

Vale of Glamorgan Council

Consultation Report

Proposal to increase Welsh medium secondary school places in the Vale of Glamorgan

1. Background Information

1.1. Outline of the consultation

This report presents the feedback received during the consultation period from 20 June 2016 to 1 August 2016 in response to the Council's proposal to increase Welsh medium secondary school places in the Vale of Glamorgan by;

- Expanding Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Morgannwg on its current site from 1361 places to 1660 places

The consultation process followed Welsh Government guidelines, in compliance with the Schools Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013. The consultation process gave local people the opportunity to learn about the proposal and for the Council to hear the views of all those with an interest so that they can be taken into account before any decisions are made.

Formal consultation was conducted through a consultation document; supplementary information and accompanying response form distributed to prescribed consultees and published on the Vale of Glamorgan website on 20 June 2016.

The publication of a consultation document is central to the consultation process for school reorganisation and is prescribed by Welsh Government in the School Organisation Code 2013. The consultation document outlined the changes being considered, the rationale for these and the details of the consultation exercise. The consultation document also incorporated an individual response form. Consultees were advised of the availability of an online version to complete.

2. Consultation

2.1. Publication of the consultation

The bilingual consultation document was published on 20 June 2016 and distributed online, through social media, and on the Vale of Glamorgan Council's website. All Welsh medium schools in the Vale of Glamorgan, including Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Morgannwg were also provided with the documentation to publish on their websites.

The Council distributed just under 700 hard copies of the consultation report to parents and carers of all Welsh medium schools in the Vale of Glamorgan who did not have communications sent to them via email. Other prescribed consultees were provided with an electronic version of the document and a link to the Vale of Glamorgan website.

2.2. Stakeholder engagement

Consultation on the proposal was undertaken with prescribed consultees as contained within the School Organisation Code 2013.

The Council consulted with the following groups:

Staff (teaching and non-teaching) at Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Morgannwg	Governing Body and Parents / Carers of children attending Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Morgannwg
Governing Body and Parents/Carers of children attending the feeder primary schools of Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Morgannwg	Children attending the feeder schools of Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Morgannwg
Pupils attending Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Morgannwg	Vale of Glamorgan Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP)
Vale of Glamorgan Children and Young People's Programme Board	Community/Town Councils
Communities First Partnership	Assembly Members (AM's)/ Members of Parliament (MP's) / Regional Assembly Members
Local Councillors	Rhieni dros Addysg Gymraeg (RHAG)
Welsh Language Commissioner	Trade Unions
Neighbouring Primary and Secondary schools in the Vale of Glamorgan	Directors of Education – All Neighbouring Authorities
Central South Consortium Joint Education Service	Further and Higher Education Institutions
Estyn	Welsh Government Ministers
Local Police and Crime Commissioner	Diocesan Directors of Education
Council's Transportation Department	Vale of Glamorgan Youth Forum and Youth Cabinet

Consultees were invited to complete a formal consultation response form which could be completed in hard copy or on line via the Council's website at www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/welshmediumexpansion

2.3. Consultation meetings and drop in session

Meetings were held with the staff and governors at Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Morgannwg, which were attended by Council officers. The main points of the consultation document were highlighted as well as an explanation of the statutory process.

Two drop in sessions were held for all stakeholders at Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Morgannwg.

2.4. Consultation with children and young people

A consultation session was undertaken with the School Council of Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Morgannwg at the school to engage the pupils in the consultation process. A report on the outcome of this session can be found at Annex A. Two further workshops were undertaken with representatives of the Welsh medium primary schools, including:

Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Morgannwg
Ysgol Dewi Sant
Ysgol Sant Baruc

Ysgol Pen Y Garth
Ysgol Iolo Morgannwg
Ysgol Sant Curig

Ysgol Gwaun y Nant were invited to attend a workshop, but were unable to send representative children.

Consultation Summary

2.5. Consultation Questions

Consultees were asked for their opinion on a key question:

1. Do you support the proposal to increase provision for Welsh medium secondary education in the Vale of Glamorgan to meet the increased demand for places?

Consultees were also offered the opportunity to comment further:

2. If you would like to suggest any changes or alternatives to the proposals, please detail these below.
3. Any other comments?

