposed class would have its own allocated staff. A member questioned if there may be job opportunities for non-permanent staff as a new class is opened. A&I officers confirmed that the new class was increased capacity and would require new staff.
- A member talked about how valuable non-permanent the staff member is as they understand the children's needs.
- The staff felt that the changing room developments made LSC classroom smaller in Penrhawceiber Community Primary School.
- The same staff member identified that the furniture is not suitable for the current pupil's needs.
- The consensus was that the move is difficult for staff and could be for children in transition although the children's needs are the priority.
- It was asked if staff could visit Abercynon to check the facilities. They also asked if the secure outdoor area needs to be split if multiple classes have access. A&I

staff informed the staff that they could visit the provision with prior arrangement with A&I.

Learning Support Class Review Consultation Events 2023

School Name:	Heol y Celyn Primary School
Venue:	Heol y Celyn Primary School
Date	15/06/2023
Number of Pupils	6
Type of meeting:	School Council, Staff/Governing Body, Parents
Local Authority Officers in attendance:	Lisa Carter, Kate Hill, Iwan Griffiths

School Council

Lisa gave an overview of the proposals.

- School council believe that the proposals were a good idea.
- When asked for opinions on the proposal, one pupil said that having the classes would mean there are new and more resources for the LSC pupils and themselves.
- The school council also believe adding new classes will help them and other pupils understand different additional learning needs and how they can help.
- The school council looked forward to the opening of new classes, no concerns were raised.

Learning Support Class Review Consultation Events 2023			
School Name:	Hawthorn Primary School		
Venue:	Hawthorn Primary School		
Date	15/06/2023	Number of School Council:	6
Type of meeting:	School Council		
Local Authority Officers in attendance:	Lisa Carter, Kate Hill, Iwan Griffiths		
School Council			
<p>Kate provided an overview of the proposals, the following is a summary of the comments they made:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All the pupils thought it was a good idea, they felt the new class would help pupils learn and support those that need it. • The group were asked what they knew about Autism, one pupil told us about a club that she attends where her friend has autism and how they do things differently to include her. • The pupils felt it would help themselves understand older pupils with Autism and they could help the pupils in the class learn. • Kate was asked where would the class be? Kate explained it will have its own class within the school but that the pupils will come into their classes, and may join them during playtimes and lunch breaks • A pupil asked Kate what do you do to help the pupils? Kate explained that there are teachers and learning support assistants that help the pupils with their learning, providing extra support to those pupils that struggle with change for example, they have lessons on how to learn to read emotions. The smaller classes gives pupils with ASD a safe place to learn, as some prefer small classes rather than in a mainstream class but others learn better in a larger class • Will it be in the new school? Yes it will open once the new school opens 			

Learning Support Class Review Consultation Events 2023			
School Name:	YGG Pontsion Norton		
Venue:	YGG Pontsion Norton		
Date	22/06/2023	Number of Pupils:	7
Type of meeting:	School Council		
Local Authority Officers in attendance:	Lisa Carter, Iwan Griffiths, Ailsa Reynolds		
School Council			
<p>Ailsa and Lisa provided an overview of the proposals. Below is a summary of the school council's comments.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A member of the school council asked whether it's been decided on how many pupils will be in the new classes? Lisa provided an explanation around the number of teachers and LSA's in the class. A member of the school council asked what kind of needs the class will have. Ailsa informed the student council that the class is for children with significant learning needs in the medium of Welsh and that pupils with different needs can access the class. Ailsa described that the pupils would come from across RCT and will be transported by taxis. • The student council have no issues with the new classes proposed and feel the changes are a good idea. One pupil discussed how a smaller class would be good for pupils that struggle in larger classes. • A member of the school council asked would the other boys and girls be able to play with the LSC pupils. Lisa advised that the school will encourage inclusion in all areas including, playtime, celebrations, assemblies, school trips and shared class lessons. • A member of the school council asked if the LSC pupils will do the same work but slower than the mainstream classes. Ailsa advised that it's dependent on the pupil's needs of the class. The LSC pupils will follow the same topics in school but their learning will incorporate what works best for the LSC pupils based off their needs. • A member of the school council asked if there are too many pupils in the new LSC class, what will happen? Lisa discussed class size as mentioned earlier by Ailsa. Lisa also said that if there are too many pupils, Access & Inclusion would look to open a new LSC in a different school. 			

Learning Support Class Review Consultation Events 2023			
School Name:	Hawthorn High School		
Venue:	Hawthorn High School		
Date	15/06/2023	Number of School Council:	6
Type of meeting:	School Council		
Local Authority Officers in attendance:	Lisa Carter, Kate Hill, Iwan Griffiths		
School Council			
<p>Iwan provided an overview of the proposal in relation to LSC provision within the New Hawthorn School, the following is a summary of the comments the council raised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Officers were asked why was it designated KS3/4 and not primary as well? Kate explained that we have sufficient primary provision at the moment, pupils thought we should consider opening provision for younger pupils. • Good idea to provide help to pupils who would be struggling, a pupil believes the mainstream pupils of the schools will be accepting of pupils with autism. The pupil spoke fondly of a pupil with additional learning needs and how everyone had included them. • The pupils felt the class would allow specific support to be provided in a dedicated environment and would be beneficial all round to both pupils and staff. • They are used to pupils coming into their class and then leaving to go back to their base from the speech and language LSC. • A pupil explained that the Hive is used to support pupils at the moment, those that need to chill out or for help with English, Maths, or if they are stressed, the staff do activities that can help pupils. Pupils thought that the Hive could help pupils in the LSC and questioned if the Hive could be expanded for the LSC pupils. • A pupil questioned if the LSC would be accessible for pupils not diagnosed with autism? Kate explained due to the wait list for a diagnosis following Covid, we look at the needs of the pupils and the support the individual requires to learn, equally some pupils with a diagnosis can access mainstream provision. • A pupil questioned if the pupils would have extra transition days. Officers responded that yes additional transition opportunities or days would be planned to meet individual pupil needs. • One pupil had a LSC in their primary school so they are used to having a class. • The group discussed the benefits of having ASD specialist within the school environment and how this would help all staff. 			

Learning Support Class Review Consultation Events 2023			
School Name:	New Hawthorn School & New Rhydyfelin School		
Venue:	Teams		
Date	15/06/2023	Number of Participants:	2 – Members of Staff from Hawthorn High and 1 Councillor
Type of meeting:	Temporary Governing Bodies of the new Hawthorn 3-16 School and New Welsh Medium School		
Local Authority Officers in attendance:	Lisa Carter, Kate Hill, Iwan Griffiths		
Temp Gov Body			
<p>Lisa provided overview of the consultation process. Kate provided overview of the proposals. The following is a summary of the comments made.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A member asked if the proposals would affect the provision of the current Speech and Language LSC in Hawthorn High. A&I staff responded by clarifying that the 2 LSCs are independent and so the proposal will increase provision and staffing. • A member of staff questioned how the class would be organised within the school. Kate referred to practise in the existing ASD LSCs where pupils access approximately 60% of their provision in mainstream. Integration into mainstream will be encouraged alongside specialist interventions focused on social communication skills. • It was asked how many new staff will be employed for the new LSC on the Hawthorn primary/high site. Kate informed the member that a LSC teacher and LSC assistants will be centrally funded and provided to schools. • It was asked if an IDP could contain 1-to-1 support. Kate discussed in detail the different support available for pupils with an IDP and confirmed that 1-to-1 is not allocated in an IDP. • Discussions were held around the building design of the new 3-16 school in Hawthorn. Lisa informed the members that the proposed LSC classroom had been identified when plans were drawn up, therefore the school does have capacity for this proposal. A member talked about the importance of making sure the school is fit for purpose. A&I staff discussed how provision discussions were held during the planning stage and so factors such as noise level and space were considered. • A member questioned whether LSC pupils will be required to sit exams. Kate clarified that students will sit exams. • A member questioned how the LA will support the school in setting up the class. A&I staff informed the member that once the consultation was complete and 			

agreed on, the SEN Coordinator will work to develop the provision alongside the school. Resources, provision and training opportunities will be made available.

- A member asked if the LSC posts are identified in the staffing structure of the school. Lisa clarified that the LSC posts are not included in the structure of the school. LSC staff are centrally funded and appointed in collaboration with the school.
- A member identified that the emphasis of the consultation is to reduce transition and highlighted that the new 3-16 school in Hawthorn is an excellent example of where through provision could be placed. A&I staff fed back that currently there is sufficient primary ASD provision however, there is insufficient secondary provision. A&I officers noted the suggestion. It was accepted by the member that not all changes can be made at the same time and suggested that this could be looked at in the future.
- A member felt that the current proposals were focused on reducing transitions of younger pupils and not older pupils. A&I staff talked about Porth Community School that currently hosts LSCs at all age group levels and that in the future this approach may be incorporated into more schools.
- A member praised the concept of converting the Council Offices in the Pavilions to a special school to increase provision.
- The structure of the consultation response proforma was queried. Lisa clarified this had been rectified on the online proforma which breaks down each proposal.
- Kate stated that the proposals are still in consultation phase and feedback is valued. Kate encouraged contribution from members.
- A member was unsure why the temporary governing body and pupils were met with of the affected schools in the catchment area although not the existing staff and school governors. Member would have preferred school governors to have given formal input to the consultation. Lisa encouraged the member to share the consultation response proforma with the school governors.
- It was asked where would the class be situated on campus? At this moment in time, Lisa had only seen the classroom location on a development map. The classroom has been allocated by 21st century in the new building. It is unclear if the proposed LSC will be in the same area of the school as the Hawthorn Speech and Language LSC.

Learning Support Class Review Consultation Events 2023			
School Name:	New Hawthorn School & New Rhydyfelin School		
Venue:	Hawthorn Leisure Centre		
Date	16/06/2023	Number of Participants:	0
Type of meeting:	Parents of pupils that could attend the new Hawthorn 3-16 School and New Welsh Medium School		
Local Authority Officers in attendance:	Lisa Carter, Kate Hill, Iwan Griffiths, Ailsa Reynolds		
Temp Gov Body			
No parents attended.			

DRAFT

Estyn Report

Proposal to reconfigure mainstream learning support class provision within Rhondda Cynon Taf.

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

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

The proposal is to:

- To relocate the Observation and Assessment LSC at Penrhiwceiber Primary School to Abercynon Community Primary School with effect from April 2024.
- To transfer the LSC for pupils in Years 3- 6 with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) at Abercynon Community Primary School to create a through Primary Phase provision at Perthcelyn Primary School taking effect from April 2024.
- To establish one Early Years Assessment and Intervention LSC for pupils under statutory school age with significant presenting needs at Abercynon Primary School. The proposal will take effect from April 2024.
- To establish two Primary Phase Welsh medium LSCs at the new Welsh medium primary school in Rhydyfelin for pupils with significant ALN. The proposal will take effect from September 2024.
- To establish one LSC for pupils in Years 7-11 with ASD at the new 3-16 school on the Hawthorn Primary/High School site taking effect from September 2024.

Summary/ Conclusion

Estyn welcomes the local authority's move to improve provision for pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) and recognises the merit of many of the strategies in the consultation. This includes increasing full-time specialist provision for pupils with significant ALN in Welsh medium schools which was an aspect identified in the recent local government education services inspection. Overall, it is Estyn's view that the information provided suggests that proposals are likely to improve

the provision for learners in the local authority. However, there are a few aspects of the proposals that need strengthening and these are identified in our response.

