



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

9th APRIL 2019

PLANNING FOR WELSH MEDIUM EDUCATION PLACES

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND INCLUSION IN DISCUSSION WITH THE CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION (COUNCILLOR JOY ROSSER)

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1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to update Members on the demand and supply of Welsh Medium Education places in the County Borough.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Cabinet:

- 2.1 Note the current position in terms of the supply and demand of Welsh Medium primary and secondary schools places across the County Borough;
- 2.2 Notes the action being taken by the Council to increase the supply of Welsh Medium places where the demand is projected to exceed supply;
- 2.3 Approve the proposal to undertake a feasibility study and submit a business case to Welsh Government to either refurbish the existing Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhondda facilities or relocate the School to new 21st century facilities to be built in the Rhondda and to report back to Cabinet at a future date;
- 2.4 Approve the proposal to undertake a feasibility study to identify a suitable site to build a new school for Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Llyn Y Forwyn, and to report back to Cabinet at a future date;
- 2.5 Commits to opening a new Welsh Medium Primary School to serve planned housing developments to the south of Llantwit Fardre/Church Village, if the developments proceed;
- 2.6 Agrees to undertake a feasibility study to explore the opportunities to increase the availability of Welsh Medium primary school places in the Cynon Valley, south of Aberdare, and to report back to Cabinet at a future date.

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 To continue to assess and meet the demand for Welsh Medium education places across the County Borough.

4. THE AVAILABILITY OF WELSH MEDIUM PROVISION IN THE COUNTY BROUGH

4.1 The Council has a statutory responsibility ensure that there is a sufficient supply of suitable school places to meet statutory requirements for early years, primary, secondary and post 16 provision for parents that choose to educate their children through the medium of English or Welsh. To meet this requirement, the Council has responsible for the pupil admissions of English medium schools and Welsh medium schools and funds a number of voluntary aided schools that manage their own admissions.

4.2 The Council is also required to produce a Welsh Education Statutory Plan (“WESP”), which covers the period 2017-2020 and was approved by Cabinet in 2016. The WESP sets out the Council’s vision and objectives to increase the number of Welsh learners; improve the quality of the provision and the educational outcomes; and ensure there is suitably trained and qualified educational workforce. This Plan is reviewed annually.

4.3 Since 2012, the Council has:

- Opened a new 240 place primary provision at Ysgol Llanhari;
- Increased the capacity of YGG Llwynceilyn by 100 places; and
- Increased the capacity of YGG Tonyrefail by 120 places.

4.4 The current position in terms of the supply and demand for Welsh medium primary schools is as follows:

<u>School</u>	<u>Capacity (R-Y6)</u>	<u>Pupils (R-Y6)</u>	<u>Occupancy</u>	<u>Capacity Nursery</u>	<u>Nursery Pupils</u>
YGG Abercynon	352	273	77.56%	50	40
YGG Aberdar	372	361	97.12%	53	45
YGG Bodringallt	172	94	54.81%	24	26
YGG Bronllwyn	236	204	86.44%	33	32
YGG Castellau	263	224	85.17%	37	37
YGG Evan James	346	264	76.30%	49	38
YGG Garth Olwg	324	302	93.21%	46	49
YGG Llantrisant	338	270	79.88%	48	42
YGG Llwynceilyn	336	267	79.46%	47	39
YGG Llyn y Forwyn	197	160	81.05%	28	38
Ysgol Llanhari	194	159	81.96%	27	31

<u>School</u>	<u>Capacity (R-Y6)</u>	<u>Pupils (R-Y6)</u>	<u>Occupancy</u>	<u>Capacity Nursery</u>	<u>Nursery Pupils</u>
YGG Pont Sion Norton	267	256	95.88%	38	43
YGG Tonyrefail	330	169	51.12%	35	30
YGG Ynyswen	300	234	78.00%	42	48
Dolau Primary (including Welsh Unit)	441	424	96.15%	63	74
Heol-Y-Celyn Primary	388	315	81.19%	55	44
Penderyn Primary	231	208	90.04%	32	26
Total	5,087	4,184	82.23%	707	682

4.2 The majority of the Welsh medium primary schools have sufficient surplus places to meet the demand for places. However, there are a number of schools where demand is close to outstripping the supply. Members will be aware that the Council has or is currently taking action to address these issues, for example:

- The Council has committed to invest £3.3m at YGG Aberdar to provide a further 60 places;
- The Council has brought together the primary and secondary schools at Garth Olwg to become a 3-19 school, to enable the primary provision to expand into the surplus space available in the secondary school;
- The Council is currently consulting on building a new Welsh medium school for the pupils of Pontsionnorton and Heol Y Celyn to provide an additional 90 spaces;
- Dolau Primary School – the Council recently consulted on expanding the Welsh and English medium provision available in the area, as a result of planned housing development in the area. This new provision will provide a further 540 primary places;
- Penderyn – the Council is in the process of consulting on increasing the number of Welsh medium places available at this dual language School by making it a Welsh medium school only.

