

DIRECTORATE OF LEARNING AND SKILLS

# Objection Report

**On the proposal to reconfigure primary provision in the Western Vale by:**

- 1. Creating a new 210 place primary school building with a 48 part time place nursery class for Llancarfan Primary School in Rhoose.**
- 2. Transferring staff and pupils from the existing Llancarfan Primary School building into the new school building.**
- 3. Changing the age range of Llancarfan Primary School from 4-11 years to 3-11 years.**



# Contents

Background.....	3
Consultation Report .....	3
Statutory Notice .....	3
Objections to the proposal .....	4
Annex A .....	5

## **Background**

The Council undertook two consultations exercises on the proposal from 5 March 2018 to 20 April 2018 and 21 May 2018 to 9 July 2018.

In March 2018, the Council launched a consultation aimed at taking a holistic view of primary school provision in the Western Vale. The aim of the consultation was to inform the community about the school re-organisation proposal being put forward under section 2.2 of the School Organisation Code and referred to as regulated alterations as follows:

- a) a regulated alteration to Llancarfan Primary School to move the site of the school from Llancarfan to a newly constructed school building on land north of the railway line in Rhoose;
- b) a regulated alteration to increase the capacity of Llancarfan Primary School at the new site from 126 to 210 places; and
- c) a regulated alteration to alter the lowest age range of pupils through the addition of a new nursery class containing 48 part time places.

During the consultation members of the community raised a number of concerns regarding the impact to their local areas, as well as raising additional questions about the proposal, while seeking to ensure their views were understood.

As a result of feedback the Council undertook a second consultation that commenced on the 21 May 2018. The Council considered it important to include greater detail in the consultation document and to provide stakeholders with the opportunity to consider this within a new consultation timeline.

The consultation exercises explained the Council's proposal to reconfigure primary provision in the rural vale.

The consultation process followed Welsh Government guidelines and was an opportunity for local people 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 decisions are made.

## **Consultation Report**

A consultation report was published following the consultation exercise. The consultation report was considered by the Council's Cabinet on 17 September 2018 who agreed to the publication of the consultation report.

## **Statutory Notice**

The recommendation to publish a statutory notice was presented to Cabinet on the 17 September and was referred to the Learning and Culture Scrutiny Committee for consideration on the 1 October 2018. The publication of a statutory notice on the proposal was further considered by Cabinet on the 15

October 2018 who agreed to the publication of statutory notice on the proposal.

The statutory notice on the proposal was published on 5 November 2018 for a period of 28 days to allow for objections. The statutory notice period expired on 3 December 2018.

The notice was published on the Vale of Glamorgan Council's website ([www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk](http://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk)) and posted at the main entrances of the school and in the area to be served by the proposed new location of the school. Copies of the notice were provided to the school for distribution to pupils, parents, carers and guardians, governors and staff members. All other organisations and consultees required under the School Organisation Code 2013 were either provided with a hard copy or e-mailed a link to the published notice on the council's website. All email recipients were provided with a copy of the letter and notice as an attachment to the email as well as a link to the notice on the website.

Where objections are received to the statutory notice, an objection report must be published summarising the statutory objections and the proposer's response to those objections.

### **Objections to the proposal**

The authority received 102 individual objections by the statutory notice closing date. A summary of the key themes and issues raised by respondents and the response from the Vale of Glamorgan Council can be found at Annex A. A copy of the consultation report can be found at Annex B and the Community Impact Assessment at Annex C.

The objections received are, in the main, reflective of the comments received during the consultation period. These comments will be familiar as members have already read the consultation responses contained in the consultation report. Members are reminded that an individual is able to resubmit their previous comments as objections. Therefore, members should ensure that these comments submitted as objections are reconsidered.

All objections received during the objection period have been made available in the Members room at The Vale of Glamorgan Council Offices, Holton Road, Barry, together with the consultation report for further perusal.

## **Objection theme 1**

**Respondents consider that the proposal is a school closure that is being referred to as a migration or transfer. Some objectors considered it hypocritical to call it a school transfer, stating that it is a school closure.**

### **Council's response to the concerns raised:**

Reference to this matter can be found in the consultation report on the proposal at issue 18, page 17.

The term migration was used in the first consultation exercise. In recognition of some confusion being expressed with regard to this term, the second consultation exercise better reflects the terminology set out in the School Organisation Code 2013 as a the regulated alteration of Llanccarfan Primary School, moving from the existing school site to a new site.

The Council is not proposing to close Llanccarfan Primary School. The proposal is to move the existing school to a new site with an improved school building and increased capacity, as well as an extended age range. A regulated alteration of a school falls under the School Organisation Code, statutory code document no: 006/2013. As a regulated alteration, this proposal would retain the existing school, its staff, pupils and governors. The name of the school would remain the same and all staff, governors and pupils would transfer to the new building.

## **Objection theme 2**

**Alternative proposals not considered. Respondents suggest that alternative options have not been considered and that Cabinet have failed to explore alternatives with the local community. They contended that the Council has not adequately investigated any alternatives and that further thought should be given to alternative actions.**

### **Council's response to the concerns raised:**

Reference to this matter can be found in the consultation report on the proposal at issue 19, page 18, and issue 20, page 21.1

Alternatives to the proposal were considered and were included in greater detail in the second consultation document. These are outlined below.

#### *Extending Llanccarfan Primary School*

Llanccarfan Primary School would be expanded to a one form entry school with a 48 place nursery to accommodate the forecasted increase in pupil numbers within the Western Vale. This option would require expansion of the existing school on its existing site.

This model was identified as not being the preferred option for the following reasons:

- The site is a constrained site and too small to expand to meet requirements. Building Bulletin 99 (adopted by the Welsh Government for the 21st Century schools programme) provides a formula for calculating minimum school site areas. For 126 children the required site area should be from 6736m<sup>2</sup> to 7540m<sup>2</sup>. However the school site is smaller than the recommended site area at 3,700m<sup>2</sup>. This compares to the recommended 10,000m<sup>2</sup> for a 210 place school.
- The confined site is also sloping on a significant proportion of the site which further limits the possibilities to expand the school on the current site or to provide sports pitches or external learning areas on the school site. A multi-storey building could be built on the site but this is not in keeping with the area and is highly unlikely to be supported by the planning department, or local residents.
- The school is on a small site, slightly offset by the use of the adjacent tennis club courts. The four separate buildings and small sloping site do not meet 21st Century School design guidance standards for primary schools which have been used for all new builds completed through the 21st Century Schools programme.
- The additional space would be required to accommodate increasing pupil numbers from the Rhoose area. Travel to the school would be difficult and would contribute to congested access through the village and lanes leading to Llancafán.
- 21st Century Schools comprise a fully accessible (Equalities Act 2010) one or two storey building providing all the required educational functions within a single building set in grounds meeting current outdoor curriculum needs. It would not be possible to achieve this with the existing site constraints in Llancafán. In order to secure 21st Century School funding from Welsh Government, it is a requirement that the 21st Century school building protocols be met.
- There is insufficient access and space on the existing site to maintain the existing school whilst building works for a new school were undertaken.

