

Western Vale Primary Provision

*Considerations for the Vale of Glamorgan
Council Learning and Culture
Scrutiny Committee*

28 September 2018

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1 Introduction

This report is presented to the Vale of Glamorgan Council's *Learning and Culture Scrutiny Committee* in response to the Council's "Western Vale Primary Provision" document published on 11th September 2018. The proposal outlines the transfer of Llanccarfan School to a new 210-place primary school building in Rhooose with a part-time 48-place nursery.

Whilst those presenting this report fully understand the Council's need to meet future demand from the new housing developments proposed for Rhooose, this report is presented as evidence that:

- The Vale of Glamorgan Council is missing a golden opportunity to take a **bold, imaginative** and **workable** approach to reconfiguring primary provision in the Western Vale.
- **Strategic planning has been narrowly focused** on one favoured option, and **credible alternatives have not been fully explored** to allow pupils in all communities to fully benefit from their educational environments.
- **Other options for funding the proposals have not been fully explored.**
- The **full impact of the proposals** on all stakeholders, including pupils, parents, and the wider Rhooose and Llanccarfan communities **has not been accurately assessed.**
- The **educational benefits of the current Llanccarfan School** site have not been fairly nor fully considered in the report presented to Cabinet by Officers.
- The **consultation process** run by Vale of Glamorgan Council has been flawed and the subsequent report is biased as a result.

In short, the single-minded focus in the Council's Consultation Report on "rationalisation of school provision" and "minimisation of additional revenue costs" comes at the expense of:

- **a sound educational rationale;**
 - the opportunity to meet new demand in Rhose by **investing in Rhws Primary School;**
 - capitalising on Llancarfan Primary School's designation as the Vale's only rural school, **uniquely eligible for additional funding** from Welsh Assembly Government.
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2.1 The Choice for Rural Schooling

Since the proposal was first announced to the public on January 17th 2018 Llanccarfan School has become listed as the Vale's only rural School by the Welsh Assembly Government. Through this designation additional opportunities are available for funding and to develop Llanccarfan School as a flagship rural school for the Vale.

Llanccarfan Primary School provides **alternative rural educational opportunities** for pupils and allows the Council to have **diversity** and **choice** for parents within its Primary School portfolio.

This choice is reflected in feedback received from current parents at Llanccarfan Primary School who were surveyed during the consultation process between 1 June and 18 June 2018 (referenced within Annex G of the Council's report).

The results stated that the **small school size** (mentioned by 93% of parents) and **rural setting** (79%) were by far the most common reasons given by parents for choosing Llanccarfan Primary. These factors **ranked higher** than the quality of education provided by the school (65%) and the feeder link to Cowbridge Comprehensive (65%).

Only five parents (12% of the sample) said they would choose the new school, while **88% said they would consider another option.**

The survey calls into real question the number of pupils likely to transfer to the new school, and how many new school entrants from within the revised catchment area will apply to attend once the transfer period is over.

The current school offers the ability to learn outdoors and make use of the natural environment. A small, designated green area in the proposed new school would not offer anywhere near the range of opportunities, or benefits that the natural environment surrounding the existing school offers. This environment includes wonderful topography; hills, valleys, woodland, streams, and the ford and bridges, together with the wildlife that inhabits these areas. Pupils make use of this outdoor environment, its wildlife and wooded areas.

Furthermore, as presented within the Appendix of this report, prospective parents of the School have come forward to demonstrate that they choose Llancarfan School due to its rural setting.

Within their responses there is evidence of the impact that the uncertainty over the School's future through this process is having upon their decisions.

2.2 Reduction in numbers at Llancarfan School

The report presented by the Council highlights a fall in intake at Llancarfan School for the 2018/19 academic year.

As highlighted by the Llancarfan School Governing Body's response to the consultation, **the reason for this has been directly linked to the Council's proposals:**

“We are deeply concerned about the news that the admissions have dropped from 7 to 4 since notification of the proposal to relocate the school and would like to scrutinise these applications. We have received feedback from parents and are deeply concerned with comments that the Admissions Officer made about the school being a second choice for parents through the consultation process and have little confidence in the admissions process and integrity of the data as a result and would like to see all applications to Llancarfan school. There are surplus places at Llancarfan school currently, running at 16% which is below the Welsh Government’s position on what is considered significant (25%).”

(Consultation Report, Annex E, p66)

Appendix 8.3.17 of this report is a statement from two parents who have removed their children from the School as a direct result of these proposals, and they confirm the Council’s uncertainty led them to that decision.

The Council are highlighting there being an issue of falling school numbers to question the School’s viability. However, it is **their own actions directly which are leading to this consequence.** This is having an acutely detrimental impact on the School and is breeding insecurity about the School’s future.

There is every reason to believe that pupil numbers would increase if the School was championed as an exemplar of rural education fit for the 21st Century.



3 (B) The Public Sector Equality Duty

3.1 Consultation Responses

We acknowledge that the Council's proposal and Consultation Report do not discriminate against those with protected characteristics.

However, rural communities across Wales face a number of disadvantages associated with an ageing population, poor transport links, limited employment opportunities and access to social amenities that are taken for granted in other settings. **The proposal to transfer a village school away from its established rural community should therefore require the Council to pay particular care to these issues.** The logic of this point is reflected in the addition to the Welsh Assembly Government's School Organisation Code of a presumption against rural school closure.

In this context, it is significant that under the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), public bodies are required:

“to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities.”¹


There has been an **overwhelmingly strong and united opposition** to the Council's proposals from **all** major interest groups, highlighting the impact it will have on the communities affected, including:

- **1,046 consultees (92% of all submissions).**

¹ UK Government (2012) Review of Public Sector Equality Duty, <https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/review-of-public-sector-equality-duty-steering-group>

- **1,959 individuals** who signed a petition against the proposal.
- The **majority of young people** consulted in class or in a workshop at the School either opposed the proposal or abstained from voting.
- The collective view of **Governing Bodies** at Llancarfan and Rhws Primaries
- **Llancarfan Community Council.**
- All the main **businesses and community groups** serving the area (Fox and Hounds Pub, After School Club, Llancarfan & District Community Association, Llancarfan Society, St Cadoc's Church, Llancarfan Tennis Club, Llancarfan Community Cinema).
- **Local politicians** (including Jane Hutt AM, Andrew RT Davies AM, David Melding AM, Rt Hon Alun Cairns MP, and Councillors across the Vale).

Given strength of feeling, which is also evident from statements submitted within the Appendix of this report, *the Council should take special care to avoid advancing a proposal that is commonly agreed could disadvantage rural communities in the area.*



4 (C) Reasons for the proposal, Options Considered and Consultation Process

4.1 Strategic planning was flawed from the start and a second consultation could have been avoided if stakeholders were involved earlier

- Vale of Glamorgan Council's planning for 21st Century Schools Band B funding began in January 2017, but Llanccarfan school leadership team and Governors were not told about plans for the school until January 2018 when the proposal had already been decided (see Freedom of Information request in Appendix 8.2.2 and supporting timeline in Appendix 8.4.3).
- This contravenes guidance on 21st Century Schools funding, which advises applicants to develop their strategic plans "...through discussion with a wide range of stakeholders [...] and so deliver a consensus approach where possible."² The Strategic Outline Programme (SOP) is expected to "provide evidence that school governors are in support of programme proposals". This is not the case.
- It also stands in marked contrast to the approach taken to strategic planning for Band A funding, which followed "a consultation and involvement strategy" comprising "various consultation meetings, workshops and visits that have assisted to the development of the design at this stage." (Appendix 8.4.2 - Vale of Glamorgan Council SOP (2010)).

4.2 The Proposal is based on a number of false premises

False premise 1: transferring Llanccarfan is a simple relocation

- This stretches beyond recognition the concept of transfer in the School Organisation Code.

² Welsh Local Government Association (2018) *21st Century Schools – Strategic Outline Programme (SOP)*, Available at: <http://21stcenturyschools.org/applying-for-funding/strategic-outline-programme/?lang=en>

- The three regulated alterations will end the provision of primary education in Llancarfan and replace it with a new school located in a different area (moving to a suburban housing estate five miles away); with a different catchment and different feeder school arrangements; with almost twice as many pupils; with a 3-11 age range; with more staff to accommodate the increased size of the school; with new governors to reflect the different families and community the school will serve, and the new staff intake (necessitating a new Instrument of Government).
- **Contrary to Vale of Glamorgan Council assertions, it is impossible for Llancarfan Primary School to relocate and expand while still preserving its small school ethos, educational merits and appeal to parents.**

False premise 2: there will be significant demand for additional places in Rhoose

- Alternative pupil yield calculations (Appendix 8.4.1), together with the results of the Llancarfan School parent survey (Consultation Report, Annex G), indicate demand for pupil places at the new school will be lower than anticipated.
- Furthermore, the final 350 houses may or may not be completed by 2026, according to the Consultation Report, and might never get built at all.
- **This will result in the new school carrying surplus places for at least the first five years after opening (and possibly indefinitely).**

False premise 3: Demand for additional places in Rhose can only be met by building a new school

- Contradictory information was given during the consultation that 21st Century Schools funding is only available for new schools. This is untrue, as Kirsty Williams AM recently explained (Appendix 8.1).
- Rhws Primary has potential for further development and would benefit from additional investment to meet existing and new demand in Rhose.
- **Investment in Rhws Primary School would avoid unnecessary division in the local community caused by a new school in Rhose.**

False premise 4: The designation of Llancarfan as a rural school is a threat

- Vale of Glamorgan Council initially supported Welsh Government proposals to introduce a presumption against rural school closure, but then argued against Llancarfan's inclusion in the draft list of rural schools in Wales (Appendices 8.2.3 and 8.4.3).
- Welsh Government subsequently confirmed Llancarfan fits the official criteria for designation, making it the only school in the Vale eligible for dedicated funding for rural schools.
- **Rural school designation presents an opportunity to secure Llancarfan's long term sustainability, by taking advantage of Welsh Government funding and because rural schools are not bound by the same requirement to address surplus places under the new School Organisation Code.**

4.3 The public consultation was beset by problems

- Unusually, Vale of Glamorgan Council launched a second consultation on the same proposal to address issues raised first time around, but **the amendments and additional information failed to reduce the scale of opposition** to the proposal (first consultation: 92% opposed; second consultation: 91% opposed).
- **Important details were missed from both sets of consultation documentation** (e.g. confirmation that feeder arrangements would change to either Llantwit Major School or Whitmore High School).
- An IT software flaw, which went undetected until the second consultation analysis was underway, meant that some **detailed submissions were not received in full** by Vale of Glamorgan Council.
- Vale of Glamorgan Council **failed to consider appropriate alternative options to the proposal**, including expanding Rhws Primary to a two-form entry 420 place school (adding 45 places to the roll) and taking advantage of funding options available to rural schools to develop Llancarfan into a class-leading provider in a rural setting.

