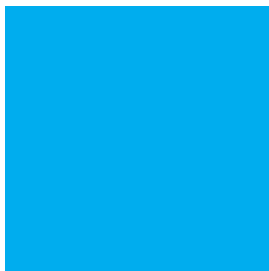


21ST CENTURY SCHOOLS



CONSULTATION ON A PROPOSAL TO AMALGAMATE CEFN AND
CRAIG-YR-HESG PRIMARY SCHOOLS TO CREATE A NEW
COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL ON A NEW SITE

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CONSULTATION REPORT

Proposal: to amalgamate Cefn Primary and Craig yr Hesg Primary Schools. The amalgamation will be achieved by closing the two existing primary schools and opening a new, bigger community primary school to replace them.

1. Purpose of the Consultation Report

This report is prepared in accordance with the Welsh Government's School Organisation Code, statutory document 011/2018. Its purpose is to inform the outcome of the consultation held during the period 10th January 2022 and 21st February 2022 between all stakeholders and interested parties listed below.

2. Who did we consult with?

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.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The federated Governing Body of Cefn Primary School and Craig yr Hesg Primary School.• Parents/carers, prospective parents/carers where possible, and staff members of Cefn Primary School and Craig yr Hesg Primary School.• Pupils of Cefn Primary School and Craig yr Hesg Primary School.• Other governing bodies of neighbouring primary schools.• 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. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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. |
|--|--|

The Proposal

It is being proposed that Cefn and Craig yr Hesg Primary Schools are amalgamated. The amalgamation will be achieved by closing the two existing schools and opening a new community primary school to replace them. The new school will be built on Craig yr Hesg Primary School site and the land adjacent to it (the former site of the Ty Gwyn Pupil Referral Unit).

The new school will cater for children aged between 3 and 11 years of age who require English medium education. It will have a proposed admissions number of 51 pupils per year group, and an overall capacity of 360 (plus nursery).

Details of the proposal and the rationale behind it are fully outlined in the consultation document and Impact Assessments that were circulated to all the stakeholders. The link to these documents is below:

<https://www.rctcbc.gov.uk/EN/GetInvolved/Consultations/CurrentConsultations/PropoaltoamalgamateCefnPrimaryandCraigyrHesgPrimarySchools.aspx>

3. The Consultation Process

All stakeholders identified in Section 2 overleaf were sent a link to electronic copies of our consultation documentation, and those that requested paper copies received them. The following meetings were also convened:

| School(s) Affected | Group | Time/Date | Venue |
|--|------------------------------------|---|------------------------|
| Cefn Primary and Craig yr Hesg Primary Schools | Federated Governing Body and Staff | 4:30pm, Tuesday 18 th January | Microsoft Teams |
| Cefn Primary School | School Council | 11:00am, Wednesday 19 th January | Microsoft Teams / Zoom |
| Craig yr Hesg Primary School | School Council | 10:00am, Wednesday 19 th January | Microsoft Teams / Zoom |

Meetings were held virtually due to Covid-19 restrictions. Notes of the above meetings were taken and are attached as Appendix 2. These notes record questions raised, comments and statements made during the meeting, with the responses provided where appropriate. Helpfully the staff and Governing Body providing questions in advance of the meeting, these and the relevant responses are also recorded.

To ensure the pupils of both schools understood the information within the proposal, a young person's version of the consultation document was created, and hard copies were provided to the school to distribute to each pupil. Additionally, to further support and encourage pupil engagement, a video of the young person's consultation

document was created and played during the consultation meetings. This was also subsequently sent to the school to enable it to be shared with the rest of the pupils.

To view the video, click here:

Welsh - <https://youtu.be/MstBhEWS6TU>

English - <https://youtu.be/DefGDj5jEd>

4. Summary of Consultation Responses

Responses to the matters raised at the consultation meetings outlined above are, as indicated, summarised in the notes of the meetings attached as Appendix 2. In addition, 34 written responses were received during the consultation period, 32 via the online survey which was available for the duration of the consultation phase, plus 2 responses via email. Out of the 34 written responses 25 were in favour of the proposals, 6 were against the proposals, 2 were unsure and one did not provide a response to this question.