### *Extending Rhws Primary School*

Rhoose Primary School would be expanded on its current site to include the addition of an 8 classroom extension and dining hall. This would require a further building to be built adjacent to the 2009 extension alongside the remodelling of existing class spaces and extension to the existing nursery facilities.

This model was identified as not being the preferred option for the following reasons:

- The additional buildings will be built on existing playing fields leaving the site looking and feeling overcrowded;
- Design restrictions and delay could be caused by the grade 2 listing of the existing school building;
- Initial feasibility work has highlighted that because of the limited outside space available at the school, the site will be deemed too small as calculated by Building Bulletin 99 Briefing Framework for Primary Schools Projects. The Bulletin states that the area required for a 630 capacity primary school plus nursery is 28,650 m<sup>2</sup>. The area of the Rhose Primary School site is 14,600 m<sup>2</sup> and is therefore 14,050 m<sup>2</sup> short of the required space for a 630 place primary school. This would limit the design and site layout for any proposed extension;
- Under the Building Bulletin requirements, the Rhws Primary School site is currently too small for the current population of the school. A school with capacity for 375 children plus a nursery would require between 16,315 and 18,115 m<sup>2</sup>. The current area at Rhws Primary is 14,648, currently falling below the minimum standard.
- By extending capacity at the school the current traffic congestion in the village will increase at key points during the day;
- There is no opportunity to address half form entry challenges at Llancarfan Primary School, or the projected fall in pupil numbers;
- Building on the existing site would cause disruption to learning for at least 9 months as not all of the work could be undertaken during school holidays. This could affect learning outcomes;
- The enlarged school would be too large causing a situation of surplus capacity in 2021 of 19%. Parents from the new developments may also choose to allow their children to remain at their existing schools. This would mean that not all of the predicted demand is realised in the short term which would increase the potential for surplus capacity in the school. When building or extending schools it is considered necessary to extend or build in multiples of 30 for a one, two and three form entry school of seven year groups, reception to year 6. This is a more efficient and sustainable model of delivery that better manages class organisation, school structure, curriculum planning, negates mixed age teaching and assists with managing statutory class size limits of 30 children.

*Building a new school in Rhose while making no changes to Llancarfan Primary School*

A new 210 place school would be built on a 1 hectare site in the Rhose Point development.

No change would be required to the current facilities or capacity at the existing Rhws Primary School, but work would be undertaken to address the issues highlighted in the 2014 condition survey.

It is anticipated that the new school would be federated with the current Rhoose Primary school. The federation would benefit from sharing a high quality Headteacher, leadership team and governing body, allowing for additional flexibility and resource sharing enabling additional cost savings. The schools would remain separate, maintaining their own individual budget allocations and would report results separately.

This model was identified as not being the preferred option for the following reasons:

- Given current projected demand of 135 children, a new 210 place school would introduce significant surplus spaces, and would not represent effective management of school places or resources.
- There is no potential to address half form entry challenges at Llancarfan Primary School.
- The creation of a federation between the new and existing school will require excellent leadership. Further succession planning will need to be incorporated to ensure that this relationship is sustained into the medium and long term.
- Leadership will need to manage the two schools across sites which would introduce additional complexity.
- Additional revenue funding of approximately £725k would be required to operate a 210 place school. This would need to be found from within the current Individual Schools' Budget, thereby reducing the funding available for other schools in the Vale of Glamorgan.

*Reduce Rhws Primary to 210 places, along with the addition of a new 210 place school in Rhws on the land north-west of the railway line, and leaving Llancarfan Primary School in Llancarfan.*

The current capacity of Rhws primary is 375 places accommodated within 8 classrooms in the original school block, a two storey classroom block with four classrooms, a double classroom demountable and a separate nursery block. The current school number on roll is 374.

The capacity could be reduced to 315, one and half form entry school, by demolishing the demountable classroom building allowing this area to revert to a playground. The estimated cost would be in the region of £25k to remove the demountable.

When building or extending schools it is considered necessary to extend or build in multiples of 30 for a one, two and three form entry school of seven



year groups, reception to year 6. This is widely acknowledged to be a more efficient and sustainable model of delivery that better manages class organisation, school structure, curriculum planning, negates mixed age teaching and assists with managing statutory class size limits of 30 children.

A further reduction in capacity could be achieved through re-designating existing small or less suitable classrooms in the main building to reduce capacity to 210. These former classrooms could be used for a school library, IT suite, PPA room, SEN/group rooms or for peripatetic teaching e.g. music.

The capacity of the stand-alone nursery building would also need to be reduced to align with a new 1 form entry school. This could be achieved through re-designating areas at no cost.

The costs to re-designate classrooms would depend on the extent of the works carried out but could be up to £80k for sundry alterations to four classrooms if additional IT and power points are required along with new fixed and loose furniture and resources.

As a consequence of reducing the capacity, the school budget would also reduce and although staffing costs would be less. The building running and maintenance costs would not significantly reduce even if the demountable was removed.

Fundamentally, the demand for primary school places in the Rhose area would not be met with insufficient primary school places to meet future demand. Based on current projections to include housing developments in Rhose on land to the north west and land north-east of the railway line, there would be a requirement for 465 school places to meet demand over the next 5 year period. The model would only realise 420 school places to serve the area. There would be insufficient places to meet demand from new housing development in the area.

A reduction in school capacity would require the Council to follow a statutory process in terms of consultation and statutory proposals. It would be problematic to justify a proposal that does not meet demand for school places in an area, and it would not meet Welsh Government's criteria for 21st Century Schools funding.