4.4 The report of the Cabinet Member for Learning and Culture and the Consultation Report are self-evidently biased

- The Cabinet Member's summary of key concerns (section 68) is **highly selective**, reducing 50+ issues raised by opponents of the proposal to 12 bullet points of arguable significance.
- The Cabinet Member's report **over-states the case in support of the proposal**. For example, section 103 says "By 2022/23 there will be a deficit of 90 school places within the Western vale under the current school

organisational arrangements.” But by Vale of Glamorgan Council’s own account this is supposition, not fact, based on pupil yield estimates and the assumption that a second housing development will go ahead and be fully occupied by this date.

- The Consultation Report unfairly presents the summary of key themes and issues raised by statutory consultees (Annex A) and of comments received in favour of the proposal (Annex B) in different ways. Annex B is made up of selected verbatim quotes from consultees, rather than a summary of the points raised. In contrast, **none of the 1,046 responses opposed to the proposal are quoted directly in Annex A**, which lacks compelling personal testimony.



5.1 Impact upon Rhws Primary School

Rhws Primary School is a **successful School** serving the Rhoose area and is **well-supported** by the local community.

There are serious concerns from staff and parents that, should these proposals be implemented, there will be a **detrimental impact upon their school** and subsequent **community divisions**. There are further concerns that the catchment area of the new school would not actually serve the community of Rhoose itself – only the new development - whilst creating large amounts of unnecessary traffic with people having to bring their children five miles out of the way to school.

Whilst the Rhws Primary School building requires some building improvements (as acknowledged by the Governing Body of Rhws Primary School in their letter responding to the Consultation in Annex E of the Council's report), Rhoose residents and Governors believe **Section 106 money should be used to develop the current school**. Furthermore, when the new build extension to Rhws Primary school was developed in 2009, **architects' plans were drawn up with a view to being able to extend further in the future**. This has not been explored in sufficient detail in the Council's report.

5.2 Impact upon Llancarfan

There are significant levels of concern that the Community Impact Assessment (CIA) prepared by the Vale of Glamorgan Council fails to accurately describe and capture the community of Llancarfan, Llanbethery and Llantrithyd, or to provide a true

reflection of the risk of adverse impact should the school 'move' to a new building in Rhoose. Neither does it pick up upon, to a sufficient degree, the concerns of the wider Rhoose community about the proposals.

Some of the measures used are not the most appropriate (and appear to have been consciously, or unconsciously selected as they give weight to the proposal), rather than measures which truly reflect the status of the current school in the community, the educational and social benefits it offers, together with its strong links to the community, businesses and organisations.

For other measures, evidence is lacking or unbalanced in nature. The current assessment also certainly fails to recognise the true impact upon businesses, organisations and facilities within the community should the current school 'move' to Rhoose.

It should be made clear that any suggestion that the wider community expects the schools and pupils to carry the wider burden of the impact upon the community and compromise the education of children, is rejected and completely untrue.

There is no evidence to support this assertion. To the contrary, the education of the children is foremost in community minds.

Allowing parents and their children to have the choice to continue their education in a rural school in Llancafán, with the benefits it brings, and also in a school that is acceptable to the community of Rhoose, is not to compromise the education of those children.

It should be noted, that whilst the Vale of Glamorgan Council consider this to be an alteration and transfer of the school within the relevant code, from the perspective of the community, the removal of the school from Llancafán, is a closure.

5.2.1 Community Facilities Used Regularly by the School

This measure focuses purely upon facilities used by the school, when, there is a much wider picture to consider; not just that of the facilities used directly by the school, but by the pupils, their parents and families and also, of course, the community organisations to whom they lend support. This, most importantly, encompasses the families of pupils from outside the immediate area.

The Vale of Glamorgan Council placed great emphasis on the current school not directly signposting parents to businesses and organisations in the community. Again, this is clearly not the relevant test. There is strong evidence of the businesses, organisations and community facilities supported and used by pupils and families during term time and holidays. The businesses, community organisations and facilities are referred to in the following paragraphs.

5.2.2 Impact on local businesses

There are a number of local businesses and organisations located close to the school, that include the tennis club, community cinema, after school club and public house. Each is used by a large number of pupils, parents and families. Pupils and parents who live outside the immediate area, would no longer make use of these businesses if the school was transferred.

Llancarfan Lawn Tennis Club – the school pay a fee for use of the tennis club facilities. As the school attracts pupils from a wider area, it brings increased membership to the tennis club. It is used by pupils, friends and family out of school hours; such use and membership continuing beyond primary school years.

If the proposal proceeds, the tennis club would lose three most important income streams: revenue from tennis lessons for pupils, holiday tennis camps (which are highly popular) and membership income from pupils and their families. Without this income the tennis club will no longer be viable.

The suggestion that the new school and governing body in Rhoose could support and promote the Llancarfan Lawn Tennis club to parents is unlikely to mitigate the loss suffered by the tennis club if the school is moved.

Recreational Facility - the tennis club also provides a recreational facility for the community; both current pupils and older children make use of it. It is also used for football and basketball. This recreational facility would be lost if the school moves from the village.

The Community Cinema – is supported by parents and children who attend the primary school. 60% of its members are families with children at the school, or who had children at the school within the last five years. It supports local businesses by selling locally made ice-cream, as well as soft drinks and confectionary.

The Cinema Club is unlikely to remain viable if the school moves.

The suggestion that the new school, governing body and PTA could support and signpost parents to Llancarfan Community Cinema is not a sound proposal as Rhoose already has its own community cinema.

The Fox and Hounds Public House - facilitates the annual school duck race, as well as family-friendly barbeques and events throughout the year, such as the Boxing Day tug-o-war. It is used by parents for tea / coffee and after school hours. Previously, a charity bicycle ride in which the headmaster and parents participated, to raise funds for the school and for charity, culminated in an event at The Fox and Hounds. It also hosted an evening fundraiser for the bicycle ride.

The PTA has used the Fox and Hounds for meetings and events. This is highly unlikely to continue if the school moves to Rhoose.

The Fox and Hounds, which has already been saved from closure by the local community, would suffer a drop in custom if this proposal proceeds.

Llancarfan Village Hall – many events are held in the village hall which are supported by parents of pupils and pupils, both from the Llancarfan Community Council area and without. This includes, amongst others, afternoon tea to mark national occasions, wine tastings and classes such as Pilates and Yoga. The hall is also hired out for children's' birthday parties, including an end of term 'sleep-over', with parents, for pupils leaving school and moving onto secondary education.

The village hall is also used for a privately run, after-school club offering after school care for both primary and secondary school pupils. The after-school club pays an annual fee to the Llancarfan and District Community Association which oversees the running of the village hall. Feedback received is that the after school club would not be able to continue following the transfer of the school (see Appendix 8.3.6).

The PTA has used the hall for events in conjunction with the cinema club and the school Christmas fare has been held in the hall.

The hall was also, recently used for the village show, which was supported by parents and pupils of the school.

The use of the village hall would diminish if the school moves to Rhoose, making it increasingly challenging to retain this facility as a thriving venue.

The move of the school would, undoubtedly, have a direct, adverse impact upon local community organisations and facilities; some are highly unlikely to remain; others would find it increasingly difficult to thrive. This is not adequately reflected in the current CIA score.

5.2.3 The Relationship between the School and the Community

None of the measures in the CIA consider, objectively, the relationship between the school and the community, nor the school's standing in the community.

The Vale of Glamorgan Council CIA places great weight on the community making little use of the existing school buildings and as a result, it infers there is little evidence of strong community links to the school.

This is not an accurate assessment of the position.

The Estyn school inspection report 2014 refers to *‘A strength of the school is the number of very beneficial links with the surrounding community, including the parish church, village hall, local landowners and the tennis club, to deliver and enhance the curriculum, for example in outdoor education and studies of the local area.’*³

In addition to the relationships with the businesses / organisations outlined above, other evidence of a strong links between the school and community are set out below:

Volunteer support - parents and local community members currently volunteer to support peer and individual reading sessions at the school and also volunteer to provide music classes. In a mixed aged, rural community such as Llancarfan, this is far more likely to take place, than in a sub-urban new housing estate environment of working families, who will have far less time to provide support with reading, and other subjects at school, during the school day.

The Church - the school has strong links with St Cadoc’s Church, using it to celebrate both Christmas and Harvest time, when the whole school attends. In the last week, at least 2 classes attended the church to look at the floral displays that were part of the local flower festival, run in conjunction with churches at Porthkerry and Rhosee.

The Cannon of the Church has taken school assemblies.

³ Estyn (2014) *A report on Llancarfan C.P.School – March 2014*, available at: https://www.estyn.gov.wales/sites/default/files/documents/Inspection%20report%20Llancarfan%20C.P.%20School%202014%20%28English%20only%29_0.pdf

Each year the church donates a prize to the school, to be given by the winning class to a charity of their choice, for the best decorated Christmas tree.

Should the school move to Rhoose (a different parish), the links with St Cadoc's, Llancafán will be far less visible and the church, with its marvellous historical treasures, will see less school children enter through its doors.

Llancafán Society Village Show – pupils from the community participated in this year's show. In previous years, the village show committee has worked closely with the school upon the titles and themes for show classes, so that they fitted into the curriculum, and high numbers of entries were received from pupils. Activities undertaken by pupils of Llancafán School have featured in the Society Newsletter.

The village show will not receive the same level of support from pupils, should the school move. This relationship will be lost.

The Community – many members of the village community attend the school sports day, school summer and Christmas fayres, together with the duck egg race and rehearsals for the Christmas plays/ concerts. Many relationships are established at the start and end of the school day, not only between parents, but by those pupils walking past the gates of residents of the village, who stop to say 'hello'. These relationships are at risk of being lost if the school moves.

Past relationships and Alumni – Many former pupils of Llancafán who have gone onto successful academic and other professional careers have maintained links with the community of Llancafán and are proud to have attended this rural school; some still live in the community or have family members who do. This supports the economic and social structure of the community.

The school is set in a village with a remarkable history and cultural background and has been providing education to the community since 1875. Those links with the past continue; some current pupils have grandparents, and other family members

who attended the same school. These past relationships and alumni, together with the other links referred to above, are evidence of the how strongly embedded the school is in its community and the relationship it continues to enjoy, all of which are beneficial to and are of educational value to pupils.

Notwithstanding the suggestion by the Vale of Glamorgan Council that the new school, governing body and PTA can support and sign-post to businesses and organisations in Llançarfan, the reality is that over time those connections and relationships between the new school and Llançarfan, Llanbethery and Llantrithyd community will be lost.