Description and benefits

The local authority has given a clear rationale for the overall proposal. It aims to realign ALN provision to meet the needs of pupils, to establish additional Welsh medium learning support classes (LSCs) to enable pupils with significant ALN to access full-time specialist Welsh medium provision, to reduce the number of transitions between placements for vulnerable pupils and to meet the demand for early intervention.

The consultation document contains a projected timetable for statutory procedures and clear end dates for each of the five proposals, for example identifying when new provision will open. It is unclear whether there are any proposed interim arrangements, which might be necessary for their implementation.

The local authority has identified well the expected benefits of the proposal but has not set out clearly potential disadvantages. It recognises advantages fairly, such as improving the range of facilities and learning resources available to pupils. However, there are five separate proposals in the consultation and the document makes only general statements about disadvantages, such as 'The relocation of the named LSCs could potentially cause some limited disruption to the proposed host schools.' The consultation is not clear enough about potential risks associated with specific proposals or how the local authority will deal with them. The proposal does not set out clearly how the local authority will ensure that the disruption to learners is minimised, for example how it will support those pupils currently in any of the settings who are moved to a different provision.

The proposal document identifies appropriately that doing nothing would mean that the local authority would not be meeting its statutory duty and that there is an identified need for this provision. However, the proposer only states that alternatives have been considered, without giving clear information as to what, or why they were discounted.

The local authority has considered adequately the impact of the changes on learner travel arrangements and on accessibility of provision. The proposal identifies that transportation would be provided in line with the council's policy and placement made in the nearest and most appropriate specialist setting. It notes that if pupils are placed within a LSC they may be required to travel out of catchment, although they will endeavour to place pupils in the nearest appropriate LSC to their home address.

The proposer identifies the number of pupils currently at each school and an estimate of future numbers. However, there are no projections or estimates for numbers of future pupils with ALN. For example, the local authority is

proposing to create 18 Welsh medium places for pupils with ALN at Rhydyfelin but have not identified the demand for those places. Similarly, two of the schools in the proposal are currently being built, but the proposer has not provided an estimate of projected pupil numbers.

The proposal takes good account of the impact of the proposals on Welsh medium provision within the local authority and the extent to which the proposal would support the targets in the local authority's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP).

Educational aspects of the proposal

The local authority identifies fairly a range of benefits of the proposal and the potential impact on vulnerable pupils. The proposer identifies that

- The relocation of the LSC provision to Abercynon Primary School should provide a more coordinated approach and improved continuum of ASD provision for pupils in the Cynon Valley.
- Relocating the LSC currently hosted at Penrhiwceiber Primary School will ensure the pupils have access to suitable outdoor play areas which is fundamental to Early Years learning.
- The proposals to create an enhanced through provision at Perthcelyn should ensure that pupils are not required to undertake any additional transitions and will allow those pupils who meet the criteria for the LSC to remain at the provision until the end of Year 6.
- The creation of Welsh language ALN provision at Rhydyfelin will ensure that the local authority addressed the current gap in primary-age Welsh medium LSC provision.

However, the consultation document does not provide clear enough information on a range of educational aspects of the proposals as identified in the School Organisation Code, such as the impact of the proposals on the quality of teaching, the breadth, balance and appropriateness of the curriculum, and leadership and management.

The proposal provides information from the most recent Estyn reports for each school likely to be affected.

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT FORM INCLUDING SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY

(Revised March 2021)

Please refer to the current Equality Impact Assessment guidance when completing this document. If you would like further guidance please contact the Diversity and Inclusion Team on 01443 444529.

An equality impact assessment **must** be undertaken at the outset of any proposal to ensure robust evidence is considered in decision making. This documentation will support the Council in making informed, effective and fair decisions whilst ensuring compliance with a range of relevant legislation, including:

- Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011
- Socio-economic Duty – Sections 1 to 3 of the Equality Act 2010.

This document will also contribute towards our duties to create a More Equal Wales within the

- Well-being of Future Generation (Wales) Act 2015.

The [‘A More Equal Wales – Mapping Duties’](#) guide highlights the alignment of our duties in respect of the above-mentioned legislation.

SECTION 1 – PROPOSAL DETAILS

Lead Officer: Lisa Carter

Director: Gaynor Davies

Service Area: Education and Inclusion Services, Access & Inclusion

Date: 15/03/2023

1.a) What are you assessing for impact?

Strategy/Plan	Service Re-Model/ Discontinuation of Service	Policy/Procedure	Practice	Information/Position Statement
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

1.b) What is the name of the proposal?

CONSULTATION ON THE PROPOSALS TO REALIGN ADDITIONAL LEARNING NEEDS MAINSTREAM LEARNING SUPPORT CLASS PROVISION WITHIN RHONDDA CYNON TAF

1.c) Please provide an overview of the proposal providing any supporting links to reports or documents.

Section 315 of the Education Act 1996 requires LAs to regularly review arrangements for supporting pupils with SEN/ALN and to ensure that provision is sufficient and meets the needs of its communities. The priority for the Education and Inclusion Service Directorate is to continue to focus on driving up standards in schools and to improve the outcomes for all children and young people. In light of the Welsh Government ALNET Act and the Council's vision to increase the number of Welsh medium learners in its schools by responding proactively to both national and local strategies, such as the Welsh Government Welsh Language Strategy: Cymraeg 2050, Rhondda Cynon Taf's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan and the current 21st Century Schools Programme to increase and improve Welsh medium provision RCT, it is essential to enhance ALN provision within RCT.

The proposals will address surplus capacity issues and a lack of capacity in key provisions allowing resources to be directed to enhance capacity for mainstream inclusion, early intervention and preventative approaches. In addition, the proposals will address the current imbalance between the number of primary and secondary provisions, transition and accessibility issues. The proposals also seeks to address the need to create additional Welsh medium specialist LSC provision, in line with the

requirements of the Additional Learning Needs Education Tribunal (ALNET) Act (2018) to provide a bilingual Additional Learning Needs (ALN) system.

The proposals seek to achieve the following aims:

- Reducing unnecessary transition across schools by establishing cross phase specialist provisions within individual schools where possible.
- Developing a robust continuum of provision that effectively addresses a wide range of need across all year groups and builds upon effective early intervention and prevention approaches.
- Establishing LSC provisions in fully accessible settings that provide a learning environment fit for the 21st Century.
- Establish Welsh-medium provision to facilitate the learning of pupils with significant ALN in the Primary Phase.

1.d) **Please outline where delivery of this proposal is affected by legislation or other drivers such as code of practice.**

In developing the proposal, consideration has been given to the following:

- Section 315 of the **Education Act 1996** requires Councils to ensure that ALN provision is kept under review.
- The **Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018** (The ALNET Act 2018) requires Councils to keep under review the arrangements for supporting pupils with ALN within their area and consider whether these are sufficient. The ALNET Act 2018 is supported by the statutory **Additional Learning Needs Code 2021**.
- Powers for Councils to develop school organisation proposals are governed by the **School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013** which is supported by a statutory **School Organisation Code (2nd Edition) (011/2018)**.

1.e) **Please outline who this proposal affects:**

- Service users
- Employees
- Wider community

SECTION 2 – SCREENING TEST – IS A FULL EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT REQUIRED?

Screening is used to determine whether the initiative has positive, negative or neutral impacts upon protected groups. Where negative impacts are identified for protected groups then a full Equality Impact Assessment is required.

Please provide as much detail as possible of how the proposal will impact on the following groups, this may not necessarily be negative, but may impact on a group with a particular characteristic in a specific way.

Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011

The Public Sector Equality Duty requires the Council to have “due regard” to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advance equality of opportunity between different groups; and foster good relations between different groups. Please take an intersectional approach in recognising an individual may have more than one protected characteristic.

<u>Protected Characteristics</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
<p>Age (<i>Specific age groups i.e. young people or older people</i>)</p> <p>Reception – Yr2 (formerly Foundation Phase) Yr 3 – 6 (formerly Key Stage 2) Yr 7 – 11 (formerly Key Stage 3&4)</p>	Positive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate placements which are well matched to pupils’ primary needs. • Improved educational outcomes and pupil engagement due to meeting identified pupil needs more effectively. • Greater opportunities for mainstream inclusion in local community schools. • Improved continuum of learning provision which improves life chances for our most vulnerable learners. • Bilingual opportunity of LSC through provision for pupils with ALN. • Proposed additional classes will enhance LSC capacity across all age ranges. 	<p>Since the inception of the Early Years Forum in September as at 30th January 2023, 294 pupils have been discussed by the Forum. Of these pupils, 40 have been allocated placements within specialist settings and an additional 14 pupils have changed placement from mainstream to specialist provision following a period of assessment.</p> <p>During the academic year 2022/23, the Welsh Complex Needs Team supported 12 pupils with an age range of Year 2 to Year 11.</p> <p>It has been identified through data analysis that as of 30th January 2023, the potential number of pupils transitioning in 2023/24 (Year 6 to Year 7) without a Year 7 placement is 14.</p>

<u>Protected Characteristics</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
<p>Disability <i>(people with visible and non-visible disabilities or long-term health conditions)</i></p>	<p>Positive</p> <p>+</p> <p>Negative</p>	<p>The review of LSC provision will allow the LA to better meet the needs of its ALN pupils. The proposed mainstream schools hosting the LSC will be fully compliant with all disability legislation. The increase of classes will enable more students to access fully accessible LSC provision while reducing unnecessary transition.</p> <p>LSC re-alignment will inevitably cause some disruption and uncertainty for parents and pupils for a period of time, although experience shows that this can be kept to a minimum and the children's education and wellbeing does not suffer. Access & Inclusion will provide support to eradicate or minimise any potential negative impact.</p> <p>All the required impact assessments have been undertaken, LSC re-alignment will inevitably cause some disruption and uncertainty for parents and pupils for a period of time, although experience from previous LSC realignments has</p>	<p>Delivery of new LSC provision enhances the educational opportunities for pupils with significant additional learning needs and will provide the required additional LSC provision.</p> <p>The positive impact that the proposal will have far outweighs the short-term negative impact.</p>

		<p>been positive. Access & Inclusion will provide support to eradicate or minimise any potential negative impact. This will involve collaboration between current LSC staff, Access and Inclusion staff, pupils and their families to ensure a person-centred approach is taken to meeting the educational and wellbeing needs of pupils.</p> <p>Concerns have been raised that the proposals will have a negative impact on pupils and may require some pupils to undertake additional transitions to another setting. However, it is important to highlight that all learners accessing Observation and Assessment placements do so on a short term basis whilst their needs are being assessed and identified to inform a longer term placement. Concerns were also raised regarding the transition of older pupils currently in the class from Abercynon as there would be an extra transition and the potential negative impact of this. The staff mentioned that pupils will experience anxiety and stress as a consequence of the proposed move.</p> <p>Robust transition plans will be put in place for any pupils directly affected by the proposals, which will be planned collaboratively with parents and staff and involve additional</p>	
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		support from specialist members of staff from Access and Inclusion.	
Gender Reassignment <i>(anybody who's gender identity or gender expression is different to the sex they were assigned at birth including non-binary identities)</i>	Neutral	This proposal is not expected to have a direct impact on characteristics relating to Gender Reassignment. The implementation of this proposal will be monitored routinely. Should an impact arise relating to Gender Reassignment, this impact assessment will be updated to reflect this.	There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will have an impact on people that share this characteristic.