Federation of the two schools would not be considered viable; the experienced Headteacher at Rhws Primary school has retired with a new, permanent Headteacher due to take up the role in January 2019. Federation requires an experienced Headteacher due to the complexities of associated with 2 or more schools on different sites.

The option would not make the Llancarfan transfer proposal achievable. The school is operating with a surplus capacity of 25 places (19.8%) that is set to increase to 28 places (22%) over the next five year period. The Vale of Glamorgan is committed to reducing the number of surplus places in schools in order to meet an agreed target put in place as a requirement of Welsh Government in order to ensure education is provided efficiently. Within the primary sector, this equates to an agreed target of no more than 10%.

A reduction in pupil numbers will have an adverse effect on the school being able to manage its budget. Reducing the number on roll to 210 would reduce the schools budget by £397,815 based on the AWP (Age Weighted Pupil Unit). The school has a number of fixed costs totalling £267,515 which would not reduce with fewer pupils. These include headteacher, administration, caretaker, premises, service level agreements and external contracts. It is acknowledged that there would be a small reduction in energy costs as a result of removal of the demountable building.

The school receives an additional £48,677k on top of the £267,515k in fixed costs towards for premises and grounds which is based on pupil numbers. As above, the reduction in pupil numbers would reduce this element however the premises itself will not change. As a listed building, the school is also subject to additional maintenance.

A 210 place school averages fixed costs at £189,282k. This is £78,233 less expensive than the cost of running Rhws Primary 210 places, given the existing site.

In order to accommodate the need for pupil places, Rhws Primary could be reduced to 255 places, rather than 210. This would still yield a reduction in the schools budget by £289,320k.

The following table demonstrates the revenue implications based on the mainstream schools funding formula between the current proposal of transferring Llancarfan into a new 210 place school site in Rhws, and maintaining Rhws Primary School with its current capacity of 375 places, versus the option of maintaining Llancarfan Primary School, reducing the capacity of Rhws Primary School on its 25.

current site to 255 places and creating a new 210 place school in Rhws to accommodate forecasted demand: <b>Current Proposal</b>	Revenue Cost	<b>Option Above</b>	Revenue Cost
Rhws Primary (375)	£ 1,262,651	Llancarfan Primary	£ 544,631
New 210 School	£ 931,028	Rhws Primary (255)	£ 1,208,767
New 210 School		£ 931,028	
<b>TOTAL</b>	£ 2,193,679	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£ 2,684,426</b>
<b>Difference</b>		£ 490,747	

The table highlights that the option outlined above would increase revenue costs by £490,747 when compared to the current proposal of transferring

Llancarfan Primary into a larger site in Rhoose and maintaining Rhws Primary with its current capacity.

- A reduction from 374 pupils on roll to a new capacity of 255 children at Rhws Primary can only be achieved through a phased reduction in the admission number from the reception intake. The scale of the reduction would not be realised until approximately 2026 following appropriate consultation on the School Admissions Policy.
- The current admission number of Rhws Primary is 53. If the school were reduced to 255 places the admission number would become 36. An admission number of 36 makes it difficult to manage class organisation, school structure, curriculum planning, and would necessitate mixed age teaching when considering statutory class size limits of 30 children.
- New catchment areas would need to be drawn to divide the Rhws pupil population to correlate with the new capacities in both schools, or both schools share the catchment area, with prioritisation given to the new school for newcomers to the catchment area.

#### *Maintaining the status quo*

Llancarfan is comprised of a Victorian school building with a separate block built in 2000 and two separate demountable classroom blocks. The school is situated on a small school site with difficult access. The school has no nursery provision in place and has an admission number of 18 that requires mixed age teaching.

The school is situated in the village of Llancarfan providing a small school ethos. Children attend from a number of different areas of which 29% live within the school catchment area. The school has a catchment population of 55 pupils compared to a capacity for 126 children. The school is categorised as yellow in terms of the Welsh Government's National School Categorisation system. The school has a high revenue cost per child compared to the Vale average.

Maintaining the status quo is not considered to be a viable option. Based on current projections, by 2023 there is an anticipated shortfall of 90 primary school places in the Rhoose area. In addition, the number of children living in Llancarfan is decreasing which will further challenge the efficiency and sustainability of Llancarfan Primary School. By law, the Vale of Glamorgan Council is required to ensure adequate provision of school places within its borders to meet demand. Given the above this option is not considered to be a viable alternative.

The proposal and preferred option of a new building and location would allow for further development of a curriculum filled with rich experiences that challenge children, raise attainment and develop interpersonal relationships. This will support the development of nursery provision extending the school to deliver education to pupils aged 3 – 11, allowing all learners to achieve success.

### **Objection theme 3**

**Some respondents were concerned that the proposal takes away the rural ethos of the school and goes against the Welsh Assembly's Rural Education Plan. They contended that it is a small rural school and should stay that way. As an existing forest school, children will miss out should the proposal go ahead. Respondent felt that the recreational and /or extra-curricular facilities are not being appreciated e.g. the outdoor learning spaces, woodland streams etc.**

#### **Council's response to the concerns raised:**

Reference to this issue can be found in the consultation report on the proposal at issues 39, page 41, and 44, page 45.

The Council fully appreciates that parents will have a multitude of factors they will wish to consider when applying for a school for their child. For parents wishing to access a rural school, there are other schools within rural locations that parents could choose to express a preference for such as Llangan, Llanfair, Pendoylan, Peterston-Super Ely, Llansannor, St David's, Wick & Marcross and St Brides C/W Primary School for example. Parents of course can express a preference for a particular school and over 90% of parents in the Vale of Glamorgan are successful in gaining a place at their first choice of school. However it can never be guaranteed that all children will receive an offer of a place at their first preference, even if they apply on time.

As part of the design process for new school buildings, all new school sites are provided with forest areas in order to ensure that the learning experience makes full use of the outdoors. The Council would work with Forest School Wales to ensure that there is sustainable Forest School provision supported by a national network that will nurture the development of projects, offer advice, provide resources, guide best practice and provide continuing professional development at the school. As at October 2018 Llancarfan Primary School confirmed that they did not meet the criteria of being a Forest School, however, staff were to attend an accredited training course. The location of a school is not a determining factor in establishing Forest School status.