4.3 Furthermore, the Council has also committed to increasing the quality and availability of early years Welsh medium provision by spending £3.5m on:

- The creation of a new childcare facility at YGG Aberdar;
- The relocation of an existing childcare facility at Ysgol Llanhari from a former house to a new location on the school site;
- Significantly improving the facilities for an existing childcare facility at YGG Evan James;

- Relocating an existing childcare facility at YGG Ynyswen to a new location on school site;
- Relocation of an existing childcare facility to YGG Abercynon;
- Replacement of mobile single classroom with a permanent two classroom extension at YGGG Llantrisant.

4.4 The current position in terms of the supply and demand for Welsh medium secondary schools is as follows:

	Capacity	No of Pupils	Surplus Places	% Surplus Places
YG Garth Olwg	1,110	810	300	27.0
YG Llanhari	914	472	442	48.4
YG Rhydywaun	1,038	971	67	6.5
YG Cwm Rhondda	1,023	732	291	28.4
Total	4,085	2,985	1,110	26.9

- 4.5 Similar to the primary schools, other than YG Rhydywaun, there are sufficient surplus places to meet the future demand for school places. Members will recall that before Christmas 2018, Cabinet approved a £10.2m investment to improve the facilities and increase the capacity of YG Rhydywaun by a further 162 places, creating a 1,200 capacity school.
- 4.6 The two tables, the investments already approved and the potential investments planned, subject to the outcome of statutory consultations, evidence that the Council has the capacity to meet increases in the demand for Welsh medium education for the foreseeable future.

5 FUTURE PLANS TO DEVELOP AND ENHANCE WELSH MEDIUM PROVISION

- 5.1 The Council has a comprehensive planned maintenance programme and continues to invest in maintaining the fabric of all schools. However, we have a number of Welsh medium schools where the site limits further development and where the outdoor and recreational facilities are limited.
- 5.2 To improve these schools, and bring them up to a 21st Century Schools standard alternative sites have to be considered. Two such schools, which both previously housed English medium schools, are Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhondda and Gynradd Gymraeg Llyn Y Forwyn. The site suitability and the current buildings need to be replaced in the near future.

- 5.3 The Council has applied for Mutual Investment Model (“MIM”) 21st Century funding which is targeted at new build schools on vacated land sites. In order to be well-placed to secure such funding, it is recommended that the Council undertakes feasibility studies to identify a range of options to either refurbish the two existing schools using other capital funding or considers the relocation of the schools to new 21st century facilities to be built on alternative sites but in their current respective Rhondda Valley. In doing so a further report will be presented to a future Cabinet meeting.
- 5.4 The Council has received a number of significant housing development planning applications over the past year adjacent to the Church Village By-pass, south of Church Village/Llantwit Fardre, and further applications are planned. Inevitably, the Council will have to increase the number of school places in the area and a new school will probably be required. It is proposed that any new such school is a Welsh Medium school, in order to meet the potential primary place supply issues that could arise at Ysgol Garth Olwg. Initially this new school could be a one form entry primary school.
- 5.5 Currently, across the County Borough, the number of Welsh medium schools varies significantly from 9 in the former Taf Ely area, to 5 in the Rhondda and only 3 in the Cynon Valley, with one in Abercynon and two north of Aberdare town centre. With the new housing development in Mountain Ash, and further developments planned on the former Phurnacite site, it is proposed that we undertake a feasibility study to explore the opportunities to increase the availability of Welsh Medium primary school places in the Cynon Valley, south of Aberdare, and to report back to Cabinet at a future date.

6 CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The Council has an excellent track record of planning for school places, ensuring that there are sufficient school places to meet local need and parental choice for English and Welsh medium provision. This report seeks to put in place further plans to ensure there is sufficient capacity to grow the existing Welsh medium provision and to improve the quality of the educational experience by providing 21st Century School learning environments.

7 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 An Equality Impact Assessment screening form has been prepared for the purpose of this report. It has been found that a full report is not required at this time.

8 CONSULTATION

- 8.1 There are no formal consultation requirements arising from these proposals at present. However, if Cabinet decides to proceed with options to relocate new schools, or significantly increase the capacity of schools, the Council will have to meet the requirements of the School Organisational Code and undertake statutory consultations.

9 FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

- 9.1 There are no financial implications aligned to this report. The costs of undertaking the feasibility studies will be met from within existing 21st Century School budgets.

10 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 There are no legal implications aligned to this report.

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

- 11.1 The proposals in this report are consistent with the Council's priorities set out in its Corporate Plan and in particular "Rhondda Cynon Taf's children and young people will receive a great start in life." In respect of the seven Well-being goals, this report is consistent with: A prosperous Wales; A more equal Wales; A Wales of cohesive communities; and A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language.

Other Information:-

Relevant Scrutiny Committee:

Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee

Background Papers:

None

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LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

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Background Papers:

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