<u>Protected Characteristics</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
Marriage or Civil Partnership <i>(people who are married or in a civil partnership)</i>	Neutral	This proposal is not expected to have a direct impact on characteristics relating to Marriage or Civil Partnership. The implementation of this proposal will be monitored routinely. Should an impact arise relating to Marriage or Civil Partnership, this impact assessment will be updated to reflect this.	There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will have an impact on people that share this characteristic.
Pregnancy and Maternity <i>(women who are pregnant/on maternity leave)</i>	Neutral	This proposal is not expected to have a direct impact on characteristics relating to Pregnancy or Maternity. The implementation of this proposal will be monitored routinely. Should an impact arise relating to Pregnancy or Maternity, this impact assessment will be updated to reflect this.	There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will have an impact on people that share this characteristic.
Race <i>(ethnic and racial groups i.e. minority ethnic groups, Gypsy, Roma and Travellers)</i>	Positive	The proposal will have a positive impact on children and young people between the ages of 3 to 19 with ALN. As a result of the proposal, the Council is expected to deliver increased ALN provision.	When looking at ethnicity data, 2022 PLASC data shows 93.9% of statutory school aged pupils were white British, 5.9% were classified as any other ethnic background whilst 0.2% were unknown.

<u>Protected Characteristics</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
Religion or Belief <i>(people with different religions and philosophical beliefs including people with no beliefs)</i>	Neutral	This proposal is not expected to have a direct impact on characteristics relating to Religion or Belief. The implementation of this proposal will be monitored routinely. Should an impact arise relating to Religion or Belief, this impact assessment will be updated to reflect this.	There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will have an impact on people that share this characteristic.
Sex <i>(women and men, girls and boys)</i>	Neutral	This proposal is not expected to have a direct impact on characteristics relating to Sex. The implementation of this proposal will be monitored routinely. Should an impact arise relating to Religion or Belief, this impact assessment will be updated to reflect this.	There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will have an impact on people that share this characteristic.
Sexual Orientation <i>(bisexual, gay, lesbian, straight)</i>	Neutral	This proposal is not expected to have a direct impact on characteristics relating to sexual orientation. The implementation of this proposal will be monitored routinely. Should an impact arise relating to sexual orientation, this impact assessment will be updated to reflect this.	<p>There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will have an impact on people that share this characteristic.</p> <p>Where a potential impact arises Access & Inclusion Service will ensure the host schools and LSCs follow Council guidance on support pupils with LGBTQ+ community.</p>

In addition, due to Council commitments made to the following groups of people we would like you to consider impacts upon them:

	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
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Armed Forces Community <i>(anyone who is serving, has served, family members and the bereaved)</i>	Positive	The increase in LSC provision will provide greater opportunity for pupils with significant ALN to access specialist provision.	Increased numbers of LSC places will result in the ability to accommodate more children with significant ALN
Carers <i>(anyone of any age who provides unpaid care)</i>	Positive	Increased potential to access appropriate specialist provision. Increase opportunity for parents/carers to choose appropriate Welsh medium specialist provision.	The establishment of more LSC provision will result in the ability to support more children with significant ALN.

If the initial screening test has identified negative impacts then a full equality impact assessment (section 4) **must** be undertaken. However, if after undertaking the above screening test you determine a full equality impact assessment is not relevant please provide an adequate explanation below:

No negative impacts have been identified for protected groups. All impacts on protected groups will be either neutral or positive.

Are you happy you have sufficient evidence to justify your decision? Yes No

Name: Lisa Carter

Position: Inclusion Co-ordinator

Date: 15/03/2023

Please forward a copy of this completed screening form to the Diversity and Inclusion Team.

PLEASE NOTE – there is a separate impact assessment for Welsh Language. This must also be completed for proposals. Section 3 Socio-economic Duty needs only to be completed if proposals are of a strategic nature or when reviewing previous strategic decisions. Definition of a ‘strategic nature’ is available on page 6 of the [Preparing for the Commencement of the Socio-economic Duty](#) Welsh Government Guidance.

SECTION 3 – SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY (STRATEGIC DECISIONS ONLY)

The Socio-economic Duty gives us an opportunity to do things differently and put tackling inequality genuinely at the heart of key decision making. Socio-economic disadvantage means living on a low income compared to others in Wales, with little or no accumulated wealth, leading to greater material deprivation, restricting the ability to access basic goods and services.

Please consider these additional vulnerable groups and the impact your proposal may or may not have on them:

- Single parents and vulnerable families
- Pensioners
- Looked after children
- Homeless people
- Students
- Single adult households

- People living in the most deprived areas in Wales
- People with low literacy and numeracy
- People who have experienced the asylum system
- People misusing substances
- People of all ages leaving a care setting
- People involved in the criminal justice system

<u>Socio-economic disadvantage</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
<p>Low Income/<u>Income Poverty</u> <i>(cannot afford to maintain regular payments such as bills, food, clothing, transport etc.)</i></p>	Neutral	<p>The advantages of implementing the proposed change includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An enhanced focus on improved mainstream LSC provision which provides improved life chances for our most vulnerable learners. • Appropriate continuum of provision which is well matched to pupils' primary needs. • Improved educational outcomes and pupil engagement due to effectively meeting pupil needs. • Greater opportunities for mainstream inclusion in a local community school. <p>A disadvantage could potentially include additional travel for some pupils. However, transport would be provided in line with the Council's Learner Travel Policy and placement made in the nearest and most appropriate specialist setting. If placed within a LSC pupils may be required to travel out of catchment although Access & Inclusion will endeavour to place pupils in the nearest appropriate LSC to their home address. ITU also have a Gatekeeping process to consider requests for transport that fall outside of the policy where it is felt that</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Previous establishment of new LSC provision throughout the county borough. • Increase in the capacity of the LA to support pupils with additional learning needs. • Positive impact of establishing the LSCs on the school and wider communities.

		it would be reasonable for parents to provide home school transport.	
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<u>Socio-economic disadvantage</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
<p>Low and / or No Wealth <i>(enough money to meet basic living costs and pay bills but have no savings to deal with any unexpected spends and no provisions for the future)</i></p>	<p>Neutral</p>	<p>The advantages of implementing the proposed change includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring that LSC provision is situated within an education setting that is accessible and appropriate for pupils with wide ranging needs, including physical and medical need. • Improving the range and quality of facilities and learning resources available to the benefit of all pupils. • Compliance with a core aim of ALNET Act to create a bilingual ALN system. • The new LSC provisions will be hosted by schools that have the capacity for the development of an additional class due to surplus spaces and can accommodate the additional pupils who will be placed in the school. <p>A disadvantage could potentially include additional travel for some pupils. However, transport would be provided in line with the Council's Learner Travel Policy and placement made in the nearest and most appropriate specialist setting. If placed within a LSC pupils may be</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Previous establishment of new LSC provision throughout the county borough. • Increase in capacity of the LA to support pupils with additional learning needs. • Positive impact of establishing the LSCs on the school and wider communities.

		required to travel out of catchment although Access & Inclusion will endeavour to place pupils in the nearest appropriate LSC to their home address.	
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<u>Socio-economic disadvantage</u>	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts	Provide detail of the impact	What evidence has been used to support this view?
<p><u>Material Deprivation</u> <i>(unable to access basic goods and services i.e. financial products like life insurance, repair/replace broken electrical goods, warm home, hobbies etc.)</i></p>	Positive	<p>The advantages of implementing the proposed change includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An enhanced focus on improved mainstream LSC provision which provides improved life chances for our most vulnerable learners. • Appropriate continuum of provision which is well matched to pupils' primary needs. • Compliance with one of the underpinning principles of the ALNET Act that all pupils should access mainstream education where possible. • Improved educational outcomes and pupil engagement through effectively meeting pupils' needs. • Ensuring that LSC provisions are situated within education settings that are accessible and appropriate for pupils with wide ranging needs, including physical and medical needs. • Improving the range and quality of facilities and learning resources available for the benefit of all pupils. • Compliance with a core aim of ALNET Act to create a bilingual ALN system. • The new LSC provision will be hosted by schools that have the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Previous establishment of new LSC provision throughout the county borough. • Increase in capacity of the LA to support pupils with additional learning needs. • Positive impact of establishing the LSCs on the school and wider communities.

		capacity for the development of an additional class due to surplus spaces and can accommodate the additional pupils who will be placed in the school.	
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		<p>provision available in LSCs.</p> <p>During the consultation the following question was asked: How will their children continue to have the same opportunities that they enjoy now? Such as weekly library visits, trips to the local shops, time at the organics garden, swimming once a week, horse riding attended through use of private minibus.</p> <p>School Council at Perthcelyn Community Primary School noted that pupils in the LSC could access local resources such as the park, community centre (clubs) and the fields. Perthcelyn has lots of countryside surrounded the school and is located close to the local village. A lot of community activities are available including using the paddling pool and the church.</p>	<p>In line with new curriculum for Wales, the curriculum is designed by the school to build on the opportunities available in the school's locality. This will be unique to each setting but there is an expected consistency in the range of learning opportunities and the specialist provision available in LSCs and beyond.</p>
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<p>Socio-economic background <i>(social class i.e. parents education, employment and income)</i></p>	<p>Positive</p>	<p>Improving specialist provision for pupils in RCT has been at the heart of the decision-making process in relation to the proposal.</p> <p>All decisions have been made with a full understanding of the needs of the pupils and with the aim of providing high quality, fully accessible 21st Century specialist provision for pupils who require specialist provision in a LSC within a fully inclusive mainstream setting.</p> <p>ALN to benefit from having the opportunity to be taught in brand new facilities fit for the 21st century.</p> <p>The new host schools will be fully accessible and compliant with the Equality Act 2010. Accommodation will consist of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • modern, flexible learning environments for all pupils, a hall/dining area, and a multi-purpose learning resource area; • enhanced outdoor spaces to support the full range of curriculum activities; • traffic management systems including on-site pupil bus drop off, and on-site staff parking. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Previous establishment of new LSC provision throughout the county borough. • Increase in the capacity of the LA to support pupils with additional learning needs. • Positive impact of establishing the LSCs on the school and wider communities.
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		<p>Those affected will be supported by Access & Inclusion during the transition phase. Those staff working in a LSC that is proposed to be relocated will move with the LSC pupils to ensure their expertise is maintained and that the pupils have continuity of staff supporting them.</p> <p>The proposed change in provision has some implications for a small number of pupils (currently 3 pupils) who currently attend an affected LSC but were due to transfer to Abercynon LSC in September 2023. To minimise any potential negative impact upon individual pupils, parents have been provided with the option to move to Abercynon LSC or to remain in Perthcelyn with additional support provided within the current Perthcelyn ASD LSC in September 2023. These arrangements will remain in place until a decision regarding the proposal has been reached, parents have been made fully aware of the implications of the option they have chosen.</p>	
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SECTION 4 – FULL EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

You should use the information gathered at the screening stage to assist you in identifying possible negative/adverse impacts and clearly identify which groups are affected.