2.6. Results of the feedback from all stakeholders

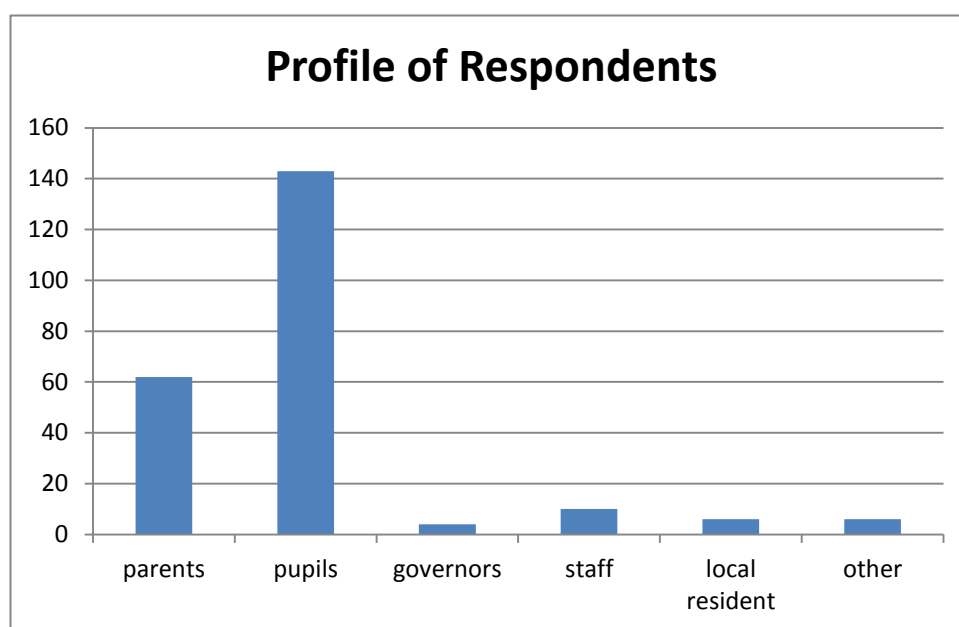
The authority received 232 individual responses by the consultation closing date. Of the 232 individual responses 213 were in favour of the proposal, 12 were opposed and, 7 provided no opinion either way. The governing body of Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Morgannwg formally responded to the consultation.

The Learning and Culture Scrutiny Committee met on the 18 July 2016 (Scrutiny minute no 169 refers) to consider the proposal. It was recommended that Cabinet be informed that the Committee supports the proposals to increase Welsh Medium secondary school places by expanding Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Morgannwg on its current site.

It has been noted that not all consultees have provided a response to each of the questions and that some forms were not fully completed. In these cases we have accepted the responses to the questions that they have chosen to answer.

Feedback from consultation meetings and drop in sessions are not included in this report as it was stated clearly in the consultation document that the Council would only accept responses using the official consultation response form. Parents were advised of this at the drop in sessions.

3.3 Profile of respondents



A summary of key themes and issues raised by statutory consultees and the response to those issues from the Vale of Glamorgan Council can be found at Annex A. A summary of comments received in favour of the proposal can be found at Annex B and other responses to general themes can be found at Annex C.

The consultation undertaken with young people can be found at Annex D.

The response from the governing body of Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Morgannwg can be found at Annex E.

The response from Barry Town Council can be found at Annex F.

In accordance with the requirements of the School Organisation Code 2013, a copy of the consultation document was sent to Estyn. The response from Estyn can be found at Annex G.

Consultation with statutory consultees

1. Feedback themes

The following summarises the key issues/concerns raised during the formal consultation period. The issues present an overview of responses and are not intended to be verbatim. All written responses have been made available to Cabinet members.

Issue 1

Two new mixed sex English medium secondary schools will see demand decrease over time.

Two respondents felt that the demand for Welsh medium education will decrease over time if the forthcoming proposal on the creation of two new English medium mixed sex secondary schools in Barry is implemented. A further respondent queried the motive of parents choosing Welsh education. Parents send their children to Welsh schools because of the lack of mixed sex schooling available in the Barry area.

Council's response to the concerns raised

It is conceivable that demand for Welsh medium education could be impacted by the establishment of two new English medium mixed sex schools. However, the council is confident that the forecast demand for Welsh medium education will be sustained based on current trends.

The pupil place demand for Welsh medium secondary education is forecast to increase significantly from September 2018 as pupils from two new Welsh medium schools established in Llantwit Major and Barry in September 2011 begin to feed into the secondary sector. A further primary school, Ysgol Gwaun Y Nant, increased its capacity from a one form entry school to two forms to meet demand from September 2015, and this will impact the secondary sector from September 2022 onwards.

The Council recognises that there is a degree of uncertainty with forecasting future demand for secondary school places that is largely dependent upon demand for places in the primary sector. The expansion of the school is based on a robust system of pupil projections that takes account of historic trends and current demand for Welsh medium education from the feeder primary schools

Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Morgannwg is forecast to be at full capacity by 2020. Additional places will be required to accommodate the additional children to allow them to continue in Welsh medium education. The authority has a statutory duty to meet this demand.

The Council will continue to monitor demand for Welsh medium as it does for all types of school provision. Based on current data trends the Council is confident that the expansion of the school is of the right size to meet future demand for Welsh medium secondary education.

Issue 2

Welsh medium schools are better funded and have better staff/student ratios

Two respondents were of the view that Welsh medium schools receive better funding and have better staff to student ratios. All schools should be funded, developed, staffed and maintained equally. Welsh medium schools have the lowest class sizes already with as low as 8/9 pupils per class and this is driving parents to seek Welsh medium education.