5.2.4 Choice of a Small, Rural School

Should this proposal proceed, parents and children that live in the local and wider community area would lose the choice of (children) attending a small school in a rural setting, with the benefits offered by such a school.

Children who live in the village would no longer be able to walk to school.

Many want to attend the same school as their siblings, Mum, or Dad, Aunts and Uncles and grandparents.

Pupils would lose the benefits of going to a school that is deeply embedded in its community and has strong links with community organisations and facilities.

The Estyn Inspection Report 2014 reflects that '*Pupils benefit from participating in cultural and environmental activities in their local area, such as the village show.*'⁴

Pupils and parents of the current school are members of the community. Accordingly, the removal of their choice to be educated in a rural school setting should be taken into consideration in the CIA.

⁴ Estyn (2014) *A report on Llançarfan C.P.School – March 2014*, available at:

https://www.estyn.gov.wales/sites/default/files/documents/Inspection%20report%20Llançarfan%20C.P.%20School%202014%20%28English%20only%29_0.pdf.pdf

5.2.5 Impact upon community demographic

Whilst it is difficult to provide evidence of what the future demographic of the Llancarfan community area will look like for certain, if the school closes, families will be far less likely to choose to live in this community.

The primary reason for many of the families moving into the community area within the past 7-10 years is the school; for its size, setting and rural ethos.

Whilst other communities might operate without a school, this community is one with strong links to its outlying areas and a strong community core, central to which is the school.

Without the current Llancarfan school, the community is likely to have a much older demographic, with the challenges that stores for the future.

Whilst the Council has suggested that it could continue to support the community of Llancarfan through its Creative Rural Communities initiative and with grant funding, this is not going to replace families with the energy and life they bring to a community.

The removal of the school from Llancarfan will directly impact the ability of its community to thrive, remain vibrant, celebrate its cultural heritage and remain resilient. It will have a significant impact not only upon the community, but also, upon its children who will lose the advantages offered by an education in a rural environment.

Not all the measures included in the Council CIA were appropriate; some showed a bias towards the proposal. Similarly, not all relevant evidence was taken into account, nor assessed in an objective manner. Had the matters outlined above been considered, the conclusion would have differed significantly. The concerns of the wider community in Rhoose do not appear to have been addressed in the assessment.

Overall, this proposal would undoubtedly result in a considerable negative impact upon the community.



6.1 Education Rationale

In the two consultations and the consultation report, the Council's educational rationale for transferring/migrating/closing Llancarfan Primary school is based on:

- New 21st Century building
- IT facilities leading to a digital curriculum
- Bigger school will help raise standards
- Mixed aged teaching was seen as a negative at Llancarfan Primary School.

According to the Auditor General for Wales there is **no evidence that new buildings improve educational outcomes**⁵. Furthermore, in 2008 Estyn gave evidence to the Welsh Government that:

*“There is no evidence to support the view that size is a significant factor [in relation to educational standards]. The quality of leadership and teaching is a more important factor than the overall size of a school.”*⁶

More recently, Estyn has concluded from a review in 2013 that larger primary schools (those with 301 or more pupils) “tend to perform better than small and medium size schools”. The proposed new school in Rhose will be classified by Estyn as a medium size school (101 to 300 pupils) **which is the same classification as Llancarfan Primary School.**

On the basis of this evidence, there is a stronger case for investment in Rhws Primary School which is already classified as a large size school.

⁵ Wales Audit Office (2017) *The 21st Century Schools and Education Programme* (p11) Available at: <http://www.audit.wales/system/files/publications/21st%20century%20school%20-%20English.pdf>

⁶ Estyn (2013) *School Size and Educational Effectiveness* Available at: <https://www.estyn.gov.wales/sites/default/files/documents/School%20size%20and%20educational%20effectiveness%20-%20December%202013.pdf>

The Welsh Government acknowledged that there was an issue with IT facilities in rural schools and funded the upgrading of their facilities. When Llancarfan becomes a designated rural school it will be able to uniquely give Vale of Glamorgan Council access to a Welsh Government £10m **“small and rural schools grant to encourage innovation and support greater school-to-school working to address issues and some of the practical difficulties of delivering education in a rural area”** as stated by Kirsty Williams AM (Cabinet Secretary for Education) in the Senedd on 19th September 2018 (Appendix 8.1).

The consultation report mentions that mixed age teaching is a challenge, but the evidence cited by the Council **has been incorrectly interpreted by Officers** because it applies to schools much smaller than Llancarfan.

6.2 Rural School Designation

Llancarfan Primary School is the only designated rural school in the Vale of Glamorgan and has the potential of becoming a flagship school in Wales. The Welsh Government are aware of the evidence from National and International studies (such as the International Journal of Educational Research⁷) that **not only do rural schools have good standards but they are embedded in their communities, create an environment for health and wellbeing, and provide the rural environment for children to interact with nature and have community support.**

⁷ Kalaoja et al (2009) Small rural primary schools in Finland: A pedagogically valuable part of the school network *International Journal of Educational Research* 48(2) p109-116

6.3 Reference to Estyn

The Consultation Report and **officers of Vale of Glamorgan have made selective statements regarding Estyn** (without referencing and as demonstrated in section 6.1 above).

In the Llancarfan School Inspection⁸ report of March 2014, Estyn say:

*“the learning environment is **varied and stimulating**”*

*“The school is a **happy inclusive community**”*

*“There are very **supportive relationships** between pupils”*

*“the buildings and site provide **stimulating and varied** learning environment”*

*“Pupils make **good use of the outdoor learning environment and its wildlife and wooded areas**”*

*“Staff use the locality well to **extend pupils’ experiences**, such as pond dipping in local ford”*

*“A strength of the school is the number of very **beneficial links with the surrounding community [...]** to **deliver and enhance the curriculum**, for example in outdoor education and studies of the local area”*

It is notable that Estyn’s conclusion on the proposal is hedged in guarded terms, and **hardly provides a ringing endorsement**: “This is likely to at least maintain the standard of education provision in the area” (Consultation Report, Annex F).

⁸ Estyn (2014) *A report on Llancarfan C.P.School – March 2014*, available at: https://www.estyn.gov.wales/sites/default/files/documents/Inspection%20report%20Llancarfan%20C.P.%20School%202014%20%28English%20only%29_0.pdf.pdf.pdf.pdf.pdf.pdf.pdf.pdf.pdf.pdf.pdf.pdf.pdf.pdf.pdf.pdf.pdf.pdf

6.4 Educational Consequences

The Consultation did not examine the educational consequences of establishing a new 21st Century school within half a mile of Rhws Primary. The opportunity of expanding Rhws Primary School using 21st Century funding (e.g. either on its own site or a split site federation) has not been explored in any depth.

It is possible to have a '21st Century' Rhws Primary to address additional demand from new housing, and a class-leading rural school in Llancarfan.



7.1 Business Case for Funding

- Llancarfan School gained rural status from the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) during the consultation period.
- The code to protect rural schools is anticipated to come in to effect on 1st November 2018.
- For this proposal 50% funding under Band B of the WAG 21st Century Schools Programme is subject to approval of the business case.
- In response to questions raised in the Senedd, Kirsty Williams AM has highlighted:

“We have been very clear to local authorities about the direction of policy travel in this area and I would expect them to be cognisant of that when they're making any decisions about the future of a rural school that would be listed under the new code.” (Appendix 8.1)

- **It is therefore highly likely that the Business case for 21st Century funding will be challenged by the WAG and / or funding could be lost altogether.**

7.2 Use of 21st Century Funds

- The Consultation Report implies that 21st Century funding can only be used for the building of a new school. However, Kirsty Williams AM has clarified that:

“It is not a requirement of the twenty-first century schools programme to access that money to have a completely new

build... I have been to refurbishment projects the length and breadth of this country, where twenty-first century schools programme money has been used to refurbish part of a school... this idea that you could only access that money if you build a brand new school from scratch is a fallacy—that is not correct.” (Appendix 8.1)

7.3 Alternative Approaches to Securing 21st Century Funding

The 21st Century Schools Programme endeavours to “ensure school facilities are developed to meet the needs of the local community” (Issue 38, Annex A of Consultation Report). The current proposal seeks to remove a rural school with inextricable and unique community links. 21st Century funding could be obtained to implement innovative, educationally excellent Schools for both communities:

i. Develop Llancarfan as a rural school

- There are substantial opportunities to **capitalise on the School’s rural school status** and develop Llancarfan as a flagship model of rural education (e.g. working with Forest School Wales as raised in Issue 39, Annex A of Consultation Report). There is an obvious **lack of such provision in the Vale of Glamorgan** - see map of approved Forest Schools in Appendix 8.4.5 of this document.
- Llancarfan is the Vale’s only school eligible to access **£10M WAG rural schools funding** specifically for encouraging innovation, improving digital technology and countering practical difficulties of delivering education in a rural area.
- Further, 21st Century funds can be awarded to **enhance the current school building and facilities**. These could be used to address the

issues of a 'constrained site' mentioned in the Consultation Report by **continuing with the extension plans for Llancarfan Primary School that are already in place** (Appendix 8.4.4) which have not been discussed in the Consultation Report. These could include the designs to:

- **Convert existing roof space** to create 2 classrooms
- **Extend the link to the hall** to create 1 classroom or additional offices or ancillary accommodation
- The above would mean that the 'temporary classrooms' currently on the site could be removed, and the site re-planned to **provide better car parking and soft and hard play areas.**

- The geographical location of Llancarfan School in the heart of the Vale provides opportunities for children from urban areas (Rhoose, St Athan, Llantwit Major and Barry) to **benefit from a forest school education** - improving and widening parental choice for schooling.

ii. **21st Century funding could be utilised to expand Rhws Primary**

- This could be achieved either through **onsite extensions or the creation of an additional new school building** for Rhws Primary (whilst maintaining Llancarfan Primary School in Llancarfan).
- 21st Century funding could **increase capacity at Rhws Primary from 375 to 420+**, potentially increasing to 630 places in a second phase to respond to increased housing provision around Rhoose. Rhws Primary governors have highlighted that **space is available to the rear of the school and that 2 rounds of extension plans have been previously proposed.** These factors are not mentioned in the consultation report and the Council officers overtly deny this feasible alternative ("there is

insufficient space on the Rhws school site to extend it” (Governors Meeting Minutes, Consultation report, Appendix A, p86)).

- A second site new build for Rhws Primary would **improve community cohesion in Rhose**, whilst maintaining Llancarfan School as a unique rural school.
- A new school building for Rhws Primary need not be for 210 places despite the report misleadingly stating that “...a 210 place building is the minimum size from an efficiency and sustainability perspective.” (Consultation Report, Appendix A, p31). As stressed by Kirsty Williams AM, there are **no minimum requirements** for a new 21st Century school. A new school building for Rhws, could be built to the most appropriate size to accommodate the additional children **without creating unnecessary surplus places**.