- 4.a) **In terms of disproportionate/negative/adverse impacts that the proposal may have on a protected group, outline the steps that will be taken to reduce or mitigate the impact for each group identified. Attach a separate action plan where impacts are substantial.**

Overall no substantial negative impacts have been identified in this equality impact assessment. However, a potential negative impact has been identified in relation to the short term disruption of pupils attending the LSCs proposed to relocate. To mitigate this potential impact, staff working in a LSC that is proposed to be relocated will move with the LSC pupils to ensure their expertise is maintained and that the pupils have continuity of staff supporting them.

- 4.b) **If ways of reducing the impact have been identified but are not possible, please explain why they are not possible.**
The potential negative impact has been mitigated as detailed above.

- 4.c) **Give sufficient detail of data or research that has led to your reasoning, in particular, the sources used for establishing the demographics of service users/staff.**

- Data analysis is based on data derived from the Access & Inclusion data systems and PLASC where appropriate.
- Qualitative reasoning gathered from the Councils Directorate of Education and Inclusion Services 21st Century Schools Team and Access and Inclusion Team and the Council's Corporate Estates Team.

- 4.d) **Give details of how you engaged with service users/staff on the proposals and the steps taken to avoid any disproportionate impact on a protected group. Explain how you have used feedback to influence your decision.**

In line with the School Organisation Code detailed cabinet reports, consultation documentation and consultation feedback reports have been written at each stage of the process to support the proposed realignment of LSC provision. All reports clearly identify the need for additional LSC provision and the data rationale behind the proposal. The consultation was undertaken between the 5th June and 14th July 2023 the consultation report will shortly be shared with cabinet and all relevant stakeholders. It is noted that there has been a good response to this statutory consultation process; 127 completed questionnaires, 12 letters/emails and 3 petitions. A further online petition was submitted by the Perthcelyn Community, however it has not been considered as it was received after the deadline. Meetings have been held with all impacted Schools Councils, Governing Bodies and staff. The feedback received has informed amendments to the proposal for Cabinet to consider further. Details can be found in the Consultation Feedback Report.

4.e) **Are you satisfied that the engagement process complies with the requirements of the Statutory Equality and Socio-economic Duties?**

Yes

No

The consultation was undertaken on 5th June 2023 - 14th July 2023.

Face to face meetings were held with the staff, School Councils and Governing Bodies of the special schools across RCT.

A Consultation Response Form has also been available at on the Council's website on the 'Get Involved' page. The Consultation Response Form enabled consultees to indicate if they wished to be notified of the publication of the Consultation Report, once presented to the Council's Cabinet.

Consultees have also been welcomed to put their views, comments, and any questions in writing to:

Director of Education and Inclusion Services
Access & Inclusion Service
Ty Trevithick
Abercynon
CF45 4UQ

Or

E-mail: A&IService@rctcbc.gov.uk

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, the Councils Directorate of Education and Inclusion Services Access & Inclusion Service held meetings with the School Councils of all potentially impacted host schools, children and young people will be encouraged to be active participants throughout this process.

A drop in session was arranged so that members of the public could discuss the proposal with Officers from the Councils Directorate of Education and Inclusion Services.

This Equality Impact Assessment was updated following the completion of the consultation to include any necessary feedback.

SECTION 5 – MONITORING AND REVIEW

5.a) Please outline below how the implementation of the proposal will be monitored:

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

- The opening of a maintained school (including special school).
- The closing of a maintained school (including special school).

The consultation started on 5th June 2023 and completed at 17:00 on 14th July 2023.

Face to face meetings were arranged with the staff, School Councils and Governing Bodies of the host schools across RCT.

A Consultation Response Form was available at on the Council's website on the 'Get Involved' page. The Consultation Response Form enabled consultees to indicate if they wished to be notified of the publication of the Consultation Report, once presented to the Council's Cabinet.

The Council's Access & Inclusion Service will be fully engaged in supporting the head teacher and governing body to establish the LSC provision through its well-established line management and quality assurance processes relating to its management of LSC provisions. In line with the requirements of the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal Act (ALNET) and Education Act 1996, the LA will continue to keep its LSC provision under review to ensure that it meets the identified needs of its learners with ALN in RCT.

Interested parties have been welcomed to put their views in writing to:

Director of Education and Inclusion Services
Access & Inclusion Service
Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council
Ty Trevithick
Abercynon
CF45 4UQ
or e-mail A&IService@rctcbc.gov.uk

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, the Councils Directorate of Education and Inclusion Services Access & Inclusion Service held meetings with the School Councils of all potentially impacted host schools, children and young people will be encouraged to be active participants throughout this process.

A drop in session was arranged so that members of the public could discuss the proposal with Officers from the Councils Directorate of Education and Inclusion Services.

5.b) **When is the evaluation of the proposal due to be reviewed?**

The Council'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 the Council's Cabinet decides not to proceed, that will be the end of the proposal.

If the Council's Cabinet decide to proceed with the proposal, a Statutory Notice will be published providing a 28 day notice period for objections. The School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2018 requires that anyone wishing to make objections to a school organisation proposal can do so. To be considered as statutory objections, objections **must** be made in writing or by email, and sent to the Council within 28 days of the date on which the Statutory Notice was published.

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

If there are objections, the Council's Director of Education and Inclusion Services will publish an Objection Report providing a summary of the objections and the response to them within seven days of the day of the determination of the proposal.

If the Council's Cabinet approve the proposal, it will be implemented in accordance with the date stated in the Statutory Notice or any subsequently modified date. In the case of the proposal, the implementation date will be no later than the 2026 academic year.

5.c) **Who is responsible for the monitoring and review of the proposal?**

Officers from the Access & Inclusion Service will monitor the proposal throughout the consultation and implementation period.

5.d) **How will the results of the monitoring be used to develop future proposals?**

The Access & Inclusion Service will undertake a 'Lessons Learnt' review at the end of the implementation phase and this will feed into future projects so that each project improves and benefits from lessons learnt (positive and negative) during previous projects.

SECTION 6 – REVIEW

As part of the Impact Assessment process all proposals that fall within the definition of ‘Key Decisions’ must be submitted to the Review Panel. This panel is made up of officers from across Council Services and acts as a critical friend before your proposal is finalised and published for SLT/Cabinet approval.

If this proposal is a Key Decision please forward your impact assessment to Councilbusiness@rctcbc.gov.uk for a Review Panel to be organised to discuss your proposal. The EqIA guidance document provides more information on what a Key Decision is.

It is important to keep a record of this process so that you can demonstrate how you have considered equality and socio-economic outcomes. Please ensure you update the relevant sections below:

Officer Review Panel Comments	Date Considered	Brief description of any amendments made following Officer Review Panel considerations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In general, the Impact Assessment could be strengthened by using the information contained within the consultation report as there is a wealth of information from Estyn, School Council etc to make it more robust and demonstrate due regard. • Disability section – requires more information given the nature of the proposal as ASD counts as disability under the Equality Act. • Page 125 – Transition plans and mitigation to be included; • Page 141 – Transition comments from teachers could be included. • Disability section – It notes that individuals may experience uncertainty for a period of time but this could be more specific and there is an opportunity for more clarity as to why it is both a positive and a negative i.e. is one long term, etc. 	<p>5th September 2023</p>	<p>Review Panel Comments have been noted and actioned as appropriate.</p> <p>Narrative from the Consultation Feedback Report has been included within the assessment including pupils’ comments where appropriate.</p> <p>Review Panel comments regarding transport have been noted but as agreed in the panel discussions pupils will not be disadvantaged as the home to school transport policy will be applied equitably. However, the assessment has been strengthened by including reference to the Gatekeeping process undertaken by ITU.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Socio-economic – more data from the consultation would make it more robust (location and transport need to be addressed). • Pages 125-127 - Area deprivation – There's several comments in respect of the move to Abercynon – include 125/126/127 mitigations and the opportunities for children – Estyn comments 133 could be added. • Pages 127 and 141 - Pupil comments to be included to show you've engaged. • Good use of the Welsh Index for Multiple Deprivation within the socio-economic section. • Area Deprivation section - Transport has been flagged but is there a need to be more specific on numbers and if there's a financial detriment to families as parents have raised this in the consultation? Opportunity to state that parents aren't losing out financially, that it is consistent with mainstream pupils and in line with existing home to school policy. • Section 4B has merged with 4A - HD to send LC/CJ a clean copy of an EIA to ensure the correct format is used; • Section 4C needs to be clear with the amount of engagement undertaken. • Section 6 needs to be updated to demonstrate that a number of potential negatives and mitigations have been put in place. 		
Consultation Comments	Date Considered	Brief description of any amendments made following consultation
No comments have been received during the LSC consultation process regarding this assessment.	5 th June – 14 th July	

SECTION 6 – SUMMARY OF IMPACTS FOR THE PROPOSAL

Provide below a summary of the impact assessment. This summary should be included in the equality and socio-economic impact section of the Cabinet report template. The impact assessment should be published alongside the report.

In summary, the Equality Impact Assessment identifies positive and neutral impacts, and mitigations have been provided for any potential negative impacts upon pupils with protected characteristics.

- The impact on age is extremely positive as they will have the full benefit of being educated in specialist LSC provision based in fantastic facilities fit for the 21st Century. Providing an inclusive model of specialist provision hosted by a mainstream school that can meet their identified needs within their local community.
- The buildings will be fully compliant with the Equality Act 2010 thereby ensuring that no pupil, staff member, parent/carer or member of the wider community is prevented from fully accessing the whole extent of the new facilities.
- There will be positive impact on the Welsh language as the proposal seeks to establish more Welsh medium specialist LSC provision, in line with the requirements of the Additional Learning Needs Education Tribunal (ALNET) Act (2018) to develop a bilingual Additional Learning Needs (ALN) system. It also aims to assist with the delivery of strategic priorities within RCTCBC's WESP.

There is an expectation that pupils in all LSCs will have mainstream inclusion opportunities. The LSCs are integral to the ethos of the host schools and families and pupils are treated equitably alongside mainstream peers. The realignment of LSCs and establishment of the proposed LSCs will ensure the LA has bilingually provided suitable provision to support children with ALN.

SECTION 7 – AUTHORISATIONS

Lead Officer:

Name: Lisa Carter

Position: Inclusion Co-ordinator

Date: 15/03/2023

I recommend that the proposal:

- Is implemented with no amendments
- Is implemented taking into account the mitigating actions outlined
- Is rejected due to disproportionate negative impacts on protected groups or socio-economic disadvantage

Head of Service/Director Approval:

Name: Ceri Jones

Position: Head of Inclusion Services

Date: 19th April 2023

Please submit this impact assessment with any SLT/Cabinet Reports.

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Community Impact Assessment

This Community Impact Assessment is prepared in accordance with the School Organisation Code – 2018 (011/2018). It is to be read alongside the Consultation Document, the Welsh Language Impact Assessment and the Equality Impact Assessment as the information in all documents is related and the themes within them are cross-cutting.

Section 2.3 of the School Organisation Code – 2018 refers to regulated alterations to a school which includes:

- The introduction or removal of SEN/ALN provision or any change in the type of such provision. This is where the provision is in a mainstream school but the pupils who are admitted are in addition to admission number of the school. The provision **must** also be recognised by the local authority as reserved for pupils with SEN/ALN;

The proposals include:

- To relocate the Observation and Assessment LSC at Penrhiwceiber Primary School to Abercynon Community Primary School taking effect from April 2024.
- To transfer the LSC for Years 3-6 pupils with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) at Abercynon Community Primary School to create a through provision in the Primary Phase at Perthcelyn Primary School taking effect from April 2024.
- To establish one Early Years Assessment and Intervention LSC for pupils under statutory school age with significant presenting needs Abercynon Primary School. The proposal will take effect from April 2024.
- To establish two Primary Phase Welsh medium LSCs at the new Welsh medium primary school in Rhydyfelin for pupils with significant ALN. The proposal will take effect from September 2024.
- To establish one LSC for pupils Years 7-11 with ASD at the new 3-16 school on the Hawthorn Primary/High School site taking effect from September 2024.