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.

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.

Summary of responses and issues raised in response to the question 'Do you agree with the proposal?'

| Comments/Issues | Clarification if required |
|---|---------------------------|
| It would be better for children and staff to combine. Children would have the best of both, schools and staff could be working from one site alone. | |

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>The decision to build the new school right next to a very busy road will have a negative impact on the children's health. The Cefn primary location with its opportunity of Forrest school sessions, big outdoor space would be much more in line what has been tried so hard to establish over the years.</p> | <p>The new school will be built on the existing Craig yr Hesg school site and the land adjacent to it, so there is already a school at this location.</p> <p>As referenced in the consultation document there are a number of site constraints on the Cefn Primary school, including location and topography, precluding it from accommodating a new larger school. The preferred site will house the new, larger and fully accessible school delivering all of the requirements in compliance with Building Bulletin 99 and the Equality Act 2010.</p> |
| <p>The proposal makes sense it will bring the community together.</p> | |
| <p>Both schools are old and are no longer fit for purpose. Glyncoch seems to be the forgotten area of RCT - how lovely to have a brand new school for our children.</p> | |
| <p>People Park everywhere down there now on pick up drop offs it will be absolutely crazy to have even more there! It's dangerous enough now without merging the schools.</p> | <p>The specific detail of the transport and traffic management of the site will be developed subject to approval and as the proposal is progressed.</p> <p>A Traffic Impact Assessment will be carried out as a part of the design process and the Highway Authority must be satisfied with the detail and recommendations that will be included within this document. All recommendations included within the report will be incorporated into the design of the new school site.</p> |
| <p>NASUWT Cymru expects that RCT as the employer will ensure that the jobs and livelihoods of existing teachers who wish to be employed in the new school are protected and teachers are safeguarded from detriment during the restructuring process. NASUWT will challenge "Fire and Rehire" practices which reduce morale and productivity. The consultation document identifies risks for staff in terms of employment (p.17), but it is encouraging to note on page 27 that there is reference to "slotting in". NASUWT Cymru expects teachers to be slotted into suitable roles within the school and given the forecast of increased pupil numbers and a commitment to teaching pupils in age related groups this should be a priority. We agree with the suggestion that there will be excellent opportunities for staff interaction, coordination and the sharing of expertise. Existing teachers have the skills, a proven loyalty and commitment to improve standards and build the 21st Century school ethos.</p> | <p>The Council has well established management of change processes and has demonstrated its commitment to minimising any adverse impact on the workforce across many 21st century school developments.</p> |

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>I know this has got to happen but the children from the top Cefn primary school will get soaked in the wet weather.</p> | <p>This is the case for the majority of pupils that live within the County Borough. Walking to school is encouraged as this contributes to the delivery of the Active Travel Act and the health and well-being agenda. However, it is acknowledged that during the winter months appropriate wet weather clothing will be required.</p> |
| <p>Over the last decade community groups along with both school leaders and staff have all been playing their part in the reinvigoration of a much-maligned village. To bring the village together, not the `top` or the `bottom` but Glyncoch and to instil a passion within the next generation for learning and achievement, to make the children believe in themselves and be proud of where they come from.</p> | |
| <p>The plans for the layout of the building don't take into account the needs of pupils. The " Heart" is a wonderful design concept on paper, very pretty indeed, but like many flights of architectural fancy have very little basis in practicality. There will be areas for pupils with special needs, but many of the pupils in the schools, whilst falling short of the actual criteria for SEN, have complex often indefinable needs that require "timeout" in rooms that are quiet and sensory pleasing. The staff in the schools need to have a major input into the building layout plans. This requires the views of people who actually teach children.</p> | <p>The specific detail of the design of the new school will be developed subject to approval and as the proposal is progressed. Building Bulletin 99 is the industry standard and is used by the Welsh Government as the guide for determining the areas, spaces and functions required when designing a school.</p> <p>The design process will be undertaken in collaboration with the school staff and governing body and specialist colleagues working within Access and Inclusion.</p> |
| <p>I welcome the proposal to build a brand new school for Glyncoch using Welsh Government Sustainable Communities for Learning funding.</p> | |
| <p>Would like to see flying start joining the school, it would provide the natural progression to primary education.</p> | <p>Flying Start will remain in its current location, however links with the school are key and can be further forged with the Headteacher and Flying Start management in relation to the new school.</p> |

The View of Estyn (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education and Training in Wales) of the Overall Merits of the Proposal.