Council's response to the concerns raised

All schools are funded in the same way through the school funding formula that is dependent upon pupil numbers with the majority of funding allocated on this basis. The number of staff that a school employs will be determined by the budget allocation which is a matter for the governing body to decide upon.

There are no classes with as few as 8 or 9 pupils attending Welsh medium schools in the Vale of Glamorgan. Class sizes in both English and Welsh medium schools, excluding nursery and special schools, are very similar. The average English and Welsh medium primary school class has 26 pupils whereas at secondary level it is 20 and 21 respectively. Councils have a duty to maintain primary class sizes at 30 or below which is being managed effectively in the Vale of Glamorgan.

Issue 3

Demand for Welsh medium secondary education should be catered for elsewhere

Three respondents felt that demand for Welsh medium secondary education should be catered for elsewhere in the Vale. Children would have less distance to travel and it would reduce school transport costs. For some, it takes an hour to get to school in the morning and an hour to get home.

Council's response to the concerns raised

The Council is confident in its predictions for Welsh medium education in future and that capacity will need to be increased from September 2020 onwards to meet the forecasted demand.

The pupil numbers in the secondary sector are largely dependent upon demand for places in the primary sector. The expansion and location of the school is

based on current demand for Welsh medium education from the feeder primary schools.

The council does not consider it feasible to establish another school in a different location. The majority of pupils, (over 79%) are located in the vicinity of Barry and the Penarth area. There is currently not enough demand to consider providing a further Welsh medium school in the Vale of Glamorgan. The Council acknowledges travel times for certain pupils can be lengthy depending on where they live. This is comparable to many other councils in Wales.

Issue 4

Construction Work

Respondents had concerns over how construction work will impact on children especially for those doing their GCSEs.

Council's response to the concerns raised

Careful planning will take place in consultation with the school to minimise any risk of distraction or disruption to the day to day running of the school by building work, especially during key exam periods.

The Council has an excellent track record and vast experience in delivering large scale construction projects for schools. The redevelopment of Cowbridge Comprehensive School, the construction of the Penarth Learning Community and the current construction of the Llantwit Learning Community have all been managed with minimal disruption for pupils. The attainment of pupils attending Cowbridge and St Cyres Comprehensive Schools increased both during and following the construction work. The Council will apply the same principles to the expansion of Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Morgannwg that will result in with minimal disruption for pupils.

The construction process provides a unique learning environment and the council has successfully delivered a number of award winning initiatives, such as construction ambassadors. This helps to ensure that teachers and pupils are aware of opportunities that the construction works can give and that through working with the contractors these opportunities are fulfilled.

Issue 5

Continue with first proposal

A single respondent felt that the Council should continue with the first proposal in 2015 for transforming secondary education in Barry and move Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Morgannwg to the Bryn Hafren Comprehensive School site.

Council's response to the concerns raised

The majority of responses to the initial proposal in 2015 were not in support of moving Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Morgannwg to the site of Bryn Hafren Comprehensive School.

Cabinet carefully considered all the responses to the consultation at the time and decided not to progress further with the original proposal and to establish an advisory board to review options.

The advisory board, having considered feedback from a comprehensive engagement programme carried out with the public, pupils, staff, unions and governors of Barry Comprehensive School, Bryn Hafren Comprehensive School and Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Morgannwg considered options for the future of secondary education in Barry and agreed that the preferred option for Welsh medium expansion was to expand Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Morgannwg on its current site.

The current proposal will address the need to expand Welsh medium secondary provision in the Vale of Glamorgan to meet future demand while enhancing learning environments and shared community facilities.

Issue 6

Future increases in capacity

A respondent in favour of the proposal felt it better to over compensate space within the building plans to enable a longer term approach to be taken to increasing the capacity of the school. It was felt that that in the future the extra 299 places would soon be used as the school continues to grow. The original plans should take further future increases in demand into consideration.

Council's response to the concerns raised

As mentioned in the Council's response to issue 1, there is a degree of uncertainty with future demand that is largely dependent upon demand for places in the primary sector. The expansion of the school is based on a robust system of pupil projections and current demand for Welsh medium education from the feeder primary schools.

The Council's projections take account of historic trends and numbers on roll/pre-school population data to identify future trends. The Council also undertakes a regular assessment/survey of preschool parents to identify future demand for Welsh medium education in the Vale of Glamorgan.

If all the Welsh medium primary schools were full to capacity each year and all primary school pupils transfer to Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Morgannwg, 1,800 places would be required. However, this is not the case. The expansion of the school is based on current projections and the demand for Welsh medium education from the feeder primary schools that are not full and are projected to remain this way

in future. On average over the past 5 years, 96.2% of pupils in year 6 of Welsh medium primary schools transfer onto to secondary education at Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Morgannwg. Expanding the school to around 1800 places would result in too much surplus capacity being built into the school which would not represent effective use of resources. Pupil projections indicate that 1,366 Welsh medium secondary places are required by 2026.