The proposals are to be consulted on between 5th June and 14th July 2023. A detailed Consultation Document has been circulated to all prescribed stakeholders and the Community Impact Assessment is an appendix of this main document. Copies will be forwarded to the Welsh Government in compliance with consultation and publication guidelines.

Proposal:

- 1. To relocate the Observation and Assessment LSC at Penrhiwceiber Primary School to Abercynon Community Primary School taking effect from April 2024.**

RCT is proposing to relocate its Observation and Assessment class from Penrhiwceiber to Abercynon. This proposal will ensure greater compliance with the Equality Act 2010 and relocation to significantly improved premises which

have benefited from 21st Century Schools Modernisation and Investment Programme. The provision will continue to accommodate 8 pupils aged 3-7 years old and placements within the LSC will be agreed in the Access and Inclusion ALN panels.

- 2. To transfer the LSC for pupils in Years 3-6 with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) at Abercynon Community Primary School to create a through provision at the Primary Phase at Perthcelyn Primary School taking effect from April 2024.**

The proposal to relocate the class at Abercynon to Perthcelyn will minimise unnecessary transition for pupils with ASD, provide continuity in their educational placements and ensure that a higher number of specialist LSC provisions provide equity for pupils in LSCs so that they remain in one setting until transition to secondary provision in line with their mainstream peers. The provision will continue to accommodate 10 pupils and placements within the LSC will be agreed in the Access and Inclusion ALN panels.

- 3. To establish one Early Years Assessment and Intervention LSC for pupils under statutory school age with significant presenting needs at Abercynon Primary School. The proposal will take effect from April 2024.**

RCT is proposing to enhance the Early Years Assessment and Intervention provision within the County Borough by creating an additional LSC to support pre-statutory school age pupils with significant presenting needs. The class will support 8 pre-statutory school aged pupils.

- 4. To establish two Primary Phase Welsh medium LSCs at the new Welsh medium primary school in Rhydyfelin for pupils with significant ALN. The proposal will take effect from September 2024.**

The proposal is to enhance the Welsh medium Additional Learning Needs provision within the County Borough by creating LSC provision for pupils in Reception Years 6 currently at the school, therefore creating specialist Welsh medium provision for pupils with significant ALN from Reception – Year 11. The classes will support 8 pupils within reception to Year 2 and 10 pupils in Years 3-6.

- 5. To establish one LSC for pupils in academic Years 7-11 with ASD at the new 3-16 school on the Hawthorn Primary/High School site taking effect from September 2024.**

To address the current capacity issues, it is proposed RCT opens an additional LSC for pupils in Years 7-11 with ASD at the new 3-16 school on the Hawthorn Primary/High School site. This is to ensure the LA meets the demands for specialist ASD provision in its secondary phase.

Community Impact

The reasons for consideration of these proposals are fully outlined in the consultation document that will be widely distributed; this document clearly outlines the background to the proposals and why it has been necessary to bring it forward at this point in time.

The creation of the new provisions is seen as positive. The proposals will not have any significant impact on local communities as more local pupils will be able to access specialist provision within their local community. However, where it is proposed to relocate existing LSCs it is acknowledged that there will be short term impact upon the immediate local communities as they will lose their current inclusive specialist provision. The LSCs will make effective use of any surplus space within the school and develop a resource that will be of benefit to vulnerable pupils and their parents/carers. The proposed establishment of the LSCs will enhance the overall ability of the host schools to meet a diverse range of needs as there will be further specialist ALN expertise within the school.

Impact on Health and Wellbeing

It is anticipated that the proposals will have a significantly positive impact on the health and wellbeing of pupils with significant ALN attending Welsh medium provision as it will enhance the current inclusive model provided by the specialist Welsh medium Peripatetic Team and address the current gap in full time specialist Welsh medium ALN provision. The relocation of classes will allow pupils to access buildings that have benefited from the modernisation programme and the creation of additional Early Years and ASD provision will meet the rising demand for specialist provision in these specific areas of need in RCT. For the few pupils currently attending the two LSCs proposed to relocate to new host schools, there will be some short term disruption. Impact upon pupils and their families will be mitigated through the relocation of the same staff to the new host schools, thus providing consistency and continuity to support pupils and families through the transition process. Central Access and Inclusion staff will also provide enhanced support to the affected LSCs during this period.

Current 'Out of hours' Usage

Any services currently provided by the schools to parents, pupils and the communities will remain unaltered for example; breakfast and afterschool clubs.

Community Safety

The host schools will be a fully accessible and within fully integrated community schools. No concerns regarding community safety are anticipated.

Transport and Travel Implications

There is a statutory duty placed upon all Local Authorities 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 compulsory school age receiving primary education and three miles for pupils of compulsory school age receiving secondary education. If placed within the LSC pupils may be required to travel out of catchment.

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

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

Community Engagement

Members of the public wishing to find out more information on the proposed changes can view the proposal documents under the 'Get Involved' section of the RCT corporate website. Members of the public are also encouraged to provide feedback on the consultation using the online proforma (<https://RCTCBC.welcomesyourfeedback.net/r9g1ao>). Parents/Carers, School Council, School Staff and the School Governing Bodies directly affected by these changes are invited to a consultation event where they can discuss the proposals with Officers from the Council's Directorate of Education and Inclusion Services. Below is a timetable of the stakeholder events including the time, date and location of each event.

School Affected	Group-Pupils/ Staff/Parents	Time	Date	Venue
Abercynon Primary Community School	School Council	13:15 – 14:00pm	12 th June 2023	Abercynon Primary Community School
	Parents	14:00 – 15:00pm		
	Staff/Governing Body	16:00 – 16:45pm		
Perthcelyn Primary School	School Council	14:15 – 15:00pm	13 th June 2023	Perthcelyn Primary School
	Parents	15:15 – 16:00pm		
	Staff/Governing Body	16:00 – 16:45pm		
Penrhiwceiber Primary School	School Council	14:15 – 15:00pm	14 th June 2023	Penrhiwceiber Primary School
	Parents	15:15 – 16:00pm		
	Staff/Governing Body	16:00 – 16:45pm		

New 3-16 school on the Hawthorn Primary/High School site New Welsh medium School	School Council Heol-y-Celyn Primary School	9:15 – 10:00am	15th June 2023	Heol-y-Celyn Primary School
	School Council YGG Ponsion Norton	10:15 – 11:00am	15th June 2023	YGG Ponsion Norton
	School Council Hawthorn Primary School	11:30 – 12:15pm	15th June 2023	Hawthorn Primary School
	School Council Hawthorn High School	12:30 – 13:15pm	15th June 2023	Hawthorn High School
	Staff/Temporary Governing Bodies	16:00 – 16:45pm	15th June 2023	Via Teams: Click here to join the meeting
	Parents	15:15 – 16:00pm	16th June 2023	Hawthorn Leisure Centre

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This Welsh Language Impact Assessment (WLIS) tool enables RCT Council to consider the principles and requirements of the [Welsh Language Standards \(No.1\) Regulations 2015](#) to ensure compliance with the [Welsh Language \(Wales\) Measure 2011](#).

Stage 1 – Information Gathering	
NOTE: As you complete this tool you will be asked for evidence to support your views . Please see Welsh Language Impact Assessment Guidance for more information on data sources.	
Proposal Name:	CONSULTATION ON THE PROPOSALS TO REALIGN ADDITIONAL LEARNING NEEDS MAINSTREAM LEARNING SUPPORT CLASS PROVISION WITHIN RHONDDA CYNON TAF
Department	Access & Inclusion Service
Service Director	Gaynor Davies, Director of Education and Inclusion Services
Officer Completing the WLIA	Lisa Carter
Email	Lisa.c.carter@rctcbc.gov.uk
Phone	01443 744344
Brief Description	<p>To realign current provision to meet the demand for specialist placements. This will be achieved by the following adjustments to LSC provision:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To relocate the Observation and Assessment LSC at Penrhiwceiber Primary School to Abercynon Community Primary School taking effect from April 2024. • To transfer the LSC for pupils Year 3-6 with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) at Abercynon Community Primary School to create a through provision at Primary Phase at Perthcelyn Primary School taking effect from April 2024. • To establish one Early Years Assessment & Intervention LSC for pupils under statutory school age with significant presenting needs at Abercynon Primary School. The proposal will take effect from April 2024. • To establish two Primary Phase Welsh medium LSCs at the new Welsh medium primary school in Rhydyfelin for pupils with significant ALN. The proposal will take effect from September 2024.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To establish one LSC for pupils Year 7 – 11 with ASD at the new 3-16 school on the Hawthorn Primary/High School site taking effect from September 2024.
Date	16 th March 2023; updated 6 th September 2023.
Please outline who this proposal affects? (Service Users, Employees, Wider Community)	Pupils with Additional Learning Needs requiring specialist provision, their parents/carers and the wider additional learning needs community.

What are the aims of the policy, and how do these relate to the Welsh Language?	The aim of these proposals is to realign current ALN provision to meet the demand for specialist placements. At present, learners with significant additional learning needs attending Welsh medium schools who meet the criteria for Primary Phase LSC provision are supported by a specialist peripatetic team through an inclusive delivery support model. The Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal Act (ALNET) 2018 stipulates that all local authorities must develop bilingual ALN provision. The establishment of 2 Welsh medium LSCs in the new Welsh medium school in Rhydyfelin will ensure Welsh support is available to learners with ALN who meet the LSC criteria. The LSCs will support 18 pupils with significant additional learning needs in the Primary Phase.
Who will benefit / Could the policy affect Welsh language groups? If so, list them here.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Welsh medium learners with significant additional learning needs. Early Years pre-statutory school age pupils presenting significant needs. Year 7-11 (formerly Key Stage 3/4) English medium pupils with ASD. Pupils at the hosting schools. Parent/carers of pupils attending hosting schools and those with children/young people with significant additional learning needs. Staff at hosting schools. The hosting schools are: Abercynon Primary Community School, Perthcelyn Primary School, new Welsh medium primary school at Rhydyfelin, the new 3-16 school on the Hawthorn Primary/High School site.
Current linguistic profile of the geographical area(s) concerned	The 2021 Census figures regarding the Welsh language show a decrease in the percentage of Welsh speakers across Wales to 17.8%. There was, however, a small increase in RCT – the percentage of the population of the county borough who can speak Welsh increased from 12.3% to 12.4%. Numerically, RCT saw a 2.8% increase in the number of Welsh speakers in the county borough, from 27,779 speakers to 28,556 speakers. RCT was

also one of only four LAs in Wales to see an increase in the percentage of Welsh speakers – the others were Cardiff, the Vale of Glamorgan and Merthyr Tydfil. All of these are neighbouring county boroughs, which could demonstrate that our region is seeing some positive trends in terms of increases in Welsh speakers, and that there may be a resulting increase in demand for services through the medium of Welsh. As further, more detailed, data from the Census becomes available for RCT (e.g. LSOA data), we will need to consider what impact it may have on the services we provide.