There are a number of examples of modern schools that have highly effective outdoor areas that are used extremely well to benefit pupils' learning and education. Within the Vale, Ysgol Y Ddraig is the most recently built primary school and, within less than two years, the school's leaders and staff have developed highly effective outdoor learning areas.

The existing extra-curricular activities will be available at the transferred school. A larger school will be able to provide a wider curriculum provision and a greater range of extra-curricular opportunities for pupils. It is intended that all existing services for children, parents and the community would continue if the proposal were to go ahead.

#### **Objection theme 4**

**Respondents queried pupil numbers, stating that predicted numbers are incorrect. They asserted that the Council has overestimated the demand for places from the new development.**

#### **Council's response to the concerns raised:**

Reference to this issue can be found in the consultation report on the proposal at issues 6, page 8.

The Council's pupil projection methodology follows Audit Commission guidance and is based on the application of Catchment/Feeder school ratios and cohort survival rates (the relationship between the number of pupils in one cohort in one school year, and the same cohort in the following school year). Pupil projections are evidence based and also take account of current and historic school data, birth rates, planned housing developments and cross catchment movement. A 2013 Estyn Inspection of the Vale of Glamorgan's Services for Children and Young People reported "The authority has appropriate systems in place for forecasting pupil numbers and the requirements for school places using a suitable range of data".

In terms of housing developments, the projected number of pupils emanating from a development is calculated using a formula derived from census data of householders in the Vale of Glamorgan. The formula is contained within the Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance for planning purposes. At nursery level this is calculated at 0.1 pupils per unit and at primary level 0.278 per unit. The developments of 350 houses would each yield 35 nursery and 97 primary age children. For the 700 units being built in total, the Council would expect around 70 nursery age children and 194 primary age children to be generated.

The pupil yield factor from housing developments in the Vale of Glamorgan is comparable to the methodology employed by other local authorities. The yield is dependent upon the demography of the Council area. The Council's methodology for calculating pupil yield from housing developments and pupil projections is consistent and the Council is satisfied that it reflects current conditions for school place planning purposes.

#### **Objection theme 5**

**Respondents claimed that not all parents of pupils at Llancafán will choose to transfer their children to the new site. People will not move to the new school, and therefore the projections used are incorrect.**

#### **Council's response to the concerns raised:**

Reference to this issue can be found in the consultation report on the proposal at issue 11, page 11.

The figures for the Llancafán Primary School on a new site in Rhose are based on the current pupil numbers for Llancafán Primary School. The Council acknowledges the survey undertaken to determine parents' wishes about moving to the school's new site. The survey can be viewed at annex G of the Consultation Report. However, whilst parents have the right to express parental preference and to change schools, there is no guarantee that those preferences can be met. The acceptance of an application to transfer to an alternative school is dependent upon the availability of school places at other schools. Whilst it is hoped that all pupils will continue to attend Llancafán Primary School following a move to a new site, it should be noted that availability of primary school places to facilitate a transfer to an alternative school is limited in the Western Vale.

### **Objection theme 6**

**Respondents claimed that communication on the consultation and proposals was not adequate, and that the proposal and consultation process flawed. Respondents felt that the Council failed in its duty of care to undertake proper consultation as per the Code.**

#### **Council's response to the concerns raised:**

Reference to this matter can be found in the consultation report on the proposal at issue 16, page 13.

The Council understands the concerns of parents, residents and pupils in terms of the first proposal being put forward by the Vale of Glamorgan Council. The Council is satisfied that its duty of care under the School Organisation Code 2013 has been met, and in some instances exceeded. Although a Community Impact Assessment was not required, the Council did so in order to ensure that full consideration to the concerns of all consultees was given.

A number of concerns were raised during the first consultation exercise regarding the impact on the local area as well as raising additional questions about the proposal. A second consultation exercise was therefore undertaken to address concerns and to provide greater detail in the consultation document on the proposal providing stakeholders with an opportunity to consider this within a new consultation deadline. Some of the additional information addressed matters such as the future of the school building, an updated Community Impact Assessment, greater depth on the alternatives considered and adding clarity to the application of section 2.2 of the School Organisation Code (2013) as it relates to the regulated alteration of the school.

Estyn have been consulted on the proposal and have responded positively to the proposal indicating that the Vale of Glamorgan Council has presented a sound rationale for the proposal to create a new school building for Llancafán Primary School with the addition of 48 nursery places for pupils on a part-time basis, on a new site in Rhose.

The consultation process has been undertaken in accordance with the School Standards and Organisation Wales Act 2013 and compliance with the School Organisation Code 2013. Legal advice was sought in relation to the application of the School Organisation Code, with appropriate guidance from the Welsh Government where required.

The Council is satisfied that it has followed the statutory requirements laid out in the School Organisation Code for consultation on the proposal with all relevant stakeholders.

Whilst a high percentage of respondents to the consultation exercise were against the proposal, this does not detract from the main purpose of the proposal to ensure that all pupils within the Vale have every opportunity to attain the best possible outcomes. This ambition is achieved by ensuring that schools remain sustainable, reflects the needs of local communities and are equipped with the best possible learning environments. The Council is confident that the proposal to move Llancafarn Primary School to a new site in Rhoose will support these aims.

### **Objection theme 7**

**Respondents reiterated that concerns raised had not been responded to satisfactorily and/or have been ignored.**

#### **Council's response to the concerns raised:**

The consultation report provided a comprehensive response to the issues raised by consultees as part of the consultation process. Cabinet fully considered the report and agreed to the publication of a statutory notice on the proposal. Prior to agreeing to this, an additional level of consideration was provided by referring the proposal back to the Learning & Culture Scrutiny Committee for further debate. In order to ensure that all views were fully considered, some cabinet members including the Leader of the Council were present at this Scrutiny Committee in order to listen to their concerns directly. There was also a high level of direct correspondence between Council and the public during the consultation period and beyond, including opportunities for public questions at Full Council meetings and direct correspondence with members and officers. All comments were available to all decision makers as part of the process for consideration.