It is the express view of those submitting this report that the Council’s proposal is not based on sound justification nor robust pedagogic evidence. As demonstrated in this report, there are logical, workable, and financially-viable alternatives which have not been considered. Such alternatives could address the predicted increase in pupil numbers whilst capitalising on the unique educational opportunities of rural schooling. This approach would strengthen, not divide, local communities and provide all children with the opportunity to thrive in their educational environments.

We look forward to working with Vale of Glamorgan Council to achieve this vision.

8.1 Welsh Assembly Plenary Transcript – 19th September 2018

Questions to the Cabinet Secretary for Education (Kirsty Williams AM), on Rural Schools, Senedd, 19th September 2018

19/09/2018 13:38:11 / Andrew RT Davies AM

3. Will the Cabinet Secretary outline the advice the Welsh Government currently provides to local authorities in relation to rural school closures? OAQ52595

19/09/2018 13:38:15 / David Melding AM

5. What is the Welsh Government doing to protect rural schools? OAQ52599

19/09/2018 13:38:19 / Kirsty Williams AM

Thank you, Andrew. Presiding Officer, I understand that you have given your permission for question 3 and question 5 to be grouped.

The school organisation code, made under the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013, imposes requirements on Welsh Ministers, local authorities and governing bodies in respect of school organisation and provides guidance to which they must have regard when considering the closure of any school, including those in a rural setting.

19/09/2018 13:38:45 / Andrew RT Davies AM

Thank you, Cabinet Secretary, for that answer. Just before the summer recess, you issued new guidance in relation to rural schools—something that was welcomed. Obviously, that guidance will come into effect later on in the year. I'd be grateful to understand what weight local authorities should place on that specific guidance that you've put out there, at the moment. As I understand, it hasn't been incorporated into the code, but many authorities—and I think of one in the Vale of Glamorgan—are deciding on school closures as we speak, and it is important that there isn't a rush to shut many vulnerable schools before this new guidance comes into the code. So, could you indicate what weight you, as the Cabinet Secretary, place on the note that you put out just before the summer recess, please?

19/09/2018 13:39:32 / Kirsty Williams AM

Well, Andrew, as you've recognised, we are revising the code. The draft code that has been revised to reflect the consultation responses—the consultation that took place last year—was laid before the Assembly on Monday of this week. As is required by the 2013 Act, the code has to be laid for 40 days, following which it may come into force unless the Assembly resolves not to approve it. Therefore, I would expect the new code to come into force on 1 November, colleagues around this Chamber willing. We have been very clear to local authorities about the direction of policy travel in this area and I would expect them to be cognisant of that when they're making any decisions about the future of a rural school that would be listed under the new code.

19/09/2018 13:40:21 / David Melding AM

Cabinet Secretary, I've heard, in relation to the proposed transfer/closure of Llancafarn Primary School, which my colleague has just referred to, that the issue of access to the school building programme requires schools, often, to be built on new sites and schools to be consolidated or expanded. This is a real problem for schools in rural communities, where there may be a constrained site, no alternative available and where money is not available for adaptation—you've just got to go with a comprehensive new build—and this restricts the choices that local authorities have, especially when they want to increase the viability of our smaller, rural schools. Will you look at the building programme?

19/09/2018 13:41:08 / Kirsty Williams AM

First of all, can I say that it is not a requirement of the twenty-first century schools programme, to access that money, to have a completely new build? In fact, I have been to refurbishment projects the length and breadth of this country where twenty-first century schools programme money has been used to refurbish part of a school—in fact, in your new leader's constituency not so long ago. So, this idea that you could only access that money if you build a brand new school from scratch is a fallacy. That is not correct.

Each case that is put forward by our partners in local government is judged on its merits. What I do understand, with regard to the issue that I know was exercising the mind of both Andrew and you, and the Assembly Member for the Vale of Glamorgan, is the case of Llancarfan. The decision that was taken at a meeting, I believe, on Monday of this week, is that the consultation that the Vale has gone out to is now to be referred to their scrutiny committee, and they are to allow the members of that scrutiny committee to look at the proposals that the Vale of Glamorgan Council has come forward with—which I welcome—and it will ultimately be a matter for those who run the Vale of Glamorgan Council to make a decision on the future of that school.

19/09/2018 13:42:24 / Rhun ap Iorwerth AM

I think my views on supporting rural schools are well known. I sympathise with councils in all parts of Wales that face impossible budgetary scenarios and I do think that the Government has to secure adequate funding to support innovative methods of keeping schools in our communities and providing support to create multi-site area schools, which is something that I support. One element that puts pressure on education budgets, as we've heard, is the backlog of maintenance work, and I hear what you say as Cabinet Secretary, but, without doubt, the trend is there in the twenty-first century schools programme towards building new, larger schools, which don't necessarily work in rural areas. So, can you, as Cabinet Secretary, give a commitment to seek a new package of finance that is substantial and specifically for this purpose, so that the condition of a school building in rural Wales isn't such a strong driver when it comes to making decisions on the future of schools?

19/09/2018 13:43:32 / Kirsty Williams AM

Again, Presiding Officer, I would have to challenge the implication by the Member that twenty-first century schools is only available for new buildings. Again, I have been to schools in the Member's own constituency—to refurbishment projects—where investment has been used to improve facilities at a school.

With regard to additional resources for rural schools, the Member will be aware that we will be making additional resources of some £10 million over this Assembly available through our new small and rural schools grant to encourage innovation and support greater school-to-school working to address issues and some of the practical difficulties of delivering education in a rural area—money that his own council has been made aware of and has applied for and is being utilised.

8.2 Freedom of Information Requests

8.2.1 ATISN 12497 - Letter from WAG to Directors of Local Authorities (10th May 2018) and Vale of Glamorgan Council response (7th June 2018)



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref: KW/0060/18

To: Directors of Local Authorities
Diocesan Authorities

10 May 2018

Dear Colleague

The Welsh Government recently consulted on proposed revisions to the School Organisation Code following three years of operation. The consultation ended on 30 September 2017 and we are in the process of analysing consultation responses, a summary of which will be published shortly. A copy of the consultation documents can be accessed at: <https://beta.gov.wales/school-organisation-code>

The most substantial change proposed was the introduction of a presumption against the closure of rural schools. A presumption against closure of rural schools does not mean that rural schools will never close, but the case for closure must be strong and not taken until all viable alternatives have been considered.

In advance of the publication of the summary I am pleased to advise you that there has been broad support for this proposal, along with the more detailed set of procedures and requirements that proposers will need to follow (at **Annex 1**). It was encouraging to see that a number of 'predominantly rural' authorities are supportive of the policy and are already carrying out much of what will be required under the new arrangements.

Designation of rural schools

In order to have a presumption against the closure of rural schools it is necessary to designate a rural school for this specific purpose. The consultation advised that we would be using the National Statistics Urban-Rural Classification as the basis for the designation. The consultation proposed that **as a minimum** schools situated in categories 3 & 4 ("village in the sparsest context" and "other sparsest context") of the detailed classifications of the Urban-Rural classification below should be designated as rural for the purpose of the presumption against closure of rural schools, these being schools in the sparsest areas of Wales.

1. Large town in sparsest context.
2. Small town in sparsest context

3. Village in sparsest context.
4. Other (hamlet or dispersed) in sparsest context.
5. Large town in less sparse context.
6. Small town in less sparse context.
7. Village in less sparse context
8. Other (hamlet or dispersed) in less sparse context

Based on their local knowledge, consultees were invited to give their views on whether these or any other schools should be designated as rural schools for the purposes of the presumption against closure. They were advised that a final decision on the categories of the Urban Rural classification that will make up the designation of what constitutes a “rural school” for the purposes of the presumption against closure would be made following analysis of responses.

57 people responded to this question. The majority (34) respondents agreed with the proposal. Based on the outcome of the consultation we can confirm that schools in the categories of village in the sparsest context and other (hamlet or dispersed) in sparsest context of the Urban-Rural Classification will be **the minimum** number of schools that will be designated as rural for the purposes of the presumption against the closure of rural schools. An updated list of schools that derive from these two categories is attached at **Annex 2**.

However, analysis of supporting comments indicates that 6 of the 34 suggested that they considered the list was too restrictive. A large number of those that agreed did not provide supporting comments. It was therefore difficult to assess whether these individuals agreed simply on the basis that their school was included on the list.

Of the 19 respondents that disagreed, 9 disagreed on the basis that they did not agree with the designation of rural schools. The remaining 10 considered that the list was too restrictive.

Following full consideration of responses we propose to extend the designation of rural schools to include a further category of the Urban/Rural classification, thereby bringing a number of additional schools within the designation of “rural”.

Given that the majority of respondents agreed with the proposed designation and list that derived from it, we are proposing to make a modest change by adding the category “Other (hamlet or dispersed) in less sparse context” element 8 of the detailed urban-rural classification above. As a result the categories of the urban-rural classification which would be used to designate rural schools for the purposes of the presumption against closure of schools would be extended from categories 3 and 4 to categories 3, 4 and 8 of the detailed classifications above.

The additional schools which would be included as a result are set out in **Annex 3**. Extending the designation and list in this way and taking into account schools that

have closed since the consultation would increase the number of schools by 30 resulting in 221 schools or (17.5%) of schools in Wales being designated as rural.

As these proposals are in direct response to those who suggested specific additional schools that should be considered "rural" we are now seeking the views of local authorities and diocesan authorities as to the practicability of the inclusion of these 30 schools.

Local authorities and diocesan authorities should discuss their inclusion with the schools concerned at annex 3 to inform their response.

We appreciate that some of you may not agree with the introduction of a presumption against the closure of rural schools and that others of you may consider that an alternative mechanism should be developed for designating rural schools. However, these views have already been taken into account as part of the earlier consultation. Consequently, you are asked to focus on the specific question below and provide reasons to support your response.

We would be grateful therefore if you could answer the question below.

Designation of Rural Schools for the Purposes of the Presumption Against the closure of rural schools

QUESTION

The minimum number of schools that will be considered rural for the purposes of the presumption against closure of schools are those in the categories Village in sparsest context and Other (hamlet or dispersed) in sparsest context of the Urban Rural Classification .