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 3. 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. **It is Estyn's opinion that the proposals will maintain or improve the standard of education**

provision in the area by providing improved facilities for teaching and learning and helping the current federation's leadership to operate more effectively and efficiently.

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

| Estyn's Report | Clarification |
|--|---|
| <p>The local authority has provided a detailed description of the proposal, including the timetable for statutory procedures and for implementing the proposal. However, it is not clear enough within the proposal exactly where the new school will be built.</p> | <p>Within the consultation document it states, '<i>The new school building will be built on the existing Craig yr Hesg Primary School site and the land adjacent to it (the former site of the Ty Gwyn Pupil Referral Unit)</i>'. To clarify, it is proposed that the new school building, external areas, and car park will cover both the existing school site and the vacant land next door.</p> |
| <p>The proposal sets out the expected benefits and disadvantages in a clear and fair way compared with the status quo. However, the only risk identified is that of parents choosing to send their children to an alternative school. There appear to be other risks which are not considered in the risk management section of the proposals. For example, the increase in traffic at the new school site is one such risk and the proposer states that a 'drop-off area' to help reduce this risk is only 'under consideration' and requires 'further surveys and transport and traffic assessments.' If the drop-off area isn't included in the final plans, there is likely to be a negative impact on traffic around the new school site at certain times of the day.</p> | <p>The specific detail of the transport and traffic management of the site will be developed subject to approval and as the proposal is progressed.</p> <p>The proposals will be subject to continued scrutiny and can only proceed if approval from all statutory consultees, including the Planning Authority, is secured. A Traffic Impact Assessment will be carried out as a part of this process and the Highway Authority has to be satisfied with the detail and recommendations included within this document.</p> |
| <p>An additional risk could be the potential impact on Craig yr Hesg Primary School during the build phase, which is not discussed in the proposal.</p> <p>If the school is sited near Craig yr Hesg there could be considerable disruption to the operation of the school. The proposal does not give sufficient</p> | <p>The specific detail of the construction management plan has not yet been developed. However, it is anticipated that the new school building will be built upon the unoccupied site so that the disruption to Craig yr Hesg Primary will be minimal during the construction period.</p> |

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>consideration to the potential disruption to Craig yr Hesg Primary School during the construction phase and how this will be minimised.</p> | <p>The construction will be phased in such a way that the new school building will be constructed first, then occupied while the existing school building is demolished, allowing the external areas to be developed. RCT have successfully implemented this phased construction methodology on a number of new school builds.</p> |
| <p>The reasons for building such surplus capacity into the new school are not made clear in the proposals.</p> | <p>There are currently a number of pupils within Glyncoch attending out of catchment schools. Experience of delivering new schools had taught us that these developments have a 'magnet effect' encouraging a number of children to return to their in-catchment school.</p> <p>Also, additional space within the school provides the flexibility for community use allowing the school to become fully integrated within the locality. There are 2 Learning Support Classes within the school, and any surplus capacity will enhance the flexibility, space and resources to meet the needs of pupils with ALN within this mainstream setting.</p> |

5. Assessment of Consultation

In view of the responses and comments received during the consultation period, a further assessment of the proposal, which is included within the consultation document, has been undertaken. 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 no amendments to the proposal have been made.

6. Conclusion

No information that has been presented during the consultation period is deemed to necessitate a change to the consultation document, and so the information remains unchanged. As such it is considered that this proposal should be wholly implemented with no amendments.

The recommendation of this report is that a statutory notice be published, as consulted upon with no modifications, in order to progress this proposal.