The Council believes that the consultation document provided sufficient reason and information to facilitate active engagement, consideration and response whilst complying fully with the School Organisation Code. Estyn commented that The Vale of Glamorgan Council has presented a sound rationale for the proposals to create a new school building for Llancafarn Primary School with the addition of 48 nursery places for pupils on a part-time basis, on a new site in Rhoose. It sets out the expected benefits and disadvantages of the proposal clearly. The local authority has considered provision for existing pupils in the current Llancafarn Primary School, its future pupils, as well as those in Rhws, Llanfair and St Nicholas Primary Schools. This is because the proposed realignment of existing catchment areas in Rhoose in order to accommodate the new school site, would affect pupils in

these schools. The local authority has taken appropriate account of educational standards, school surplus places, pupil travel arrangements, accessibility of provision, the quality and sustainability of school accommodation, financial investment and running costs.

Estyn further commented that the proposal has considered appropriately outcomes, provision and leadership at Llancaf Primary School. It has drawn on a suitable range of evidence to do this including a brief analysis of the school's performance data over the past 3 years

### **Objection theme 8**

**A respondent pointed out an error regarding travel distances. The route shown for Llanbethery does not show a route from Llanbethery but from the top of Pancross Hill in Llancaf.**

#### **Council's response to the concerns raised:**

The two routes are outlined in the consultation report at issue 22, page 26 are for school transport purposes.

They indicate the suggested routes to be used for two minibuses serving the Llancaf and surrounding areas to the transferred school site in Rhose for school transport purposes. The distances for the suggested routes to the transferred site in Rhose are approximate measurements and any final routes and transport arrangements would be confirmed the term before these arrangements would take place.

### **Objection theme 9**

**Respondents felt that parents should be reimbursed for providing funding in support of the school (funding for the school hall).**

#### **Council's response to the concerns raised:**

The school was awarded a WG grant under the class size reduction scheme some 18 years ago and wanted to use the funding to build a school hall. Additional support was provided by some parents and the wider community. Records at both the school and Council indicate that there are no signed agreements regarding funding or loans, and there is no evidence that any outstanding funds due to be reimbursed to parents. Any funds which may have been previously donated or invested into the school has been to the benefit of the pupils, and there are no statute of limitations in place in regard to repayment of any funding following a school reorganisation.



## **Objection theme 10**

**Respondents expressed concern that the Council is ignoring Welsh Government policy concerning rural schools. Respondents stated that Llancarfan is a rural school and should be kept open.**

### **Council's response to the concerns raised:**

Reference to this matter can be found in the consultation report on the proposal at issue 17, page 14.

The proposal is a regulated alteration of a school contained under section 2.2 of the School Organisation Code as follows and is not a school closure.

- a) a regulated alteration to Llancarfan Primary School to move the site of the school from Llancarfan to a newly constructed school building on land north of the railway line in Rhoose;
- b) a regulated alteration to increase the capacity of Llancarfan Primary School at the new site from 126 to 210 places; and
- c) a regulated alteration to alter the lowest age range of pupils through the addition of a new nursery class containing 48 part time places.

The revised elements of the new Code that came into force on the 1 November 2018 in respect of the presumption against the closure of small rural schools does not apply to this proposal. Welsh Government have stated that where a proposer has commenced consultation before 1 November 2018 the proposal must be published and determined in accordance with the first edition of the Code to which this proposal applies.

Llancarfan is one of 6 schools in the Vale's rural cluster of schools which has received funding from the Welsh Government for the past two years through the Small and Rural School Grant. The Amount of funding available to the Vale of Glamorgan from Welsh Government from this grant was £56,276 for 2018/19. The Council's bid on behalf of the rural cluster for this funding was successful, with each of the 6 school receiving £9,379 each.

Nevertheless, it is recognised that the removal of a school from its local community could have a similar impact as a school closure and this has therefore been considered in the Community Impact Assessment.

Whilst Llancarfan has been included on a rural list, it would only be considered under this category if it were being considered for closure after the revised code came into force. This would not be the case for Llancarfan Primary School under both the current and revised code as it is not being considered for closure.

## **Objection theme 11**

**Respondents indicated concern that Abracadabra playgroup wasn't included in the consultation process, and that the proposal would have a direct impact on its provision, and therefore the playgroup should have been consulted.**

### **Council's response to the concerns raised:**

Abracadabra is located north east of Cowbridge, approximately 5.4 miles from Llancafán and lies within the catchment area of Y Bont Faen Primary School in Cowbridge. The playgroup provides high quality childcare and education for under fives in Welsh St Donats. The playgroup is not within the catchment area for Llancafán, and therefore does not identify it as being linked to the Llancafán area. There are other playgroups that are in closer proximity to Llancafán. No children living in the Llancafán area attended the playgroup during the academic year 2017/18.

The Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP) were consulted on the proposal of which Abracadabra is a member of the partnership as a registered provider. The playgroup were therefore not excluded from consultation and there was no reason why they couldn't have provided an opinion on the proposal.

An independent nursery provider was consulted in Rhoose, who is not part of the EYDCP, as additional provision in the Rhoose area could potentially affect playgroup numbers in future as a result of parental preference, no other playgroups were considered to be directly affected by the proposal.

## **Objection theme 12**

**Respondents stated that a Community Impact Assessment (CIA) was absent from first consultation or missing vital points.**

### **Council's response to the concerns raised:**

A community impact assessment was undertaken as part of the first consultation exercise. A number of concerns were raised during the first consultation exercise regarding the impact on the local area as well as raising additional questions about the proposal. A second consultation exercise was therefore undertaken to address concerns and to provide greater detail in in the consultation document on the proposal providing stakeholders with an opportunity to consider this within a new consultation deadline. Some of the additional information addressed matters such as the future of the school building, an updated Community Impact Assessment and reaffirming the regulated alteration of the school to a new site with greater detail on the alternatives that were considered.

In order to ensure feedback received regarding the impact this proposal would have on the community, a more robust Community Impact Assessment was developed in conjunction with the school and whereby meetings were also undertaken with local businesses. The Community Impact Assessment was

also revisited and further developed following the completion of the second consultation exercise.

The Councils duty of care is reflected within the Community Impact and Equality Impact Assessments although a Community Impact Assessment is not a statutory requirement for the proposal.

The Council is confident that the second consultation addressed many concerns raised in greater detail and provided some reassurance to the local community. A number of mitigating actions have been identified to limit the impact the proposal would have on the community.