The table that follows illustrates the Welsh language skills of residents living in the County Borough of Rhondda Cynon Taf and is obtained from the 2021 Census.

Table 1: Welsh Language Skills of Residents (Census 2021) – (%)

	County Borough of Rhondda Cynon Taf	All Wales
Can Speak, Read and Write Welsh	10.1%	14.8%
Can Speak and Read but Cannot Write Welsh	0.7%	1.2%
Can Speak but Cannot Read or Write Welsh	1.4%	2.4%
Can read but cannot speak or write Welsh	1.6%	1.4%
Can write but cannot speak or read Welsh	0.2%	0.2%
Can read and write but cannot speak Welsh	0.5%	0.6%
Can Understand Spoken Welsh Only	4.0%	5.5%
Other Combination of Skills	0.1%	0.2%
No Skills	81.3%	77.1%
Total	100.0%	100.0%

The Annual Population Survey collects information about respondents' Welsh speaking ability and includes a question on how often people speak Welsh. It is updated quarterly, so is a more up-to-date source than the Census. The most recent Annual Population Survey, for the year ending 31 March 2023, reported that 20.2% of respondents living in the County Borough of Rhondda Cynon Taf said they could speak Welsh, compared to the-all Wales percentage of 29.7% of respondents. This can be further broken down to the data contained in the table that follows.

Table 2: Welsh Language Skills of Residents (Annual Population Survey)

Welsh Language Skills of Residents – (%)		
	County Borough of Rhondda Cynon Taf	Wales
Can read Welsh	18.8%	26.0%
Can write Welsh	17.2%	23.9%
Can understand spoken Welsh	23.0%	33.5%

The data demonstrates that in each Welsh language skill area, the all-Wales percentages are notably higher than the County Borough percentages.

When asked about their frequency of speaking Welsh, the table that follows shows a breakdown of responses of respondents living in the County Borough of Rhondda Cynon Taf compared to the-all Wales responses.

Table 3: Welsh Language Skills of Residents (Annual Population Survey)

Welsh Language Skills of Residents – (%)		
	County Borough of Rhondda Cynon Taf	Wales
Speak Welsh daily	7.4%	15.0%

Speak Welsh weekly	5.1%	5.8%
Use it less often or never	5.2%	8.9%

The data demonstrates that the percentage of respondents that speak Welsh daily is far lower for the County Borough than the-all Wales percentage.

The Welsh Language Use Survey for the years 2013 to 2015, contains detailed information about Welsh speaker's fluency and their use of the Welsh language in a range of settings. When looking where respondents living in Wales learned to speak Welsh, the majority, 45.0%, learned to speak Welsh at home, followed by 26.0% who learned to speak Welsh at nursery school and primary school between the ages of 2 to 10 and 14.0% who learned to speak Welsh at secondary school at the age of 11 plus. The remaining 2.0% learned to speak Welsh in other settings, including at 'Welsh for Adults' courses.

The data above clearly shows that there is a gap in the Welsh language skills of residents of Rhondda Cynon Taf when compared to the whole of Wales. Proposals such as this significantly improve the opportunities available for Welsh learners with ALN through providing targeted specialist Welsh medium LSC provision for learners with significant additional learning needs in a 21st Century School environment. The headteacher of the new school will be encouraged and supported to consider using the community use facilities at the school to increase participation in the Welsh language by offering the opportunity for parents, carers and other members of the community to attend Welsh classes and/or other opportunities for community engagement through the medium of Welsh. The school will be designed to be a fully accessible and there will be a dedicated area within the school itself so that the local community will be allowed to safely utilise the facilities at the school.

In recent years, support has been given to promote and increase learners' use of the Welsh language in primary and secondary schools and in social contexts. This has been done through the Welsh Language Charter (Siarter Iaith/Cymraeg Campus), developed by Gwynedd Council, and various other projects, in partnership with the CSCJES and the Urdd to provide opportunities for learners to use the Welsh language in different contexts. In terms of the schools involved in this proposal -

- Perthcelyn Primary School have received their bronze and silver Cymraeg Campus awards and are working towards achieving the gold award.
- Abercynon Primary School have engaged with the Cymraeg Campus provision and are working with CSCJES to achieve their bronze award.

- Hawthorn Primary School have received their bronze Cymraeg Campus award and are now working towards achieving the silver and Hawthorn High School have engaged with the programme and are working towards achieving the bronze award.

An evaluation conducted in July 2023 whilst gathering information and data for the WESP Annual Review Report evidenced the positive impact the Siarter Iaith Cymraeg Campus programme has had on the use of the Welsh language in English medium schools. 13 English medium primary schools from different areas of the County Borough were contacted and all reported an increased use of incidental Welsh throughout the school with more children playing yard games through the medium of Welsh and more assemblies being held with focus on the Welsh language, history and heritage. The Siarter Iaith Cymraeg Campus programme has been rolled out to all special schools and units in Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council and many have already begun their journey to receiving the awards. The continued roll out of this programme will support the Welsh Government's target of one million Welsh speakers in Wales by 2050 and the targets set out in the Council's new WESP (2022 to 2032).

Other relevant data or research

Having reviewed internal data it was noted that due to a lack of Welsh medium LSC provision, 7% of the total number of pupils accessing specialist settings have previously attended Welsh medium provision.

The most recent data available from PLASC 2023 shows that there are currently 1,926 (6.28%) learners with ALN attending English medium schools and 256 (3.58%) learners with ALN attending Welsh medium schools across the County Borough. When comparing this with data available from PLASC for the previous year, the number of learners with ALN in schools across Rhondda Cynon Taf has increased, please see table below.

Table 4: Learners with ALN attending schools across the County Borough (PLASC)

Number and Percentage of Learners with ALN Attending Schools in RCT				
	2021 - 2022		2022 - 2023	
	Number	%	Number	%
English Medium Education	1,508	4.87%	1,926	6.28%
Welsh Medium Education	200	2.77%	256	3.58%

In line with the Council's new WESP, in order to achieve the targets of the WESP we will continue to ensure the benefits of the Welsh language and Welsh medium education are promoted to parents/carers from the initial early years, through to primary and secondary education and onwards through to higher and further education

for all learners, whatever their learning need. In line with Outcome 6 of the WESP, the Council are committed to increasing the provision of Welsh medium education for learners with ALN (in accordance with the duties imposed by the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018).

The continuing development of Welsh medium ALN provision will form part of the Local Authority's Access and Inclusion Services' action planning, monitoring, evaluating and reviewing processes. This will ensure the sufficiency of Welsh medium additional learning provision for learners with ALN in Rhondda Cynon Taf is kept under review to ensure arrangements are sufficient to meet the needs of learners and to identify any emerging needs or gaps in provision.

Section 63 of the ALNET Act (2018) highlights the Duty on local authorities to keep under review the arrangements that they and the governing bodies of maintained schools in their area make for children and young people with ALN. This includes considering the extent to which the arrangements are sufficient to meet the ALN of the children and young people for whom they are responsible. Local authorities must have regard to the additional learning provision that may reasonably be arranged by other bodies (such as health bodies). It also requires local authorities to consider the sufficiency of additional learning provision in Welsh and the size and capability of the workforce available. If a local authority considers that the arrangements are not sufficient in any way, it must take all reasonable steps to remedy the matter. Local authorities must consult any persons that they consider appropriate in order to inform the consideration and review, and at times which they consider appropriate.

Stage 2 – Impact Assessment

In this section you need to consider the impact, the evidence and any action you are taking for improvement. This is to ensure that the opportunities for people who choose to live their lives and access services through the medium of Welsh are not inferior to what is afforded to those choosing to do so in English, in accordance with the requirement of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011.

Please note there is a separate impact assessment for Equality and Socio-Economic duty that must also be completed for policy proposals.

Remember that effects that are positive for some groups could be detrimental to others - even among Welsh language groups. Consider the effects on different groups. For example, a proposal may be beneficial to Welsh learners, but not to Welsh speakers.

Will the proposed action affect any or all of the following?

	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts?	Describe why it will have a positive/negative or neutral impact on the Welsh language.	What evidence do you have to support this view?	What action(s) can you take to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
<p>Opportunities for persons to use the Welsh language</p> <p>e.g. staff, residents and visitors</p> <p>The rights of Welsh speakers and learners to use Welsh when dealing with the council and for staff to use Welsh at Work</p>	<p>Positive</p>	<p>The proposals included in this proposal are to relocate, transfer and establish English medium LSCs at different locations throughout the County Borough where there is identified need and demand for specialist provision should not have a negative impact on the Welsh language. The proposals to relocate and transfer LSCs between Perthcelyn Primary School and Abercynon Primary School is being proposed in order to improve the continuum of ALN provision in this area of the County Borough by creating a through provision at primary phase. The establishment of an Early Years Assessment & Intervention LSC for pupils under statutory school age at Abercynon Primary School further supports the Council's</p>	<p>Data gathered by the Access and Inclusion team shows that 7% of the total number of pupils accessing specialist settings have previously attended Welsh medium provision, are now accessing English medium LSC provision due to there being a lack of Welsh medium LSC provision available in the County Borough.</p> <p>The Welsh Language Use Survey (2013 – 2015) reported that over half of the Welsh speaking respondents who completed the survey reported that they try to use Welsh in the workplace with colleagues and when dealing with public organisations. This demonstrates the importance of staff, residents</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The impact of establishing the LSC provision in the new Welsh medium school in Rhydyfelin will be evaluated and demand monitored to ensure the opening of these classes have a positive impact on the Welsh language. If positive, opportunities to develop more LSCs like this across the County Borough will be considered. Ensuring inclusion with mainstream pupils is a key principle to ensure learners with ALN have equal opportunities to learn the language and receive their education through the medium of Welsh.

		<p>hopes to improve the continuum of ALN provision in this area of the County Borough where there is identified need.</p> <p>The establishment of a specialist LSC for pupils in Year 7 – 11 with ASD at the new 3 - 16 school which is being built on the current site of Hawthorn High School should not negatively impact the Welsh language as this will be a specialist provision.</p> <p>The establishment of two Primary Phase Welsh medium LSCs at the new Welsh medium primary school in Rhydyfelin will transform the Welsh medium opportunities available to learners with significant ALN in this area of the County Borough as this will be the first of its kind in the County Borough and can only have a positive impact on the language. Alongside this, the newly established Welsh medium LSC provision at Ysgol Garth Olwg will open to the secondary aged learners from September 2023, providing opportunities for learners to remain in Welsh medium education and continue to receive their education through</p>	<p>and visitors having fair access to opportunities to use the Welsh language.</p> <p>In line with the Council's Statutory Welsh Language Standards, any Council publications, documentation and correspondence must be bilingual with a message included to state that correspondence in Welsh is welcomed and corresponding with us in Welsh will not lead to a delay. The Council also applies this to any new school builds so that signage in English schools is bilingual. New school builds now also incorporate bilingual braille on signage throughout the school.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with the headteacher of the new Welsh medium school in Rhydyfelin and Welsh medium organisations to utilise the facilities to deliver Welsh medium learning sessions for parents, carers and the wider community. • If a person is unable to speak Welsh, they must call on a colleague in the building who is able to speak Welsh if this is being requested.
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the medium of Welsh in this area of the County Borough. The establishment of Welsh medium provision at different stages of education can only positively impact the Welsh language. Welsh medium ALN provision and the demand for this type of provision will be evaluated and monitored closely. If deemed successful, the Council's Access and Inclusion Services will explore options to develop further provision like this in different areas of the County Borough.