Would extending the designation of rural schools to include schools in the category “Other (hamlet or dispersed) in less sparse context” category 8 of the National Statistics Urban-Rural Classification cause your local authority/diocesan authority any difficulties? (see annex 2 for the additional schools that would be considered rural)

Yes	No
Yes	
<p>If yes please include details below of the difficulties that this would cause. :</p> <p>The Vale of Glamorgan responded to the first consultation exercise with no schools classified as rural in the authority and as such supplied a general response on the merits of the proposal.</p> <p>The response would have been different if schools were originally identified as potentially falling under the definition of a rural school, which then would have necessitated a detailed assessment in order to provide an informed response to the exercise. As such, the Council believes that amending the context of the consultation, after it has finished, does not enable an appropriate response with regard to the initial aims of the consultation.</p> <p>The ADEW POSP group met in October 2017 where it was implied that there could be a change to the criteria used to select the schools designated as 'rural' in the code. POSP noted that they would like to be re-consulted on such a change as many LAs would respond differently if the list of schools were different from that included on the original consultation. This has not been undertaken with the group.</p> <p>In terms of the inclusion of a school within the Vale of Glamorgan area, namely Llancarfan Primary School, the authority would not consider the school as strictly rural in nature. The school is not remote compared to other authority schools in Wales; the next nearest school is 3.4 miles away and Llancarfan Primary School is only 5.2 miles away from Barry, a large urban town. Although the classification seems to depict the area of Llancarfan as a hamlet or dispersed settlement, the Council does not agree with this, as the school and its setting are no different from some other schools in the Vale of Glamorgan which have not been included. A hamlet is a settlement without a church which is not the case in Llancarfan.</p>	

The Council feels that using a distance criteria to the next nearest school would be a better factor against which to judge whether school is rural or not. The relationship between the number of children living in the catchment area and where children come from to attend a school should also be a factor. A predominantly rural school is likely to have the majority of children attending who are from the local/catchment area and which is usually too far away for parents to exercise parental preference for. The size of a school should also be a factor in classifying whether a school is rural or not. Rural schools are likely to be small in nature.

In summary the Council believes that when classifying rural schools the following factors need to be taken into account as part of an assessment;

- Distance to alternative schools
- Size of a school (determine an appropriate size for classification)
- Number of children living within the catchment area and the relationship to the number of children attending from outside the catchment area

Name of Local authority/Diocesan authority: Vale of Glamorgan Council

Name and designation of person completing:

Please return to David Weale, School Organisation and Admissions Branch,
Education Directorate, Welsh Government, Cathays Park, Cardiff CF10 3NQ or by
e-mail to SchoolsManagementDivision3@gov.Wales by **7 June 2018**

Annex 1 Presumption against the closure of rural schools

The Presumption against closure of rural schools does not mean a rural school will never close but the case for closure must be strong and not taken until all viable alternatives to closure have been considered including federation.

This will require proposers to follow a more detailed set of procedures and requirements in formulating a rural school closure proposal and in consulting on and reaching a decision as to whether to implement a rural school closure proposal.

In summary the changes to the Code will require the proposer to:

Prior to decision to consult on closure proposal

1. Consider whether a rural school will be closed as part of a proposal by referring to the designation of rural schools and a 'rural school list'. If the school is a rural school the special provisions apply.
2. Identify clear and specific reasons for formulating the proposal and consider these reasons as part of the decision making process on whether or not to consult on closure proposals.
3. Identify any reasonable alternatives to closure which might also address the reasons for the proposal and provide evidence to show that it has carefully considered all other viable options (including federation), with a clear assessment of the merits and their viability before the proposer proceeds to consult on closure, this includes:
 - The likely education benefits
 - The likely impact on the community
 - The likely effect on travelling arrangements
4. Set out in the proposal paper (i.e. a paper to be presented to the decision maker on whether, or not, a proposal should be consulted upon) the alternatives that have been identified, give an assessment of these and explain why the proposer considers in the light of the assessment that implementation of the closure would be the most appropriate response to the reasons for the proposal.
5. The proposer should not make a decision as to whether to proceed to consultation until after these preliminary requirements have been carried out. The Code states that this type of engagement is expected to lead to higher quality proposal papers and better consultations.

During and after consultation

6. Provide an opportunity for consultees to make representations on the alternatives identified, as well as the main proposal and to suggest further alternatives during the formal consultation on the proposal.
7. Following the consultation period, when reviewing its proposal, carry out a further assessment for the proposal and each of the alternatives that were set out in the proposal paper against the same matters and any new reasonable alternatives suggested through consultation responses.

8.2.2 RFI 18 6472 - Strategic Outline Programme timeline

From: FOI Unit <FoiUnit@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk>
Subject: RFI 18 6472
Date: 24 July 2018 at 15:42:23 BST
To:

Dear

RFI 18 6472

Thank you for your Freedom of Information requests.

Your requests were forwarded to the relevant officer who has now provided the following responses:

Response to email dated 25.06.18

1. Are you able to supply me with a copy of the Council's Strategic Outline Programme for school improvement under Band B of the 21st Century Schools Programme? **This will be published on the Council's website at the end of July as required by Welsh Government**
2. Please tell me the date on which Council officers began preparing the Council's Strategic Outline Programme for school improvement under Band B of the 21st Century Schools Programme. **January 2017**
3. Please tell me the date on which the Strategic Outline Programme for school improvement under Band B of the 21st Century Schools Programme was submitted by the Council to Welsh Government. **31 July 2017**
4. Please tell me the date on which the Strategic Outline Programme for school improvement under Band B of the 21st Century Schools Programme was approved by Welsh Government. **Approval in principle letter received 6 December 2017**

5. Please provide a full list of stakeholders consulted by Council officers in drafting the Strategic Outline Programme for school improvement under Band B of the 21st Century Schools Programme. **Not available**

6. Please provide the date(s) on which stakeholders were consulted by Council officers in drafting the Strategic Outline Programme for school improvement under Band B of the 21st Century Schools Programme. **Not available**

7. Please confirm whether or not the Llancarfan Primary School Senior Leadership team and/or Governing Body were consulted by Council officers when drafting the Strategic Outline Programme for school improvement under Band B of the 21st Century Schools Programme. Please also supply the date they were consulted. **Not consulted.**

8. Please supply the date on which stakeholders (including Llancarfan Primary School Senior Leadership team and/or Governing Body) were notified of the Welsh Government's approval of the Strategic Outline Programme for school improvement under Band B of the 21st Century Schools Programme. **Meeting to discuss the SOP took place on 12 January 2018**

Response to email dated 26.06.18

1. Has the Council prepared a Business Justification Case (BJC) in accordance with 21st Century Schools Programme, for the proposal outlined in the Western Vale Primary Provision consultation? **No. A BJC would only be submitted in the event that this proposal was approved by Cabinet. As the consultation has only just finished no decision has been made.**

2. If yes, are you able to supply me with a copy of the BJC?

N/A

I hope this information is of assistance but if you are dissatisfied with this response and would like to have this reviewed, please contact the Council's Monitoring Officer (Legal Services) at the Civic Offices, Holton Road, Barry, CF63 4RU.

Further information regarding FOI and the appeals process is available at www.ico.org.uk.

Kind regards

Information Governance Officer
Managing Director and Resources
Vale of Glamorgan Council / Cyngor Bro Morgannwg
tel / ffôn: 01446 700111
mob / sym:
e-mail / e-bost: foiunit@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk or
dpo@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk

Consider the environment. Please don't print this e-mail unless you really need to.

Ystyriwch yr amgylchedd. Peidiwch ag argraffu'r neges hon oni bai fod gwir angen.

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Ewch i'n gwefan yn www.bromorgannwg.gov.uk

[Find us on Facebook / Cewch ddod o hyd i ni ar Facebook](#)
[Follow us on Twitter / Dilynwch ni ar Twitter](#)

Correspondence is welcomed in Welsh or English / Croesewir
Gohebiaeth yn y Gymraeg neu yn Saesneg.

From:
Sent: 26 June 2018 08:46

Subject: Fwd: Freedom of Information Request: Western Vale Primary Provision Consultation
Importance: High

Following my previous email I have two further requests for information:

1. Has the Council prepared a Business Justification Case (BJC) in accordance with 21st Century Schools Programme, for the proposal outlined in the Western Vale Primary Provision consultation?
2. If yes, are you able to supply me with a copy of the BJC?

Thanks and kind regards,

Begin forwarded message:

From: _____
Subject: Freedom of Information Request: Western Vale Primary Provision Consultation
Date: 25 June 2018 at 19:29:49 BST
To: foiunit@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk

I would be grateful if you can address the following requests for

information in connection with the current consultation on Western Vale Primary School Provision:

1. Are you able to supply me with a copy of the Council's Strategic Outline Programme for school improvement under Band B of the 21st Century Schools Programme?

2. Please tell me the date on which Council officers began preparing the Council's Strategic Outline Programme for school improvement under Band B of the 21st Century Schools Programme.

3. Please tell me the date on which the Strategic Outline Programme for school improvement under Band B of the 21st Century Schools Programme was submitted by the Council to Welsh Government.

4. Please tell me the date on which the Strategic Outline Programme for school improvement under Band B of the 21st Century Schools Programme was approved by Welsh Government.

5. Please provide a full list of stakeholders consulted by Council officers in drafting the Strategic Outline Programme for school improvement under Band B of the 21st Century Schools Programme.

6. Please provide the date(s) on which stakeholders were consulted by Council officers in drafting the Strategic Outline Programme for school improvement under Band B of the 21st Century Schools Programme.

7. Please confirm whether or not the Llancarfan Primary School Senior Leadership team and/or Governing Body were consulted by Council officers when drafting the Strategic Outline Programme for school improvement under Band B of the 21st Century Schools

Programme. Please also supply the date they were consulted.

8. Please supply the date on which stakeholders (including Llancarfan Primary School Senior Leadership team and/or Governing Body) were notified of the Welsh Governmnet's approval of the Strategic Outline Programme for school improvement under Band B of the 21st Century Schools Programme.

I look forward to hearing your responses.

Thanks and kind regards,

8.2.3 RFI 18 6574 – Rural school designation

From:
Subject: Rural school designation
Date: 31 August 2018 at 14:27
To: Thomas, John W (Cllr) jwthomas@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk
Cc:

JB

Dear Cllr Thomas

Thanks for your time earlier this week. I'm just following up our discussion about the rural status of Llancafarn Primary School. You kindly invited additional comments in writing, and the further points I wish to raise are in connection with a response I received to a Freedom of Information request about the council's submissions to the Welsh Government's consultation on the School Organisation Code.

The information raises a number of important questions about the fitness of council officers' judgments about the rural character of Llancafarn, and the implications of this for council proposals to end the provision of primary school education in the village. I'm writing to you as Council Leader because my principal concern is about the way the council has conducted itself in dealings with the Welsh Government.

In response to my FOI request (RFI 18 6574) I was supplied with the council's original submission to the Welsh Government consultation, dated 22 September 2017.