<b>Ref.</b>	<b>Mitigating Action</b>	<b>Desired Outcome</b>
M1	Support the local community through the Council's Creative Rural Communities initiative. The Creative Rural Communities initiative has supported rural communities throughout the Vale of Glamorgan.	Creative rural Communities initiative supports business innovation to limit the impact this proposal will have on local businesses. The Creative Rural Communities initiative can also support the exploration of new ways of delivering services, facilities and activities that benefit the community.
M2	Provide the local community with information regarding the Council's Strong Communities Grant Fund.	The Strong Communities Grant Fund offers grants to Community Groups, the Voluntary Sector and Town and Community councils towards the cost of initiatives within the Vale of Glamorgan. The fund totals £672,000 over three years until March 2020. Organisations affected by the proposal would be able to apply for funding to support new initiatives to limit impact.
M3	Work with the school, governing body and PTA to support local organisations and the community.	Work with the school to support local organisations through signposting on the website and sending information to parents. The transferred school could continue the strong relationship with the Llanccarfan community to limit the impact.
M4	Engagement with the school leadership, staff, governing body, parents, pupils and the community to develop plans for the new build.	Work closely with school leadership, staff, governing body, parents, pupils and the community to develop the plans for the new build to ensure the building meets their needs. This will ensure the new build forms part of the local and wider community by enhancing facilities available to the community. The engagement will also look to limit disruption due to increased traffic.

### **Objection theme 13**

**It is incorrect to assume that state of the art facilities will improve education. Respondents expressed a lack of evidence of improved educational standards.**

#### **Council's response to the concerns raised:**

Reference to this matter can be found in the consultation report on the proposal at issue 28, page 34 and also issue 40, page 41.

The consultation document set out the school's current targets for improvement and explains how the proposal would support the school to improve. Providing the appropriate resources and technologies to ensure we support learners to meet the objectives of the framework is an important consideration in developing our plans for new school buildings as part of our strategy for Band B of the 21st Century Schools Programme.

The learning environment and infrastructure, including both indoor and outdoor facilities and learning space are key elements in supporting both teachers and learners. This is reflected in the aims of the national curriculum and Digital Competence Framework (DCF) and the Council's ambitions for 21st Century Schools with full access to 21st Century technologies. This is therefore part of a wider National strategy, and reflected in the National Mission. An additional benefit to this proposal is that the learning environment would require less time, creativity and intervention from staff to make it work. This would enable them to have a greater focus on achievement, attendance and pedagogy, in line with the targets listed above.

Additional responses were also provided at Issue 33, page 37 which provides extracts from an Audit Wales report published in May 2017 which also references the Salford University research "The Clever Classrooms Project".

### **Objection theme 14**

**Respondents felt that the current success of Llancarfan Primary School had been 'downplayed' during the course of the consultation.**

#### **Council's response to the concerns raised:**

Reference to this matter can be found in the consultation report on the proposal at issue 27, page 33.

Llancarfan Primary School has been evaluated as being able to benefit from additional support from the Central South Consortium, Local Authority and other schools.

The school has the following targets for improvement:

- Continue work on increasing the number of pupils achieving Level 5

- Implement strategies to ensure the performance of pupils at Level 5 is above the median and in line with performance in English and science.
- Improve attendance to move into a benchmark position above the median
- Continue to work with cluster schools on moving Good teaching to excellent
- Update its Self-Evaluation report in line with up-to-date standards
- Develop improved transition for Year 6 pupils
- Engage with NACE to further improve More Able and Talented practice across the school.

Under the national categorisation system for schools, all schools are placed in one of four support categories (green, yellow, amber or green) and one of 4 groups for ability to bring about improvement (A-D) with A being the highest for improvement capacity. The support category determines the level of support the school receives from the Central South Consortium. In 2017-18, Llancarfan was placed in a yellow support with the ability to bring about improvement judged as B, having previously been in an amber support category. In 2017-2018, 28 out of 56 schools in the Vale of Glamorgan were placed in a green support category. For further information about the categorisation scheme, please see Welsh Government's parents' guide to the National School Categorisation System:

<http://gov.wales/docs/dcells/publications/150119-parents-guide-en.pdf>

This was discussed at the extraordinary Scrutiny Committee on 15 October 2018. An extract of these minutes is provided below for clarity.

“The Cabinet Member also wished to add that the aforementioned point of Llancarfan school being categorised as a yellow school was subjective and the Council was not in a position to confirm if, at all, this category would change if the school was to move. The Director of Learning and Skills, for clarification purposes, pointed out that the reference she had made to the school being categorised as yellow under Welsh Government's categorisation system was relevant in that it demonstrated that the school has room for improvement. She was of the view that the proposal would support the school to achieve the improvements set out in its School Improvement Plan”.

It is the Council's view that the proposal would support the school to achieve the improvements set out in its School Improvement Plan.

### **Objection theme 15**

**Respondents were concerned that it will be impossible for parents to access pre and post school clubs, and Children will therefore be denied access to an important part of education.**

### **Council's response to the concerns raised:**

Reference to this matter can be found in the consultation report on the proposal at issue 50, page 48.

The report advises that after school provision could still operate and be available from the community hall. As school transport would be provided for children from the Llanccarfan, Llanbetherly and Llanccadle areas to the transferred school, it is possible on the return journey home that children could be dropped off at the community hall to continue with their after school club provision.

In addition, under issue 42, page 43 of the consultation report, the Council maintained its commitment to supporting our communities and would look to work closely with the organisations identified in the Community Impact Assessment to minimise any negative impact. The Governing Body of the school would also be encouraged to maintain these links with the community organisations where they positively support the ethos and management of the school.

In addition, reference to this matter can also be found in the consultation report on the proposal at issue 30 on page 36. It is acknowledged that the staff and pupils make full use of the resources they have available to them. The accommodation at Llanccarfan is challenging however and there are examples of the teachers experiencing difficulties in managing curriculum delivery. ICT concerns have been outlined in issue 27, another example relates to sport. Feedback was received during the recent consultation event with regard to the difficulties in teaching some team sports, such as cricket on a restricted tennis court. In addition, the constraints of the school site meant that during sports day, teachers had to place mattresses against the walls for health and safety reasons in order to prevent pupils from running into walls and injuring themselves during races. An additional benefit to this proposal is that the learning environment provided at a new school building would require less intervention from staff to make it work. This would enable them to have a greater focus on achievement, attendance and pedagogy.

### **Objection theme 16**

**Respondents stated that Estyn have no concerns regarding the buildings or site. Llanccarfan Primary School had received a good report from Estyn.**

### **Council's response to the concerns raised:**

Reference to this matter can be found in the consultation report on the proposal at issue 29, page 35.