The council is confident in its predictions for the increase in pupil numbers and that the school being built of the right size to meet future demand for Welsh medium secondary education.

This section provides comments raised during the formal consultation period for those in favour of the proposal. The issues present an overview of responses and are not intended to be verbatim. All written responses have been made available to Cabinet members.

The expanded school will support the increased demand for Welsh medium secondary education in the Vale of Glamorgan.

- It's important to meet demand so that every family who have chosen Welsh medium education can have an appropriate school place for their children
- It is of vital importance to increase the provision for Welsh medium education in order to ensure that every pupil who wants to be educated through the medium of Welsh gets that opportunity.
- There is a significant increase in the number of pupils wanting Welsh medium education
- It is self-evident that demand is growing and therefore the supply needs to be increased

Choice for pupils to be taught through the medium of Welsh.

- Parents must be given choice in which language they wish their children to be educated in. Therefore, these choices must be accommodated.
- It is essential to ensure a future for the Welsh language in Wales, especially in the Vale. The most sensible way to do this is to expand Welsh medium education for youngsters.
- Because the language should be carried on there needs to be more school places for pupils who want to speak Welsh.
- It is a great opportunity for more children to speak Welsh and to keep the language alive. It is not fair to restrict people from this because there are insufficient school places for them.

Opportunities for improved facilities,

- This will provide an opportunity to expand the dining area which is currently too small.
- There is a need for a school that is fit for the 21st century and can offer the best for its pupils in terms of IT, sports and specialist classrooms in

order to continue with the success of pupils leaving school.....and being prepared to contribute to Welsh society and our economy.

- There is a need for better support for children with Additional Learning Needs in Welsh education in the Vale of Glamorgan.
- Need expansion and more facilities for children. The school needs to be expanded and more facilities should be provided as part of this work.

This section provides comments to common issues arising from the consultation exercise on the proposal.

Will there be any changes to the admission arrangements for the school?

The Vale of Glamorgan Council is the admission authority for the school. Admission arrangements would remain unchanged as a result of the proposal.

Will there be any changes to the school catchment areas?

Catchment areas for both primary and secondary age groups will not change.

Will the school continue to operate over the existing site?

The school will continue to operate over the existing site. In 2018, the admission number for secondary places will increase from 169 to 240. There is current capacity within the school to accommodate the increase in pupil numbers up to 2020, at which time the increase in numbers will require additional accommodation to be provided.

When will the work be undertaken?

If the proposal is agreed by Cabinet, it is anticipated that work will commence at the beginning of 2019. At this stage we have not yet received the backing of Welsh Government as the funding programme will not begin until 2019. We are, however, committed to the expansion of secondary age provision for Welsh medium education. The Council has an excellent track record in gaining the approval of Welsh Government for its business cases for 21st Century Schools grant funding. This success together with the effective implementation of our school investment schemes under Band A of the 21st Century Schools programme, places us in a strong position to secure grant funding under Band B. If grant funding is not approved by Welsh Government, the Council will review its programme, giving priority to expanding the capacity of the school to meet anticipated demand.

Will construction work be undertaken during term time?

The construction process provides a unique learning environment and the council has successfully delivered a number of award winning initiatives, such as construction ambassadors. This helps to ensure that teachers and pupils are aware of opportunities that the construction works can give and that through working with the contractors these opportunities are fulfilled.

Will transport continue to be provided for eligible pupils?

Pupils receiving a free school transport service will continue to do so. Eligibility under the criteria outlined in the School Transport Policy can be viewed via the following link:

http://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/working/education_and_skills/schools/school_transport/school_transport.aspx

Consultation with young people

CONSULTATION WITH PUPIL REPRESENTATIVES FROM YSGOL BRO MORGANNWG FEEDER SCHOOLS ON BEHALF OF VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL

CONSULTATION

Consultation sessions were undertaken with children from;

- Ysgol Iolo Morganwg and Ysgol Dewi Sant (13 July 2016), a cross section of pupils from years 4 and 6;
- Ysgol Sant Curig, Ysgol Sant Baruc, Ysgol Pen y Garth, Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Morgannwg (15 July 2016), a cross section of pupils from years 3, 4, 5 and 6.

BACKGROUND AND AIM

- The Vale of Glamorgan Council wanted to give the primary pupils from the feeder schools a voice in this consultation on the expansion of Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Morgannwg
- A group of pupils from each school were given the opportunity to participate in this consultation workshop

METHODOLOGY

- An interactive workshop to give pupils an opportunity to discuss and share ideas amongst each other.
- The meaning of 'consultation' was discussed along with why a discussion with pupils was important.
- The rudiments of a good discussion/consultation were shared and agreed
- The consultation document was explained to them. There was reference to the main elements within the document including background, recommendations and timetable.
- Pupils were divided into sub-groups to create mind maps/lists of their own ideas for and against the proposed plans.
- Sub-groups were then brought together to report back and have further discussion following the ground-rules set at the beginning of the session.