The proposal to create 2 Welsh medium primary phase LSCs at the new Welsh medium school in Rhydyfelin will have a positive impact on the Welsh language. This will be the first Welsh medium provision of its type in the County Borough and will widen the opportunities available to learners with ALN to learn the Welsh language. Learners accessing the provision will be able to access a range of additional extra-curricular activities in line with their peers through the medium of Welsh.

Opportunities for community and third-party use of the facilities at the school will be encouraged to offer Welsh medium learning classes for adults which will be promoted in the local community and throughout the County Borough. This will contribute towards Welsh Government's ambitious goal of creating a million Welsh speakers in Wales by 2050 and the Council's WESP by providing opportunities for persons to use the Welsh language.

Welsh Government's Welsh Language Use Survey (2013 – 2015) reported the largest increases in the number of fluent Welsh speakers in Wales in Rhondda Cynon Taf and in our neighbouring authority Cardiff. By working with the headteacher of the proposed new special school, opportunities for community and third-party use of the facilities at the school to offer Welsh medium learning classes for adult will be promoted in the local community and throughout the County Borough. This will

contribute towards Welsh Government's ambitious goal of creating a million Welsh speakers in Wales by 2050 and the Council's WESP by providing opportunities for persons to use the Welsh language.

The Council has opportunities for internal staff across all services to access free training to improve their Welsh language skills. Welsh Language Services are working to develop technological support for Welsh speakers and learners within the Council to be able to deliver services through the medium of Welsh. All newly recruited Council staff are required to undertake Welsh language Level 1 training. This will support the opportunities available for the Council to create a bilingual workforce with the ability to work and deliver services bilingually.

Stage 2 – Impact Assessment

Will the proposed action affect any or all of the following?

	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts?	Describe why it will have a positive/negative or neutral impact on the Welsh language.	What evidence do you have to support this view?	What action(s) can you take to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
<p style="text-align: center;">Numbers and / or percentages of Welsh speakers</p> <p>e.g Welsh Medium Education / Study Opportunities. Links with the Welsh Government's Cymraeg 2050 Strategy / RCTCBC Five Year Welsh Language Strategy</p>	<p>Positive</p>	<p>Welsh Government's ambitious Cymraeg 2050 strategy calls for far-reaching changes and boundaries being pushed to increase the numbers learning and using Welsh. To achieve the Cymraeg 2050 targets of reaching a million Welsh speakers in Wales by 2050, each local authority needs to transform how Welsh is taught to all learners. The headteacher of the new Welsh medium school in Rhydyfelin will be supported and encouraged to utilise the facilities available to offer opportunities to deliver Welsh for Adults classes for parents, carers and other members of the community. This will support the Welsh Government's Cymraeg 2050 strategy, and the targets set out in the Council's WESP.</p> <p>In recent years, support has been given to promote and</p>	<p>Welsh for Adults courses for the academic year 2022/23 are being held at Coleg y Cymoedd Llwynypia campus, Gartholwg Lifelong Learning Centre and Treorchy Library. Through utilising the facilities to deliver Welsh for Adults lessons at the new Welsh medium school in Rhydyfelin, this will encourage parents and carers to consider undertaking Welsh lessons. These types of lessons would be marketed and promoted throughout the community and neighbouring schools to encourage an uptake amongst parents, carers and the wider community.</p> <p>The Welsh for Adults classes are currently well attended. Learn Welsh Glamorgan have been engaging with schools throughout the County Borough to encourage schools to offer their facilities to</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that parents, carers and the wider community are signposted to the Welsh for Adults classes. Marketing and promotion of the classes will be implemented via the Council's website and corporate social media platforms. • The school-based workforce will continue to be supported with continued professional learning and networking, utilising opportunities to share best practices. • To continue working with the CSCJES to

		<p>increase learners use of the Welsh language in social contexts through implementing the Welsh Language Charter (Siarter Iaith/Cymraeg Campus) in Welsh and English medium primary and secondary schools in partnership with the CSCJES. The Siarter Iaith has been implemented in both primary and secondary Welsh medium schools in order to develop learners' use of the Welsh language in different contexts. As of July 2023, all Welsh medium primary schools have achieved the bronze award, 13 have achieved the silver award and 5 have achieved the gold award. Two Welsh medium secondary schools have achieved the bronze award and 1 has received the silver. The Cymraeg Campus has been implemented in both primary and secondary English medium schools in order to develop learners' use of the Welsh language. As of July 2023, 40 English medium primary schools have achieved the bronze award, 10 have achieved the silver award and 2 have achieved the gold award. A total</p>	<p>deliver Welsh for Adults sessions for the next academic year.</p> <p>The WESP Outcome 7 sub-group provides an effective focus on the challenges faced in terms of the school-based workforce. The group includes local, regional and national officers who are working collaboratively to implement strategies to work towards creating more Welsh speakers to ensure we have a school-based workforce of sufficient size and capability.</p> <p>Monitoring reports prepared by local authorities throughout Wales who currently have established Welsh language immersion provision report positive outcomes for learners who have accessed the support, leaving them equipped to start learning in the mainstream Welsh medium classroom.</p> <p>Data and information relating to the Welsh Language Charter is shared with the Council each quarter via the CSCJES Welsh Language Officer.</p>	<p>promote and increase learners' use of the Welsh language in primary and secondary schools with all English medium schools being supported to achieve the Cymraeg Campus awards.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council's WESP Co-ordinator to work collaboratively with partners in developing and implementing strategies in line with the Council's WESP to support the delivery of the Welsh Government's Cymraeg 2050 vision of a million Welsh speakers, and to contribute towards the development of strategies which promote the Welsh language and Welsh medium education across the County Borough.
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of 5 English medium secondary schools have achieved the bronze award.

More recently, CSCJES have begun working with special schools, learning support classes and pupil referral units in Rhondda Cynon Taf to implement the Welsh Language Charter (Cymraeg Campus) programme. To date, 3 special schools/units have achieved the bronze Cymraeg Campus award.

In contributing towards the vision of achieving a million Welsh speakers in Wales by 2050 and in line with the commitments outlined in the Council's WESP, ensuring a school-based workforce of sufficient size and capability is vital. In order to create more Welsh speakers, our education system is dependent on its school-based workforce, we must work locally, regionally and nationally to ensure a workforce with robust linguistic skills with the ability to inspire and motivate learners in Welsh medium education.

	Neutral	<p>The aim is to embed positive habits and attitudes towards the Welsh language through purposeful planning and promoting the information use of the Welsh language amongst learners across the education sector. Facilitating the use of the Welsh language across the curriculum and in wider contexts is key to ensuring a continuum of linguistic progression to support learners throughout each key stage, offering all learners the opportunity to become fully bilingual in alignment with the Curriculum for Wales – 2022.</p> <p>Whilst pupils who meet criteria to access the Welsh medium peripatetic complex needs service within their mainstream school settings may opt to remain within their Welsh medium mainstream setting rather than accessing the new Welsh medium settings due to the potential increased travel time. 7% of pupils with other identified ALN who previously attended Welsh medium mainstream settings now attend</p>	<p>Having reviewed internal data it was noted that due to a lack of Welsh medium LSC provision, 7% of the total number of pupils accessing specialist settings have previously attended Welsh medium provision.</p>	
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		English medium specialist settings. Pupils will now have increased options to access Welsh medium specialist settings.		
<p>Opportunities to promote the Welsh language e.g. status, use of Welsh language services, use of Welsh in everyday life in work and in the community</p> <p>Actively encourage and promote the use of our services in Welsh to see an increase in demand over time</p>	Positive	<p>The Welsh language now has official status and legislation in place which provides rights for Welsh speakers to receive Welsh language services. The challenge is to expand the opportunities for people to be able to use the Welsh language in their daily life through creating the right conditions for new learners of all ages to develop and use their skills from early years, through every stage of compulsory education and post-16 provision, to opportunities for adults to learn Welsh.</p> <p>As mentioned above, the Siarter Iaith Cymraeg Campus programme is having a positive impact on the promotion of the Welsh language in schools engaged with the programme through providing increased opportunities for learners to use the Welsh language. Although the proposals for the Cynon area of the County Borough and the proposals for</p>	<p>Currently learners with significant ALN are receiving English medium specialist support due to the lack of Welsh medium provision available. The opening of these LSCs can only benefit the promotion of the Welsh language.</p> <p>The demand for Welsh for Adults classes is evidenced by the popularity of current classes being held, for example at the Gartholwg Lifelong Learning Centre.</p> <p>The new school will be fully compliant with the Equality Act 2010 and the ALNET Act 2018 and such opportunities will be within the heart of the community, so that the local community can safely utilise the facilities.</p> <p>Representatives from Welsh Language, Youth, Leisure, Arts and Culture and Musical Services all form part of the WESP Outcome 5 sub-group which</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The impact of establishing the LSC provision in the new Welsh medium school in Rhydyfelin will be evaluated and demand monitored to ensure the opening of these classes have a positive impact on the Welsh language. If positive, opportunities to develop more LSCs like this across the County Borough will be considered. Ensuring inclusion with mainstream pupils is a key principle to ensure learners with ALN have equal opportunities to learn the language and receive their education through the medium of Welsh.

		<p>Hawthorn Primary School/Hawthorn High may not directly promote the Welsh language, the statutory changes to ALN provision in line with the ALNET Act 2018 and the introduction of the New Curriculum for Wales tied with the rollout of the Siarter Iaith Cymraeg Campus programme in these schools ensures an increased opportunities for all learners to use the Welsh language, which in turn will support promoting opportunities to use Welsh.</p> <p>The proposal to establish two Primary Phase LSCs at the new Welsh medium school in Rhydyfelin will allow for young children to access Welsh medium education at an inclusive school of brand new build, completed to 21st Century standard. Establishing Welsh medium LSC provision for children with significant ALN from this young age will enhance pupils' opportunities to continue to learn via the medium of Welsh but in a dedicated class setting alongside their peers who also have additional</p>	<p>focuses on creating more opportunities for learners to use Welsh in different contexts in school, therefore information is provided directly. The work underway not only supports the use of Welsh in different contexts in school, but also extends the use of Welsh in different contexts across all service areas and in the wider community which supports the Welsh Government's Cymraeg 2050 vision of increasing the use of the language and ultimately the number of Welsh speakers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that parents, carers and the wider community are signposted to the Welsh for Adults classes. Marketing and promotion of the classes will be implemented via the Council's website and corporate social media platforms. • Support the headteacher of the new school to promote community use of the facilities for the purpose of delivering a range of opportunities through the medium of Welsh with support of Welsh language organisations such as Menter Iaith and the Urdd to assist in the promotion of the Welsh language.
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		<p>learning needs rather than via peripatetic teaching.</p> <p>As a result, we will work with the headteacher of the new Welsh medium school in Rhydyfelin to provide opportunities to offer Welsh for Adults classes for anyone looking to learn the language and other opportunities for community engagement through the medium of Welsh. The school will be designed to be fully accessible in line with the Equality Act 2010 and the ALNET Act 2018, and a fully integrated community school with dedicated community use areas that the local community can safely utilise.</p> <p>The Council will continue to adhere to The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 which requires the Council to produce a five year strategy outlining actions which will facilitate and promote the Welsh language.</p> <p>The Council's Five Year Welsh Language Promotion Strategy (2022 – 2027) has been taken into consideration in order to</p>		
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encourage and facilitate long term growth for the Welsh language and Welsh medium education. The strategy outlines the Council's commitment to working towards Welsh Government's Cymraeg 2050 vision of increasing the number of Welsh speakers, increasing the use of the language in the workplace, via Council services and throughout the community and creating favourable conditions. Rhondda Cynon Taf Welsh Language Services, Youth Services, Leisure Services and Arts and Culture Services and Musical Services are all working proactively towards developing opportunities for learners and the wider community to use the Welsh language. These include but are not limited to:

Welsh Language Services:

- Developing materials to provide to school-based staff to support with their Welsh language skills.
- Exploring the feasibility of Welsh medium learning/support applications

		<p>being placed on every member of staffs' devices.</p> <p>Youth Services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Running trips for Welsh medium learners to provide opportunities to use Welsh in different contexts. - Creating promotional materials to be placed in youth clubs throughout Rhondda Cynon Taf. - Working in partnership with the Urdd and Menter Iaith to develop Welsh Language Youth Forums in all Welsh and English medium secondary schools along with the local college. <p>Leisure Services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Working with the Urdd to deliver sport activities for Welsh medium schools and exploring extending this to incorporate English medium schools on a bilingual model of delivery. - Working with Menter Iaith to develop opportunities to 		
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		<p>introduce the Welsh language into leisure sessions.</p> <p>Arts and Culture Services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Collaborating with Youth Services on a programme of provision across community and cultural venues to encourage the use of the Welsh language and incorporating the Welsh language into community based events. <p>Musical Services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Engaging with both Welsh and English medium schools to encourage an uptake in musical services, learners who show an aptitude for any instruments are being encouraged and supported into taking part in the Eisteddfod. <p>The Council will continue to ensure a clear alignment with the Five Year Welsh Language Promotion Strategy. This commitment to promoting the Welsh language, increasing the number of Welsh learners and improving the Welsh language</p>		
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		skills of staff and pupils across schools in Rhondda Cynon Taf is reaffirmed in the Education & Inclusion Directorate's Education Strategic Plan for 2022 – 2025.		
<u>Stage 2 – Impact Assessment</u>				
Will the proposed action affect any or all of the following?				
	Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts?	Describe why it will have a positive/negative or neutral impact on the Welsh language.	What evidence do you have to support this view?	What action(s) can you take to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
<p>Compliance with the <u>Council's Statutory Welsh Language Standards</u> e.g increasing or reducing the Council's ability to deliver services through the Medium of Welsh.</p> <p>Consider the rights of Welsh speakers to use Welsh when dealing with the Council and for staff to use Welsh at Work</p>	Positive	<p>All processes associated with this proposal will be in accordance with the Council's Statutory Welsh Language Standards.</p> <p>The proposal to open 2 LSCs in the new Welsh medium school will create Welsh medium ALN job positions for 2 teaching staff and 2 non-teaching staff, increasing the Council's ability to deliver services through the medium of Welsh and</p>	<p>Contractual arrangements will ensure that all consultations are undertaken bilingually and all public correspondence in relation to these proposals will be sent out bilingually with Welsh positioned first.</p> <p>The new job positions generated as a result of the LSCs being established will help with increasing the workforce available to support learners with ALN, which is a key target of our</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instil contractor awareness of the Council's Statutory Welsh Language Standards and ensure compliance with these standards. • Work with the new Welsh medium school to ensure new members of staff have received sufficient training to

		contributing towards expanding the Welsh medium ALN workforce available in the County Borough.	<p>WESP, mainly outcome 7 which focuses on increasing the workforce available to teach Welsh as a subject and subjects through the medium of Welsh.</p> <p>The duties imposed upon us under the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal Wales (ALNET) Act 2018 requires all local authorities to ensure there is sufficient provision available through the medium of Welsh for learners with ALN.</p>	deliver the level of support required through the medium of Welsh.
Treating the Welsh language, no less favourably than the English language	Positive	The opening of these LSCs at the new Welsh medium school in Rhydyfelin will have a positive impact on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than English as at present there are 45 English medium LSCs in the County Borough, whereas there are no Welsh medium primary phase LSCs and this will be the first of its kind here in Rhondda Cynon Taf. Providing opportunities for learners who would previously not be able to access these opportunities will only positively impact on the Welsh language.	The Sustainable Communities for Learning Band B Programme contains a wide range of schools, both Welsh and English medium, in various parts of the County Borough. This will be the first Welsh medium primary phase LSC provision in the County Borough. If deemed successful, the Council's Access and Inclusion team will explore options to develop more opportunities for learners with ALN to access Welsh medium opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that parents, carers and the wider community are signposted to the Welsh for Adults classes. Marketing and promotion of the classes will be implemented via the Council's website and corporate social media platforms.

The new Welsh medium school is being constructed as part of the Council's Sustainable Communities for Learning programme which is jointly funded by the Council and Welsh Government. The purpose of this programme is to ensure there are good schools so all children and young people, whatever their learning need is, have equitable access to good Welsh and English medium education. This proposal will help us in achieving this purpose.

The new school will incorporate facilities for community use to offer opportunities through the medium of Welsh and staff will be encouraged and supported to undertake any additional learning to improve their Welsh language skills.

Stage 3 - Strengthening the proposal

Having listed actions in section 2 which may mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts – please record below which ones you will imbed into the policy proposal and who will be responsible for them.

Also consider is the proposal necessary? Would it be possible to meet demand without any new developments? Could other existing provision be used? Where should the development be?

What are you going to do?	When are you going to do it?	Who is responsible?
Consultation and engagement with stakeholders (as set out in statutory Consultation Document).	The consultation was held between 5 th June and 14 th July 2023. The feedback from the consultation has been collated and summarised, and a report presented to the Council's Cabinet in September 2023.	Access & Inclusion Service
Learners at hosting schools	<p>The Council has acknowledged that the voice of children and young people is about involving them as active participants in the development, delivery, management and improvement of their educational and learner experience.</p> <p>Children and young people have a right to express their views in all matters affecting them and for their views to be heard and given due consideration in accordance with their age and maturity. As such, the Council's Access & Inclusion Service will ensure that suitable arrangements are made to involve learners as active participants throughout this consultation process, and if a decision is made to progress the proposal, throughout the implementation process.</p>	Access & Inclusion Service

Stage 4 – Review

As part of the Welsh Language, Equalities and Socio Economic Duty Impact Assessment Process all proposals that fall within the definition of Significant Key Decision should present at the Officer Review Panel. This panel is made up of officers from across Council Services and acts as a critical friend before your report is finalised and published for SLT/Cabinet approval.

If this proposal is a Key Strategic Decision please forward your impact assessment to CouncilBusiness@rctcbc.gov.uk for an Officer Review Panel to be organised to discuss your proposal. [See our guidance document](#) for more information on what a Significant Key Decision is.

For all policy proposals, whether it is a Significant Key Decision or not you are required to forward this assessment to Welsh Language services in the first instance for some initial guidance and feedback.

It is important to keep a record of this process so that we can demonstrate how we have considered and built in sustainable Welsh language considerations wherever possible. Please ensure you update the relevant sections below

Welsh Language Services Comments	Date Considered	Brief description of any amendments made following Welsh Language Services feedback
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Welsh Language pupils with significant ALN that meet the criteria for English provision are supported, but there needs to be clarity on why English medium criteria is used for Welsh Language pupils. The wording throughout could be amended to inspire a pro-active approach. For example, it notes that Welsh Language provision may be extended if the need arises but you could put the provision in place, rather than when the need emerges. There is an opportunity to include a comparison between the proposal and the service in place previously i.e. relocation could have an impact on travel time and may impact where they choose to learn. The new service will provide 22 new English placements and 18 new Welsh placements, which in terms of the demographic of the area, is positive but why isn't it seeking complete equality? An opportunity to state that there will be 44 English classes and 3 Welsh classes. 	5 th September 2023	Comments have been noted and revisions made: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The criteria based on the severity and complexity of pupils identified ALN and are language neutral. The ALN Code 2021 stipulates that LAs must develop bilingual ALN provision over time. Section 3.2 of the Code states that one of the principles underpinning the ALN system is A bilingual system where all reasonable steps are taken to deliver ALP in Welsh for children and young people who require support thought the medium of Welsh, with scope for increasing the delivery of ALP in Welsh over time. Numbers and/or percentages of Welsh speakers has been updated. The ALN Code 2021 stipulates that LAs must develop bilingual ALN provision over time. Section 3.2 of the Code states that one of the principles underpinning the ALN system is A bilingual system where all reasonable steps are taken to deliver ALP in Welsh for children and young people who require support thought the medium of Welsh, with scope for increasing the delivery of ALP in Welsh over time.
Officer Review Panel Comments	Date Considered	Brief description of any amendments made following Officer Review Panel considerations
As above.	5 th September 2023	
Consultation Comments	Date Considered	Brief description of any amendments made following consultation

No comments have been received during the LSC consultation process regarding this assessment.

5th June –
14th July

Stage 5 – Monitoring, Evaluating and Reviewing

How and who will you monitor the impact and effectiveness of the proposal?

Officers from the Access & Inclusion Service will monitor the proposal throughout the consultation and implementation period.

The Access & Inclusion Service will undertake a 'Lessons Learnt' review at the end of the implementation phase and this will feed into future projects so that each project improves and benefits from lessons learnt (positive and negative) during previous projects.

Stage 6 – Summary of Impacts for the Proposal


Provide below a summary of the impact assessment. This summary should be included in the Welsh Language Considerations section of the SLT/Cabinet report template. The impact assessment should be published alongside the report.

In summary, the Welsh Language Impact Assessment identifies only positive impacts with no negative or neutral impacts upon the Welsh Language.

- The impact on Welsh medium Primary Phase pupils with significant additional learning needs is extremely positive as they will have the full benefit of being educated in Welsh medium specialist LSC provisions alongside their mainstream peers through an inclusive model, hosted by a mainstream school.
- The proposal seeks to create Welsh medium specialist LSC provision, in line with the requirements of the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (ALNET) Act (2018) to develop a bilingual Additional Learning Needs (ALN) system. It also aims to assist with the delivery of strategic priorities within RCTCBC's WESP
- There is an expectation that pupils in all LSCs will have mainstream inclusion opportunities. The LSCs are integral to the ethos of the host schools and families and pupils are treated equitably alongside mainstream peers. The development of Welsh medium LSCs will ensure the LA has LSCs based in a fully accessible and high quality educational environments that has benefited from significant 21st Century Modernisation and Investment.
- The proposals also have a positive impact for pupils attending English medium provision due to the proposed increase in Early Years

and ASD placements.

Stage 7 – Sign Off

Name of Officer completing the WLIA	Lisa Carter	Service Director Name:	Gaynor Davies
Position	Inclusion Co-ordinator	I recommend that the proposal: (Highlight decision)	Is implemented with no amendments.
			Is implemented taking into account the mitigating actions outlined.
			Is rejected due to disproportionate negative impacts on the Welsh language.
Signature		Service Director Signature	
Date	07.09.23	Date	07.09.23

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