Estyn have a responsibility to report on their findings at a school. They are not required to recommend a move to new premises. They have however acknowledged in their response to this proposal that "the school does not meet the standards set out in the statutory framework for school buildings and design in Wales and routes through the village and lanes to access the school are congested." They also acknowledge that the "school site is restricted in size".

Estyn have been consulted on the proposal and have responded positively to the proposal indicating that the Vale of Glamorgan Council has presented a sound rationale for the proposal to create a new school building for Llancafán Primary School with the addition of 48 nursery places for pupils on a part-time basis, on a new site in Rhose.

Estyn further commented that the proposal has considered appropriately outcomes, provision and leadership at Llancafán Primary School. It has drawn on a suitable range of evidence to do this including a brief analysis of the school's performance data over the past 3 years.

### **Objection theme 17**

**Respondents concerned that current school numbers are affected by the proposal and that prospective parents are choosing others schools/areas. Pupil numbers have dropped at the school as a result of the consultation.**

#### **Council's response to the concerns raised:**

Reference to this matter can be found in the consultation report on the proposal at issue 5, page 8.

The Council is projecting that surplus capacity will increase to 28 places (22%) over the next five year period. This does not into take account any impact of the proposed move of Llancafán Primary School to the new site. There is a drop in the Llancafán reception intake for September 2018 but this is not attributable to the proposal. The closing date for reception applications was the 8 January 2018 which was prior to the proposal being launched. A number of factors relating to the proposal, including local campaigns, are likely to have an impact on future pupil numbers and parental choice. This could result in some parents choosing alternative schools. In recognition of this the Council has offered funding protection to the Governing Body to sustain the school in the interim.

### **Objection theme 18**

**Respondents expressed concerns that that the proposal favours religious children/families over non-religious children/families and reduces freedom of choice for parents to send children to non-religious schools. Access to Cowbridge Comprehensive was cited as an example.**

#### **Council's response to the concerns raised**

Reference to this matter can be found in the consultation report on the proposal at issue 4, page 7.

Cowbridge Comprehensive School has ten feeder primary schools serving the school of which four are Church in Wales Voluntary Aided schools who control their own admissions policy and admissions to the school. Therefore, parents not wishing to access a religious Cowbridge feeder for their child could apply to Y Bont Faen Primary School, Llanfair Primary School, Llangan Primary

School or Llancarfan Primary School. All feeder schools are inclusive schools serving Cowbridge Comprehensive School with no considered bias toward religious beliefs. The denominational schools serve their local village and communities irrespective of faith and denomination. Parents have a choice for their children attending a Church in Wales primary school to either attend a denominational or a non-denominational secondary school.

### **Objection theme 19**

**Respondents expressed concern that as Llancarfan Primary School has attracted young families to the village who have helped support essential community services and keep the community alive, the village demographic will negatively alter in terms of increased age and decrease the diversity of the population.**

#### **Council's response to the concerns raised:**

Reference to this matter can be found in the Community Impact Assessment, page 17.

Feedback received as part of the consultation suggested that Llancarfan village and the surrounding area would no longer be desirable to families due to the transfer of the school. This was considered, however, the Council noted that there are a number of strong communities across the Vale of Glamorgan that are not within walking distance of a school that are nonetheless highly desired by families. According to the 2011 census data, the population of Llandow, St Donats and Welsh St Donats has a similar mean age to Llancarfan despite there being no primary school within the village.

### **Objection theme 20**

**Respondent requested help to support the community in maintaining this County Treasure. Historical value of the site as a County Treasure.**

#### **Council's response to the concerns raised:**

Reference to this matter can be found in the consultation report on the proposal at issue 49, page 48.

It has been acknowledged that the site is situated within the Llancarfan Conservation Area and is identified in the Llancarfan Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan as a 'positive building' as it contributes to the character or appearance of the conservation area in a positive manner. The building has been identified and included in the Council's 'County Treasures' list. Any future planning proposals with regard to the school building would be subject to consideration of its status as a County Treasure alongside clear adherence to the policies and regulations in place with regard to buildings with this status.



## **Objection theme 21**

**Respondents expressed concern that parents will need to commute in the opposite direction, which may have an impact on their jobs or force relocation.**

### **Council's response to the concerns raised:**

Reference to this matter can be found in the consultation report on the proposal at issue 1, page 5.

School transport would be put in place for children living in the Llancarfan and surrounding area provided in line with the Council's school transport policy. School transport arrangements would be available for parents from the Llancarfan and surrounding areas to access in order for their children to attend the relocated school in Rhoose. This would not mean that parents would need to commute any further from their current arrangements. Some parents may have less distance to travel that wasn't available to them previously.

It is not possible for the Council to develop proposals on school organisation based on the personal circumstances of parents such as work location. Free school transport is available for primary aged pupils from the September after they turn 4 who reside two or more miles away from their school.

## **Objection theme 22**

**Respondents expressed concern that the village will be negatively impacted in its future sustainability as prospective residents will choose other areas/schools.**

### **Council's response to the concerns raised:**

Reference to this matter can be found in the consultation report on the proposal at issue 11, page 11.

This section acknowledged that the figures for the Llancarfan Primary School on a new site in Rhoose are based on the current pupil numbers for Llancarfan Primary School and that this can change. However, whilst parents have the right to express parental preference and to change schools, there is no guarantee that those preferences can be met. The acceptance of an application to transfer to an alternative school is dependent upon the availability of school places at other schools. Whilst it is hoped that all pupils will continue to attend Llancarfan Primary School following a move to a new site, it should be noted that availability of primary school places to facilitate a transfer to an alternative school is limited in the Western Vale.

This was also referenced in the Consultation report under issue 44, page 45 of the report where it was acknowledged that some parents have chosen to send their children to Llancarfan due to its small school ethos and size. The report also expressed concern relating to existing surplus capacity at the

school. “Over the last three years, an average of 4 children have been born in the Llancafán Primary School catchment area each year compared to 18 places available at the reception intake. The school has a catchment area population of 55 primary age children set against a capacity of 126 places. Only 29 of the 55 primary aged children living in the catchment area attend the school”.