Two points are worth noting about this submission:

1. The council agreed with the suggested amendments, including the addition of a procedural presumption against the closure of rural schools.
2. The council response stated that the "Vale of Glamorgan Council does not have any schools classified as rural schools".

On the first point, it is clear that the council accepts, unequivocally, the principle of taking additional steps to safeguard rural schools because of their special status in village life, including (but not limited to) considering all other options for managing surplus places.

On the second point, it is puzzling that despite its stated view that the Vale has no schools classified as rural, the council then went on to describe Llancafarn Primary School as "a relatively small rural school" in the first consultation on reconfiguring primary provision in the Western Vale, which was launched six months later on 5 March 2018.

Following its initial proposal on revising the School Organisation Code, the Welsh Government wrote to all local authorities on 10 May 2018 explaining its decision to expand the definition of a rural school to include the category of 'other (hamlet or dispersed) in less sparse context'.

This decision was made in response to feedback on its original proposal, and it added 30 schools to the list previously circulated for comment, including Llancafarn Primary School.

As you know, Llancafarn is the only school in the Vale of Glamorgan officially recognised as rural in the proposed new Code.

The reason for this designation is that the Rural Urban Classification system, used in Official Statistics, identifies Llancafarn as a "hamlet or other dispersed dwellings in a less sparse context". This category is one of three that the Welsh Government chose as the basis for designating schools as rural under the revised Code, following its initial consultation.

Local authorities were then invited to give feedback on the new proposal by responding to the following question:

"Would extending the designation of rural schools to include schools in the category "Other (hamlet or dispersed) in less sparse context" category 8 of the National Statistics Urban-Rural Classification cause your local authority/diocesan authority any difficulties?"

The council's response to this letter, dated 7 June 2018, is both telling and disappointing in its narrow-minded characterisation of Llancafarn.

It says:

"...the authority would not consider the school as strictly rural in nature. The school is not remote compared to other authority schools in Wales [...] Although the classification seems to depict the area of Llancafarn as a hamlet or dispersed settlement, the Council does not agree with this, as the school and its setting are no different from some other schools in the Vale of Glamorgan which have not been included. A hamlet is a settlement without a church which is not the case in Llancafarn."

Does this characterisation of Llancafarn really represent the council's view? Do you, as Leader of the Council, recognise and stand by this position?

After all, the village's rurality and remoteness are noted in the council's own Conservation Appraisal and Management Plan, which describes Llancafarn as

"...a small rural village [which] has a remoteness despite its close proximity to Barry."

The Plan goes on to state what every local resident and visitor to the village and surrounding area recognises about Llancafarn, namely that it

"...lies in a countryside setting of woodland and fields, within the somewhat enclosed valley of the Nant Llancafarn."

In terms of the rural nature of the school itself, I'd also draw your attention to Estyn's most recent inspection report (2014), which describes Llanccarfan Primary as serving

“the village of Llanccarfan and surrounding hamlets in the rural Vale of Glamorgan.”

The final point in the council's response, that a hamlet is a settlement without a church, is simply incorrect and it is worrying that the local authority with a duty of care for the rural Vale should make such a naive error.

The official definition of a hamlet has nothing to do with the presence of a church. In fact the guide to Rural Urban Classification published by the Office for National Statistics makes clear that hamlets are defined “by reference to a group of farmsteads” (usually numbering between 3 and 8), which perfectly describes the historic roots of Llanccarfan's development and its present-day circumstances. Llanccarfan's remoteness and small size are partly due to the fact it is surrounded by farmland on every side, linked to farmsteads at Pancross, Llanvithyn, Pen Onn, Walterstone, Moulton and elsewhere.

Quite apart from the dubious depiction of Llanccarfan put forward in the name of the council, I cannot help noting the timing of the council's response, and the questions this raises about officers' motives.

The council issued its second consultation on reconfiguring primary provision in the Western Vale on 21 May, eleven days after being informed by the Welsh Government that Llanccarfan Primary was on the proposed new list of rural schools. This would certainly have been enough time to re-consider the proposal and the framing of the consultation to take account of this significant development, or to pause the process while the implications of this proposed change in public policy were properly considered.

In light of this, it is odd that the council's first consultation document described Llanccarfan as “a relatively small rural school” in March 2018 when it had already told the Welsh Government it had no rural schools, only for this description to be removed from the second consultation document in May 2018 as soon as the Welsh Government informed the council of its intention to classify Llanccarfan as rural for the purposes of the procedural presumption against closure of rural schools.

Just as worrying, in its letter of 10 May the Welsh Government told local authorities they

“should discuss their inclusion with the schools concerned at annex 3 to inform their response.”

I have seen no evidence that Llanccarfan Primary School was consulted when the council prepared its response of 7 June. Given that Llanccarfan's future as a rural primary school was under consideration and threat at that time, this is unfortunate and highly irregular.

I'm interested to learn whether you share my concerns about the way officers characterised Llanccarfan in responding to the Welsh Government consultation, and if you can shed any light on their failure to consult Llanccarfan Primary School about its proposed designation under the revised School Organisation Code?

Once again, many thanks for taking the time to meet with campaigners earlier this week, and for this opportunity to raise additional concerns in writing. As I hope we made clear, we see the rural status of Llanccarfan Primary School as an opportunity and not a threat, and we hope the council will embrace this idea going forward.

Your sincerely

Jim Barratt

8.3 Statements

8.3.1 Keith Thomas - Llancafarn School Alumni

"I was a pupil at Llancafarn School between 1937 and 1943. There was an average of 48 pupils and three members of staff. They provided an excellent primary education which enabled me to come top of the county in the 11-plus examination ('the Scholarship', as they called it in those days), and to go on to Barry County school and thence on a History Scholarship to Balliol College, Oxford, and an academic career.

What was so good about the school was that it was tightly embedded in the local community. It was a totally safe environment: I walked by myself to school; and back, and I went home for lunch. The teachers knew all the parents and had a real understanding of the children and their problems. The parents had a common interest in the school's success and thereby got to know each other better. So did the pupils; it was through the school that I came to have friends in what were relatively outlying areas like Llancafarn, Llanbethery and Llantrithyd.

In my day the school was only one of many institutions which brought together the people of Llancafarn. But today the post office has closed; the sweet shop is no more; and the blacksmith's smithy and the carpenter's workshop have long gone. Most of the schoolchildren's parents are commuters to Barry, Cardiff or elsewhere. In these circumstances, typical of so many country villages today, Llancafarn school has become crucial to the identity and cohesion of the local community. Its closure would not just mean that the children would no longer begin their schooling in a familiar and reassuring environment, but would have to spend time travelling to Rhoose, a very different place with which they have no other connection and where their family background would be quite unknown to the teachers. It would also mean that a vital prop, sustaining the village community, had been removed."

Keith Thomas

Honorary Fellow of All Souls College, Oxford; former President of the British Academy and of Corpus Christi College, Oxford

8.3.2 Jane Hutt AM - Vale of Glamorgan (Labour)

I have grave concerns about the proposal to close Llancarfan School, a successful rural school in the Vale of Glamorgan. The closure plans are widely opposed and contested with rigorous, expert, independent evidence. I believe the concept of this being a transfer of a school rather than a closure is both flawed and bogus and it discredits the School Standards and Organisation Act (2013).

I am particularly concerned that the results of the second consultation will be considered by the Vale Cabinet (subject to a suitable case for band B funding), despite the fact that there are serious questions about the proposal to build this 'new' school in Rhoose which is unlikely to attract a full roll and which will inevitably compete with the existing Rhws Primary School.

I am disappointed that there does not seem to have been any attempt by the Vale Council to consider alternatives to sustain the successful rural school of Llancarfan and enhance provision at Rhws Primary School which could access the 21st Century Schools Programme.

8.3.3 Andrew RT Davies AM - Vale of Glamorgan (Welsh Conservatives)

Statement to the Vale of Glamorgan Council Education and Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Committee, regarding proposed changes to primary education provision in the Western Vale

I am a member of the National Assembly for Wales for the South Wales Central electoral region, which includes the Vale of Glamorgan in its entirety. I therefore represent the communities of Llanccarfan, Rhoose and other surrounding villages, and have received several representations from constituents expressing deep concerns regarding the proposals. To clarify my own position, I share these concerns, and for the reasons I have set out below I do not believe that the proposals should go ahead.

The proposed “transfer” of the school

As the Committee will be aware, the proposals involve closing the primary school in Llanccarfan, and replacing it with a new school at a site some four miles away in Rhoose. While the Council have argued that this constitutes a “transfer” rather than a “closure”, I do not agree with this assessment. It is proposed that the new school will retain the name “Llanccarfan Primary School”, but this is one of few characteristics the new school would share with its predecessor. It will be located a considerable distance outside the village of Llanccarfan, as well as the other villages the school serves. Many parents have expressed the view that designating the proposals as a “transfer” is merely to avoid the procedures set out in the School Organisation Code 2013, which I will discuss below, and I share this view.

The School Organisation Code 2013

The Welsh Government are currently in the process of updating the School Organisation Code 2013, which will include a presumption against the closure of rural schools. Crucially, under the changes, Llanccarfan will be classified as such, and so would remain open under the Code’s guidelines. I raised this with the Cabinet Secretary for Education in the National Assembly for Wales last week, and she confirmed that the new Code should be in force by 1st November. The Cabinet Secretary also made clear that local authorities have been notified of the changes, and that they are “expected to be cognisant” of these when taking decisions regarding affected schools. It would therefore be wholly inappropriate to agree the proposals prior to the changes coming into force, and would be perceived as an attempt to avoid the measures contained in the Code.

Llanccarfan’s classification as a “rural school”

As I have highlighted, the revised Code classifies Llanccarfan as a “rural school”, and is the only such school in the Vale. In addition to the fact that such schools should remain open under the Code, retaining it would also provide the Council with several opportunities, including to make it a flagship school.

Access to 21st Century Schools funding

The Council’s business case for the proposals centres around obtaining monies from the Welsh Government’s 21st Century Schools programme, to fund the new school in Rhoose. This is largely based on the assumption that monies are only available under the scheme for new build schools, and so closing the school in Llanccarfan is necessary to secure the funding. However, the Cabinet Secretary last week

confirmed this is not the case, and there are indeed many examples of upgrades to existing schools which have been funded under the programme. There is therefore no reason the existing school in Llancarfan could not be refurbished or expanded under the scheme, and this wholly undermines the business case for the closure.

The Council's consultation on the proposals.