PUPILS' RESPONSES

What makes a good discussion?

- That there is good subject matter
- A readiness to listen to other people's ideas
- Everyone to contribute
- Be confident to share ideas
- Present your ideas in a clear manner
- No cutting across others whilst discussing
- Be prepared to give your own ideas and not just keep to the rest of the group's ideas

BENEFITS OF THE PROPOSED PLAN

Workshop 1

- More room – inside and outside
- The school will be more popular – more people will want to come to the school
- More people will want to learn Welsh as it will be a better school
- Keep the language alive
- Better opportunities for young people in life, a better education, better jobs
- Opening doors to people who want Welsh medium education
- More work for new teachers
- Better Physical Education
- A bigger car park and sports fields
- It will look more modern
- Maybe that the 'makeover' will attract more children to the school (as has happened in Cowbridge Comp)
- More help for children who require special assistance

Workshop 2

- It will be more fun as there will be more things to do outside
- There will be more resources as there will be more people
- More space and not everyone on top of each other
- More space for gymnastics and science
- More space for parking, storing equipment, to eat, play football
- More classrooms
- It will be better for parents as there will be more places to park
- It will help to develop sport as a consequence of the 3G pitch and sports hall
- Maybe the classrooms will be the same size and therefore fairer to everyone
- It'll be easier to find the class as it will be more organised
- More pupils will be able to have Welsh medium education and more will want Welsh medium education and come to Ysgol Bro Morgannwg
- There will be more opportunities for children

- More people will want to come to the school as it will be new
- It'll be easier to find the entrance
- Maybe people from the English medium schools will want to come there
- There will be more jobs for teachers
- People will have a better education as there will be more teachers

POSSIBLE PITFALLS FOR CONSIDERATION

Workshop 1

- Will it take a lot of time to build?
- Will the hall be bigger?
- Maybe it will be too costly
- Maybe the children will get hurt during the build
- Need to be careful that the site isn't dangerous during the build

Workshop 2

- Maybe there'll be more cars around and therefore more pollution?
- Concern whether it will affect the surrounding houses and the natural environment?
- Maybe there'll be less room outside due to the new buildings taking too much space?
- More traffic could cause more problems
- Will there be enough money and if not, will there be enough resources?
- Will there be enough space?
- Will it eventually be too full as a result of more people wanting to come there?
- Maybe it will be difficult to learn with the noise of the building work

VOTE

Following the above discussion the pupils were asked to vote for, against or to indicate if they were unsure about the proposed project and 100% expressed their support for the plan.

Consultation Workshop – School Council Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Morgannwg

Tuesday 05 July 2016

A workshop was held at the school through the medium of Welsh by the Council's Community Engagement team.

In total, 11 young people attended the workshop

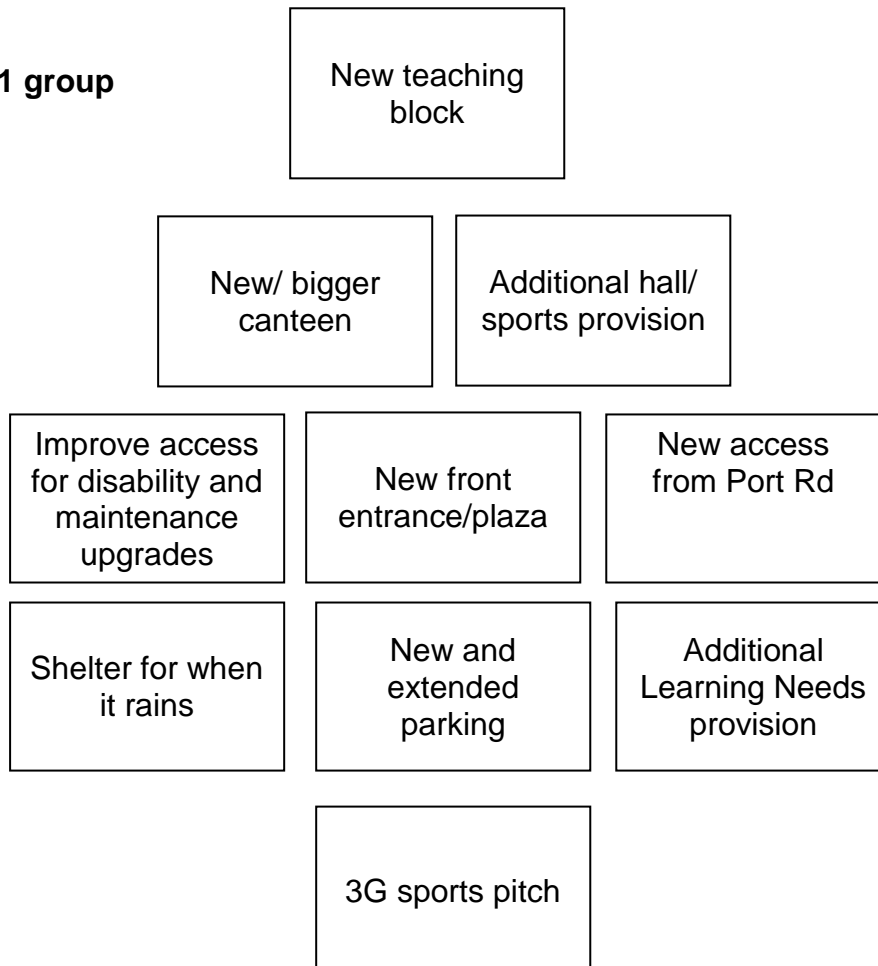
Year 7: 1; Year 8: 2; Year 9: 2; Year 10: 1; Year 12: 5