Additional responses were also provided in relation to this objection under Issue 39, page 41 of the Consultation Report which reiterated that there are many reasons why parents choose schools and that concerns relating to the loss of a rural ethos to Llancafán School would be addressed in the design process. Specifically, all new school sites are provided with forest areas in order to ensure that the learning experience makes full use of the outdoors. The Council would work with Forest School Wales to ensure that there is sustainable Forest School provision supported by a national network that will nurture the development of projects, offer advice, provide resources, guide best practice and provide continuing professional development at the school.

### **Objection theme 23**

**Respondents expressed concern about the lack of infrastructure to meet the anticipated demands in Rhoose, and in general, and were concerned about traffic congestion in the area.**

#### **Council’s response to the concerns raised:**

Reference to this matter can be found in the consultation report on the proposal at issues 21, page 25, and issue 22, page 26.

The Council approved development in the Rhoose area as part of the Council’s Local Development Plan 2011 – 2026.

If the proposal were to be implemented, traffic and transport implications would be considered as part of the Transport Assessment that would be required in order to achieve planning consent for the building works for the school. As part of the design process a transport management plan would be developed which will include input from highway officers. Onsite parking provision would be considered in the design of the new school.

If the proposal were approved, a planning application will be submitted for the build of a 210 place school on the new development. The highways department are a statutory consultee for planning applications who will provide detailed impartial comments on the proposal. This would include recommendations if improvements to the road network are required particularly as school transport would be provided to the school from the Llancafán, Llancale and Llanbethery area.

The Council has already received developer contributions for highway works and sustainable transport facilities in respect of the north-west development. Sustainable transport facilities include information, facilities, services or projects which provide or improve access for pedestrians, cyclists, public transport users, motor cycles, taxis or car shares in the vicinity of the site and

within the Rhoose ward boundary. This will include road safety measures in Rhoose.

As part of a planning application a traffic impact assessment would be carried out to look at what improvements would need to be made to the existing road infrastructure.

#### **Objection theme 24**

**Respondents expressed concern that funding from Welsh Government had not yet been received in full to fund the proposal and the change to the percentage of Local Authority funding.**

#### **Council's response to the concerns raised:**

Reference to this matter can be found on pages 26 and 31 of the consultation document on the proposal.

In July 2017, the Council submitted its Strategic Outline Programme (SOP) to Welsh Government, identifying the projects included within the Band B programme.

On 10 November 2017, the Education Secretary Kirsty Williams announced that the Council's proposals met Welsh Government's investment objectives and subject to approval of the individual business cases, Welsh Government is committed to supporting all of the projects presented. This was confirmed in writing on 6 December 2017.

On 22 January 2018, Cabinet approved the proposed Band B phase of the 21st Century Schools Programme. Funding for the projects was based on an anticipated Welsh Government intervention rate of 50% funding for non-faith school schemes and 85% funding for Voluntary Aided faith school schemes.

On 21 November 2018 Welsh Government and WLGA issued a joint statement announcing a change to the Welsh Government intervention rate for the 21st Century Schools Programme. Welsh government funding for non-faith school schemes would increase from 50% to 65%. A new intervention rate was introduced for facilities for those pupils with additional learning needs and those in pupil referral units at 75% Welsh Government funding.

Should Cabinet approve the proposal, a Business Justification Case would be submitted to Welsh Government to secure the funding for the project. This approach is consistent with previous projects.

#### **Objection theme 25**

**Respondents stated that the change in intervention rate for Band B funding, renders the information in the Consultation document as inaccurate. Financial assumptions including viability of alternatives should therefore be revisited in light of Band B intervention rate change.**

### **Council's response to the concerns raised:**

On 21 November 2018 Welsh Government and WLGA issued a joint statement announcing a change to the Welsh Government intervention rate for the 21st Century Schools Programme. Welsh government funding for non-faith school schemes would increase from 50% to 65%. Welsh Government confirmed that there would not be an increase in the overall funding envelope for each Local Authority. As there is to be no increase in the overall funding envelope, there was not need to revisit individual schemes.

On 7 January 2019 the Council's Cabinet considered the revised programme in light of this change. The total capital funding for the Primary Provision in Western Vale scheme will remain at £4.185m with £1.465m being funded by the Council and £2.720m being funded by Welsh Government.

### **Objection theme 26**

**Respondents expressed concern that the community and local businesses in Llancarfan will be negatively affected.**

### **Council's response to the concerns raised:**

Reference to this matter can be found within the final published Community Impact Assessment, pages 9 to 28.

The initial Community Impact Assessment was updated to reflect the responses received and was re-issued as part of the second consultation exercise. It has been acknowledged in the Community Impact Assessment that there would be some negative impact within the local community and on local businesses. Please refer to the [Community Impact Assessment](#) for further information relating to this matter.

The Council is committed to supporting our communities and would look to work closely with the organisations identified in the Community Impact Assessment to minimise any negative impact. The Council would continue to support the community of Llancarfan through its Creative Rural Communities initiative, which sees the Council supporting communities and enterprises to develop innovative projects and ideas that will create long term social and economic benefits. The Strong Communities Grant Fund offers grants to Community Groups, the Voluntary Sector and Town and Community Councils towards the cost of initiatives within the Vale of Glamorgan which help to support the Council's vision of "strong communities with a bright future". The grant fund totals £672,000 over three years until March 2020. The fund aims to:

- Improve the resilience of organisations/groups or their activities by funding activities which add value to their current work and reduce their reliance on grant funding in the future. Provide seed corn funding towards initiatives that can demonstrate longer term sustainability.
- Undertake consultation, feasibility, design and other specialist work to develop proposals for future activity and funding bids.

- Meet the capital costs of schemes by purchasing plant, machinery, equipment or other assets.
- Undertake work that would enable services to be provided, for example, through increased income generation potential.
- Open up Section 106 funding to specific communities where developments have taken place.

Funding for facilities and open space projects in specific areas will be announced when each round is opened for applications.

Support small scale and innovative projects.

This proposal is an education proposal which aims to address specific issues of school place capacity within the Western Vale. The School Organisation Code asserts that “the prime purpose of schools is the provision of education’. It is therefore not reasonable to expect schools and pupils to carry the wider burden of the impact on the community. Ultimately, economic and social factors are not educational issues and cannot be allowed to compromise the education of children. The Council would however continue to support the communities involved, if this proposal is to progress, in various ways to ensure that any identified negative impact is minimised.