The Council have to date undertaken two consultation exercises in relation to the proposals, but sadly there have been several problems with these. The Council launched the second consultation after several errors and inconsistencies were spotted in the initial consultation document, with a revised version being provided for the second consultation. Despite this, there were still issues within the new document, which to date have remained unresolved. It has also emerged that several responses were not received to either consultation, because of a 10,000 character limit that was imposed on the online form. Consultees were not made aware of this, and so any response that breached the limit was automatically cut off. This error was not spotted until responses to the second consultation were considered, which raised questions as to the level of attention paid to responses to the first. The consultation process has therefore been flawed, and so parents, pupils and residents have not had a full and proper opportunity to have their say on the proposals.

8.3.4 Alun Cairns MP – Secretary of State for Wales (Welsh Conservatives)

Llancarfan School is the centre of the community life and is an essential part of the village.

Clearly, the primary purpose of any school is to provide the highest standard of education to the pupils. The school in Llancarfan meets this in academic terms but also adds value by nature of its location and intrinsic links with the rural environment and a rural way of life.

I believe that the school meets the Welsh Government's objectives associated with protecting rural schools not only for their education value but also for the social and community links. It is for these reasons their policies to protect rural schools have been developed.

The funding allocated to the Vale Authority by the Welsh Government for education is insufficient and is based on data that is more than twenty years old. There is a current campaign to reform this settlement and all living and interested in education in the Vale should become associated with initiative. If this is successful, then the Authority will have greater capacity to maintain schools and current proposals for restructuring of education provision could be premature.

The Welsh Government have also made additional funds available to protect rural schools and Llancarfan could be one that qualifies for this resource. This may lead to an additional allocation to the Vale. These essential funds are needed in view of the Authority's poor settlement.

This issue has also galvanised public opinion like no other. I cannot recall an issue of this type that has drawn so many responses from a community. Not only the number of responses to the consultation but also the proportion of the response against the population of the community surrounding the school.

8.3.5 Canon Derek Belcher - St Cadoc's Church, Llancafán

We write to express our deep concern over the Council's plans to discontinue to site Llancafán Rural school in the village of Llancafán.

The school has always been a constant feature of the community life which involves the Church, Village Hall, Fox and Hounds Public House and the various community groups that interact to form the community that encompasses not only Llancafán but the neighbouring villages and further afield.

The first consultation resulted in a very positive feeling amongst everyone that the school should remain where it is. This is something that has touched at the roots of people's thoughts and feelings. Many have been very upset at the way the matter has been handled that has ignored the majority of people's real feelings and concerns.

The Christian community take this opportunity to speak for those who feel unable to express their deep concerns and we appeal to the compassion and understanding of counsellors to listen to the many voices we represent and let our rural school remain where it is. It is intimately lined with the past, present and future history of our various communities. Its removal from the village would strike a deep hurt in the hearts, minds and feelings of many.

Sincerely

Canon Derek Belcher Obl OSB, Parish Priest and Vice Chair of the Llancafán Society
Mr Sue Taylor Church Warden and Treasurer of the Llancafán Society
Mr. Kevin Barry Church Warden

8.3.6 Victoria Dixon – Owner, Llancarfan Village Hall After School Club

I would like to point out that the proposal to close the school would result in my business the After School Club, which has been going for 29 years in the village hall, being lost with job losses of myself and my staff.

It is untenable to bring the children back from the new school site to the village hall as some are as young as four, and I believe that health and safety would not allow this. On top of this, the huge costs involved would be absolutely ridiculous.

I hope the council will see sense so we don't lose a long-running, popular service for the children, and we do not lose our livelihood and our business.

Victoria Dixon

8.3.7 Harry Lewis – Owner, The Fox and Hounds, Llanccarfán



I have made previous submissions on behalf of The Fox and Hounds, Llanccarfán relating to the potential impacts on our business of the Village School closing, which do not need rehearsing again in detail. The closure of the school will mean that we will need to recalibrate our model in terms of such as opening hours. Being open for business less often will obviously impact in many uncomfortable ways and also affect investment priorities. Obviously, in that narrow context, we hope fervently that the Village School is not closed.

Were the Committee to take pause for thought as to wider implications, perhaps even beyond its remit, (and I am taking great care to avoid hyperbole or sensationalism), I do firmly suggest that decisions such as this directly, over time *emphasis*, relate to the statistical fact of thousands upon thousands of village country pubs/inns being forced to close because they are uneconomic.

This is because the loss of such as a School, a Shop or a Pub quite literally rips the soul out of a village community because it changes – in fact halts - its evolution. And it is why, in very short years, that sense of community changes dramatically and can fracture as it has done, up and down the country a thousand times over. The word village being more accurately defined by the word dormitory.

Yours sincerely

Harry Lewis
Owner

THE FOX AND HOUNDS, LLANCCARFÁN CF62 3AD
www.fandhllanccarfán.co.uk 01446 781287 enquiries@fandhllanccarfán.co.uk

8.3.8 *Llancarfan District Community Association (LDCA)*

The LDCA runs the village hall in Llancarfan.

In short, the closure of the school on the village site and its “transfer” to Rhoose would be a hammer blow to the hall, for two main reasons.

The first and most important relates to the local sense of community. The hall is closely entwined with the school in a number of ways, and losing the school would make the hall an emptier, less used, less bustling and joyous space.

The detrimental impact that this would have on the local community is hard to measure in the sort of metrics that go into council reports and consultation documents. But no one who lives locally is in any doubt that it would be profound.

The relationship between the hall and the school extends from the long-running After School Club run by Vicky Dixon, to events such as fairs (including the occasional school function) to the Cinema Club and other groups and societies.

Moreover, the hall is a convenient venue for parents who wish to engage in activities after dropping their children at school or before picking them up, for example the 9am Pilates class.

The second blow to the hall from losing the school would be financial. The biggest source of income for the hall—in some months by far the biggest source—is the After School Club. With the school no longer at the site, the hall would lose this critical infusion. That would greatly undermine the finances of the facility (which is owned and maintained by the VOG Council). It is hard to imagine how this lost revenue could be replaced.

For these reasons, the LDCA urges the Council Scrutiny Committee and the Cabinet to reject the closure/transfer proposal.

PS: The LDCA was surprised and saddened that it was not approached by Council officers for information or a viewpoint at any point during either of the two consultations, particularly in relation to the community impact assessment. This added further to the sense in the local community that the process was poorly managed. Other local bodies feel the same and have no doubt made their views known.

8.3.9 *The Llancarfan Society*



LLANCARFAN SOCIETY

Llancarfan School has been at the heart of our community since 1875. We regard the Council's proposal as effectively meaning closure of our school. The fact that it is stated to be a 'transfer' is disingenuous. It is clear that the proposal has been formulated by officers who appear to have little empathy or understanding of life in a rural community.

The consultation document and subsequent report focus on Rhoose as a community. Little regard has been given to the community of Llancarfan. Although in the same Ward, Llancarfan with its surrounding villages and Rhoose are very different communities. It is therefore nonsensical to consider that by transferring Llancarfan Primary to Rhoose the school will remain the same, albeit in a completely different setting.

Llancarfan Primary School is part of a vibrant community and this was acknowledged by the most recent Estyn report. Our village institutions support the school in different but important ways and contribute to pupils' sense of belonging to and being valued members of the community. The closure of the school would therefore have a negative impact not only on the village but also on parental choice. Historically, parents from outside the catchment area have chosen to send their children to Llancarfan because it is a village school and if the proposal goes ahead, this choice will be denied to them.

We understand that the School Organisation Code is likely to come into effect on the 1st November. Llancarfan Primary has been listed as the only rural school in the Vale of Glamorgan. The Code will include a presumption against closure of rural schools. The Society takes the view that the Council is hiding behind the word 'transfer', maintaining that it is not the intention to close the school. Once a facility for which it was originally built is no longer used for that purpose, it is closed and it is difficult to understand how the Council can continue to deny that the proposal will result in closure of the school. We take the view that it is incumbent upon the Council to uphold the spirit of the Code and do all that it can to sustain Llancarfan Primary in its current setting.

The consultation has resulted in an overwhelming majority of respondents stating that they are against the proposal. It is therefore time for the Council to listen to public opinion and to properly consider alternatives in the light of the fact that 21st Century funding is not only available for funding new schools.

It is clear from the response provided by the Governors of Rhws Primary that their school is badly in need of investment. Perhaps an appropriate response from the Scrutiny Committee would therefore be to recommend to Cabinet that alternatives are properly and fully explored which would not appear to have happened to date – e.g. setting out a business case to access 21st Century funding to provide investment in both Llancarfan and Rhws Primary Schools.

8.3.10 Llancafafan Tennis Club

I write, on behalf of Llancafafan Tennis Club, to object to the proposal to migrate Llancafafan Primary School out of the village to Rhoose,

As well as providing the multi-sport facility to the school, the tennis club provides tennis lessons to pupils of Llancafafan primary school each year. All of these pupils enrol as members of the club and often continue their membership through to secondary school and beyond.

This proposal has severe implications for membership and in turn viability of the tennis club. Llancafafan primary school attracts pupils from a wider area than the very local vicinity, which brings increased membership. These friendships continue and many of these groups of friends continue playing tennis together and thus retain their membership past primary school.

The proposed plans to close Llancafafan school would cut off the tennis clubs three most important income streams: revenue from tennis lessons for Llancafafan School children, holiday tennis camps (which are highly popular) and membership income from pupils and their families. Without this income the tennis club will no longer be viable.

Loss of the school would then in turn remove the only outdoor recreational facility in Llancafafan and surrounding area. It would also remove the focus and sports opportunities for all local children outside of school hours. Older secondary age children use this facility to play recreationally (it also serves as a football pitch and a basketball court). Where will young people play without access to a well maintained and safe recreational area? In a community without public transport this will also impact upon the health and wellbeing of community residents who benefit from these facilities currently - both recreationally and as a social activity.

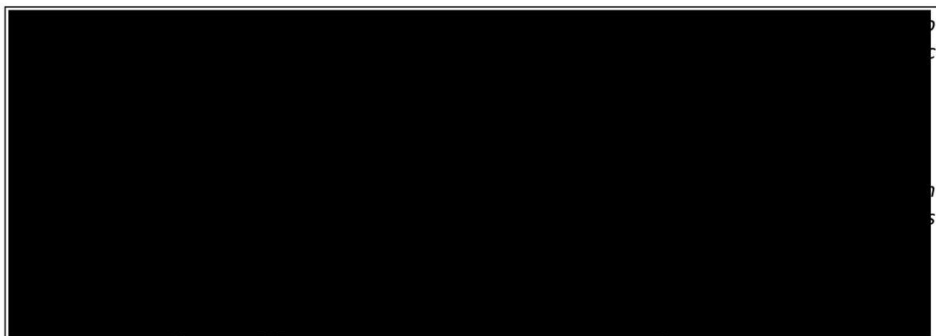
On behalf of the committee of Llancafafan Tennis Club, we urge the Vale of Glamorgan Council to reconsider its proposal. Please help us to keep our rural communities thriving so that everyone who wishes to benefit from the fantastic educational opportunities of rural schooling, and the local recreational facilities, can do so, for generations to come.