Girls: 4; Boys: 7

Diamond Ranking

What improvements are most important to you?

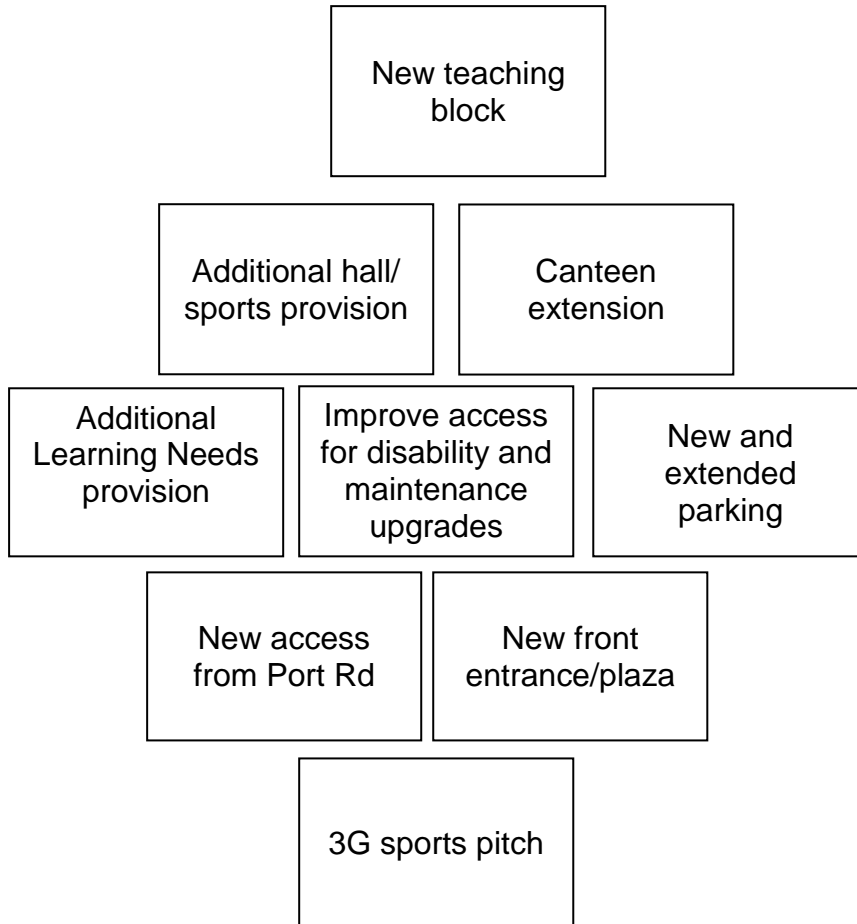
Year 7-11 group



Diamond Ranking

What improvements are most important to you?

Sixth form group



Agree	Disagree
With the proposed expansion of the school: 11	With the proposed expansion of the school: 0
With the proposed refurbishments: 11	With the proposed refurbishments: 0

Comments

New teaching block

- The school needs more classrooms and places to study
- Children come here to learn so it is important to have enough space for this

Additional hall/ sports provision

- This could be a multi-use area for school assemblies, sports, dining room and somewhere to shelter when it rains

Improve access for disability and maintenance upgrades

- This is important for those with a disability but will not be useful for everyone
- Disabled access should be in place but does not need lots of money spent on it

New access from Port Rd

- Suggestion to have one entrance for cars and one entrance for buses
- Will allow those who live on that side of Barry to enter the school site easily

Additional Learning Needs provision

- Not many pupils need this

New and extended parking

- Useful for parents, particularly if the school is to be expanded

3G sports pitch

- Nice but not essential

Further suggestions:

Canteen

- There is not enough room in the canteen
- There are always long queues at lunch
- There is not enough space to sit and eat
- One suggested idea which had already been discussed is the possibility of splitting lunch times so that there are less pupils on break and in the canteen at the same time

Shelter for when it rains

- There is currently nowhere for pupils to shelter from the rain in the mornings before registration.

Conclusion

1. New teaching block
2. Additional hall/sports provision; New canteen/canteen extension
3. Improve access for disability and maintenance upgrades
4. Additional Learning Needs provision; new front entrance/plaza; new and extended parking; new access from Port Rd
5. Shelter for when it rains
6. 3G Sport Pitch

**Barry Youth Action – Pupil Workshop
19 July 2016**

2 young people attended the workshop, who had both participated in the previous consultation in May 2015.

Do you agree with the proposal to increase the number of places at Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Morgannwg?

1 young person agreed but did not think that there are enough new places being created for £19 million.

1 young person disagreed because they thought that there still would not be enough room in the canteen/café.

Increasing places is a positive aim because it will result in more Welsh speakers.

Do you agree with the proposal to improve facilities at Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Morgannwg?

Both young people agreed that this was a good idea. Both stated that they thought pupils should be consulted about the specific expansion and development plans as they will have a practical perspective on whether or not they will work.

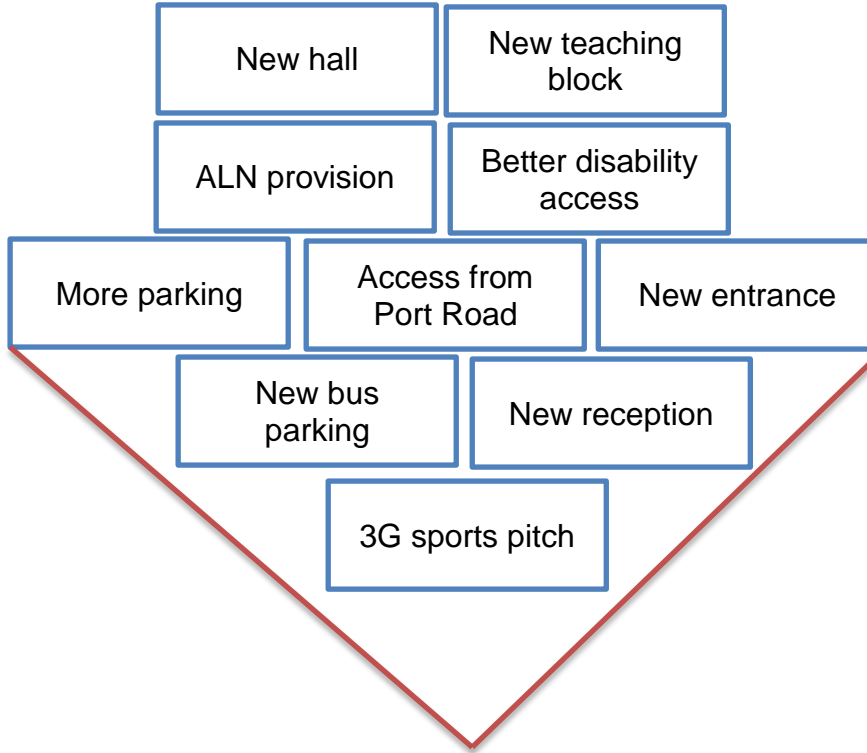
Both young people stated that there was no need for a 3G sports pitch as there is already an indoor pitch. One young person stated that instead of a 3G sports pitch an athletic track could be developed.

What improvements are important to you?

Facility	Discussion notes
New teaching block	GC thought that this would decrease congestion
New entrance	A new entrance on Port Road and Colcot Road would enable pupils to get to registration quicker
3G sports pitch	Not needed. Have an athletics pitch instead.
New bus parking	Less necessary than normal parking because they are there for only 15 minutes.
Access from Port Road	Good idea.
New reception	Good idea if it reduces amount of time for paperwork to be completed.
Better disability access	This is important but not high priority.
New hall	RP though a new hall should be a top priority.
More parking	Low priority (but higher than bus parking), but would help. Current parking is used by primary school parents as well.
ALN provision	Both thought ALN provision should be a high priority.

Diamond Ranking

What improvements are most important to you?



Governing Body Response– Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Morgannwg

The Governing Body believe that the proposals will have a positive effect on furthering Welsh Medium Education in the Vale for future generations. Projected increased demand will be met by these proposals.

The Governing Body are grateful to the Vale of Glamorgan Council for recognising the need for investment in Barry Secondary Schools per se. YGBM's current infrastructure cannot sustain further significant growth without such investment.

The proposals will have a positive effect on furthering Welsh Medium Education in the Vale for future generations. Projected increased demand will be met by these proposals.

Bob Evans
Chair of Governors

Response from Barry Town Council

Barry Town Council consider that they must support the proposal to increase the number of secondary school places at Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Morgannwg to meet demand as this is a mandatory requirement of Unitary Authorities.

Angie Norman - Acting Town Clerk

Estyn Response to consultation

Estyn response to the proposals to transform secondary schools in Barry

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 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.

Introduction

This consultation proposal is from the Vale of Glamorgan Council.

The proposal is to increase Welsh medium secondary school places in the Vale of Glamorgan by expanding Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Morgannwg on its current site from 1361 places to 1660 places.

Summary/ Conclusion

It is Estyn's opinion that the proposal is likely to at least maintain current standards of Welsh medium education and offers an opportunity to increase the number of places available in Welsh medium secondary education in the area to meet growing demand.

Description and benefits

The Vale of Glamorgan provides many sound reasons for the proposal, namely that it would:

- expand the available Welsh medium secondary places in the medium-term future.
- ensure that there is a sustainable balance between supply and demand for Welsh medium secondary places.
- provide increased and improved facilities for pupils at the school
- provide opportunities for a wider range of Welsh medium learning opportunities
- increase the level of community access to Welsh medium education

- enhance employment and development opportunities for staff

Based on projected pupil numbers, the proposer makes a reasonably coherent case

- for the need to increase the number of places in Welsh medium secondary education in the medium and long term
- and that the current site for Ysgol Gyfun Bro Morgannwg secondary school would not be able to accommodate the council's projected demand for Welsh medium secondary education from 2020.

The council appears to have given full consideration to many of the disadvantages of the proposal, however it has not set out how it will mitigate the risk of expanding on a site that is already constrained.

A number of alternatives were considered during the initial consultation in 2015. The council legitimately discounts these alternative options or maintaining the status quo. After being rejected by consultees due to the disruption that would be caused to English medium learners and increased travel distances for some primary aged pupils, the proposer is unable to pursue the option preferred during the initial consultation. In addition it asserts reasonably that maintaining the status quo would not allow it to meet its statutory duty to meet the need for increasing demand for Welsh medium secondary school places.

It also asserts reasonably that the proposal would cause minimum disruption to all secondary schools across Barry.

The council asserts credibly that the proposal will have no impact on admissions and catchment area arrangements. Therefore one can also reasonably assume that there is unlikely to be a significant impact on learner's travel arrangements

Whilst the full-scale plans are contingent on a successful application for Welsh government funding, the outcome of which we are not able to comment on, the council asserts reasonably that it would be in a position to prioritise work that would increase the number of Welsh medium secondary school places to achieve its stated aims.

Although the current surplus places are not addressed by the proposal, one can reasonably assume that this will be addressed if the forecast increase demand for places materialises.

The proposer reasonably asserts that the proposal is likely to have an overall positive impact on the local community as a result of enhanced facilities.

Educational aspects of the proposal

When presenting the educational outcomes the council has not provided the full range of school's performance indicators.

For key stage 4, it asserts that GCSE performance is in the two upper quarters compared with similar schools. The council has not made it clear what timeframe or

year this refers to. If referring to the most recent outcomes at key stage 4, this assertion would be incorrect as, in 2015, a minority of indicators are in the lower half of similar schools based on free school meal eligibility. This applies in particular to proportion of pupils achieving 5 GCSEs (including Welsh and mathematics) at A*-C grades, which is the only indicator for which information has been provided. The information provided for this indicator does not compare performance to similar schools based on free school meal eligibility.

No performance information is provided for key stage 3.

As the primary department of the school came into existence in September 2015, it does not have a previous history of data in its current form. However, for the sake of completeness and given that the department operated as a federated school prior to becoming part of the all age school, historical data on the department's outcomes in the Foundation Phase during this time is available and could have been presented here.

Whilst these omissions do not lessen the strength of the council's proposal, the analysis of data is somewhat misleading with regard to the school's performance. In particular, it does not lend weight to the council's assertion that the intention of the proposal is to maintain the momentum of improvement at the school, given that, at key stage 4, performance in three out of eight indicators declined in 2015.

In other respects, the council's presentation of school's categorisation is appropriate.

The proposer's presentation on the impact of the proposals on provision asserts reasonably that additional physical capacity is likely to be created to accommodate a projected increase in demand for Welsh medium secondary school places and thus improving provision of Welsh medium education in the area. It does not, however, consider any other aspects of provision such as the impact on staffing requirements to enable it to deliver the full curriculum at key stages 3 and 4. However, this is in some part addressed appropriately in its consideration of the financial impact on the school's budget of an increase in pupil numbers.

It asserts reasonably that the proposal would have little impact on the school's leadership and governance.

The council reasonably asserts that construction work would need to be carefully managed to minimise disruption to pupils and transport during term time. It also sets out clearly how the school buildings and provision will be enhanced and overall proposed costs.

The council has considered the effect of the proposal on neighbouring schools and asserts reasonably that the impact of this is unlikely to be significant.

The proposer asserts credibly that the proposal is unlikely to have a negative impact on vulnerable pupils currently at the school, including children with special educational needs. If the council realises it plans, it asserts reasonably that an increase in capacity will allow it to better staff and resource the school's additional needs department to meet a growing need feeding through from the primary schools

for Welsh medium specialist resource bases. Although it should be noted that this is a stated aim, rather than a firm commitment at this stage.