Sincerely,

Dr Sarah Voisey-Smith – Chairman of Llancafafan Tennis Club

8.3.11 Llancaf Community Cinema

Llancaf Community Cinema and Llancaf Primary School



Without Llancaf Primary School there would be no Community Cinema in the village

- At the time the cinema was established in 2012, the founding committee members were all parents of pupils at the school; that's how they knew each other. All of these families moved to the village over the last decade because the school was present in the village.
- The volunteer group has grown since 2012: ten volunteers run the monthly screenings and of these FIVE either have children at the school or did so very recently, and THREE other volunteers are former pupils of the school.
- The best attended screenings (attracting audiences of 70+, compared with an average of around 40 per screening) are family events promoted as fund raisers for the school PTA. These are great social occasions, bringing together children, parents and older members of the community. They also help to promote the Cinema beyond the village, reaching families who travel in for the school.

The Community Cinema and Primary School are mutually supportive

- The Community Cinema benefits from ticket sales to parents and children who attend the primary school. 60% of its members are families with children at the school, or who had children at the school within the last five years.
- In turn, the School PTA has benefited from funds raised at special events hosted by the cinema. Since 2013, four such special events have been held, as follows:
 - Christmas screening of *Despicable Me 2* in December 2013, which raised £100 for the School PTA.
 - Llancaf Community Cinema took part in a nationwide season of Sci Fi films in October 2014. The cinema screened *Flash Gordon*, and ran an alien poster colouring competition in association with the school. The screening raised £80 for the PTA.
 - Christmas screening of *Minions* in December 2015, which raised £70 for the School PTA.
 - Llancaf Community Cinema took part in a nationwide season of films marking the centenary of Roald Dahl's birth in 2016. The cinema screened *Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory* in September 2016 and *The BFG* in December 2016, raising £350 for the PTA.

TOTAL RAISED BY THE CINEMA FOR THE SCHOOL PTA SINCE 2013 = £600

The Community Cinema has links with other village institutions that will suffer if the school closes

- All the main social institutions in the village are linked in some way, and if one suffers they all suffer.
 - The cinema hires the village hall for every screening, providing valuable income to the LDCA.
 - The cinema has run cross-promotional activity with the Fox & Hounds Pub, including pre-screening meal deals. On film nights the pub fills up with audience members after the screening.
 - The cinema ran a social event for the Llancarfan Tennis Club in 2016 with a screening of *Eddie the Eagle* to help promote membership of both groups.
 - The cinema hosted a charity event with the Ladies Tuesday Club, involving a screening of *The Lady in the Van* in March 2016, which raised £245 for local charities including Rhose Lifeguards.

The School is what brings families to Llancarfan to settle, and it is the tie that binds different generations together.

Without the village school, the community cinema's future looks very uncertain.

About Llancarfan Community Cinema

www.llancarfan cinema.co.uk

Llancarfan Community Cinema is a nonprofit, volunteer-run film club serving the village of Llancarfan and surrounding area. It was established in September 2012 and won the prestigious Best New Film Society award at the 2013 Film Society of the Year Awards.

The Community Cinema has benefited from Vale of Glamorgan Council funding through Creative Rural Communities, to assist the purchase of blackout blinds, chairs, an electric screen and high definition projector.



8.3.12 Helen Wilson - Prospective Llancarfan Primary parent

My son Oscar turned 1 on Monday 10 September. So far he seems a bright boy and has been lucky enough to spend his first year in the rural village I moved to in 2014. As for me, I wasn't born with a silver spoon in my mouth, my parents did not have the option to attend university, my dad was a soldier (not an officer) in the Army having joined up at aged 17. My mum was an infant school teacher.

We grew up poor financially but lucky in terms of the strength of our family. My grades weren't great at school but I've worked hard and managed to do well in university and get myself a decent job. I saved and finally managed to buy a small house in a nice little spot in Llancadle, part of the rural vale.

I chose the village as it was quiet, had a local pub and a good sense of community. The local school is a short bike ride away in Llancarfan. It's a small but popular school. If you haven't been there, it might help to know that the school has received good reports from Estyn and is set in a rural environment. The school makes use of its rural environment and that has been commented on within the Estyn reports.

Neither my village nor Llancarfan has a great deal of amenities but the community makes use of what we have as best we can. I had been looking forward to getting to know the other mums in the rural community when Oscar started school.

Rural communities are hard to get together. Whether people commute to work in the city or work on the farms, they work hard and, as for all people, free time is in short supply. Unless there are places where people can meet up, it can be an isolated life. When people feel isolated their mental health deteriorates and community spirit can dissipate.

When things happen that remove the opportunity to meet, it has catastrophic effects. I have seen this first hand as the local pub in Llancadle closed two years ago. The council allowed Brains to sell it to people who turned it to houses. The pub was mentioned in the Domesday book and suddenly it had gone. People in the village now have nowhere to go to meet up and we have lost part of the community spirit that the village had when I moved in. Thankfully, the amenities in Llancarfan were not at risk so we started spending more time there.

As you will be aware, the council has now proposed to move Llancarfan school into a suburban area in Rhoose. The council describe it as a 'migration' but the school building in Llancarfan will be closed and the children will have to go to a modern school in a suburban area miles away from the rural villages they live in. The community are thoroughly opposed to the move but the council seems relentless in its desire to close the school building and set the school up elsewhere.

There is nothing wrong with the school. It is popular and the quality of the education is good. It is the only school in the Vale of Glamorgan which has been classified by the Welsh Assembly as rural and which would have the benefit of the protection of the new regulations if it is open when they come into force. If it is moved, it will not be a rural school anymore. The last school of its type in the Vale and the council is trying to close it. I cannot understand why it is not treasured by the council.

The council should be proud of all aspects of the Vale, the urban arrears, the sub urban and the rural. It is what makes the Vale so attractive as a place to live. I implore that when you are asked for your views on the school move / migration / closure you bear that in mind.

I appreciate that there are practical issues that the council must consider. Finances being one of them. However, the consultation documents that I have read have not considered all the options. I am sure that you will have received letters and read comments of those that understand the options of federation and other issues. I am a bit too simple for that. What I can say though is that if you need money to keep the school going or to build a new school, perhaps that's what you should ask for. There are a number of international businesses based in Cardiff who wouldn't mind putting their hands in their pockets to donate to a new school. They might want the hall to be named after them or to pop their names on the sports kit but would that matter?

A closure / move / migration is not the only option but the alternatives have not been considered or fully explained within the consultation document. They should be explained and if the council thinks they would not work, the reasons for that should be made clear so that you can make an informed decision when you are asked to vote on the proposal. Given that they are absent, I would urge you to vote against the move until such time as you can see all the options and make an informed decision.

Finally, I would urge you to look at the opinion of the public on this matter who overwhelmingly opposed the move when the consultation was active. The rural community don't want it and Rhose doesn't want it. These are the people that vote, that live in the communities that will be forever changed by the decision that you make. Please don't ignore them for a proposal which has failed to properly consider the alternatives. As I said at the outset, my son is 1 on Monday, if you allow Llancarfan primary school to be closed / moved, his chance to have a rural education will be gone forever. Please don't take that from him.

I would love it if you could confirm that you will vote against closure. I would be grateful if you could just let me know that at the very least, you have read this and will think about Oscar and children like him when you cast your vote.

Thank you for your time.

Helen (and Oscar)

8.3.13 [REDACTED] - *Prospective Llancaf Primary parent*

Having personally been brought up in Llancaf village and someone who attended Llancaf primary school with both my brothers some 30 years ago. My husband and I decided to move back to the village ten years ago with the long-term prospect of starting a family in Llancaf.

The return back to the rural village (that has always been my parents' home), was based around 3 fundamental reasons; the local primary school, the local amenities and the rural setting.

Llancaf school provided me with fantastic opportunities as a child both personally and educationally. It has given me the grounding to a sound academic career. It is a school with continued fantastic results and one I wished my daughter and growing family to attend.

If Llancaf primary school is closed, we will not send our daughter to the proposed Rhose primary. We aspire for her to learn and nurture in a small school, one that provides access to rural outdoor opportunities, one that is a major part of a village community, a primary that has the ability to assist positively in a child's development and wellbeing, a school with low pollution and a school where she does not need to commute to daily to on busses.

We urge you to keep our local school open, to close it will remove the nucleus of our village. It will detrimentally affect all local amenities that we have. It threatens the closure of our village hall, our tennis courts and will unquestionably drastically affect trade at our local pub.

The continued threat of closure over the last 5 years has caused the schools numbers to diminish, we need it to stay open once and for all so that faith is restored and parents will send their children to the school. The village has an ever-increasing young population now and this will continue only if our heritage remains.

8.3.14 Laura Field - Prospective Llancarfan Primary parent

We reside in Llancarfan with two small children aged just one and three. We moved to Llancarfan one year ago from London for two main reasons, a rural way of life to raise our children and a good village school that we could walk our children too. The closure of Llancarfan School in Llancarfan is most upsetting. The removal of the only rural school in the Vale of Glamorgan means we have to rethink our children's primary education completely which has caused much stress and frustration over the drawn out, and somewhat bias, consultation process. In just two months' time we have to apply for a reception place for our eldest child with uncertainty. There is currently no finality on whether the council will close the village school or it will remain open. So, do we apply for a place at Llancarfan and hope we succeed in saving our school or look elsewhere. We have no desire to send our children to a large busy primary school in an urban area which the council is proposing. This is not the best environment for our children to succeed. Instead we are now forced to apply for primary places at other Vale of Glamorgan Schools with no certainty that our son will be accepted into our next school of choice due to being out of catchment.

We personally chose to live in Llancarfan based on the school and the community that the school helps to provide. Not only will the council be removing an excellent school in terms of education from us but also rip out the heart of our community that we were blessed to find. The pupils of Llancarfan school currently benefit from the keen involvement of the local village, and broader rural community in many of their activities.

Locals of all ages support many of the children's activities, be it the well-known duck races down the river, services in the church, village fete, etc. This engagement with the community provides opportunities for children to learn and develop skills outside of the class room.

Best regards,

Mrs Laura E. David

8.3.15 Rachel Edwards - Prospective Llancarfan Primary parent

I write to you as a local resident and a prospective parent of Llancarfan School.

When my son was born in December 2014 and my daughter in May 2016, we never discussed which Primary School we would send our children too, as there was only one Llancarfan as have the generations before, we were proud that our children would be the fifth generation to attend the village school, which was built by the community (including my children's relatives) and has been the centre and heart of the community since 1875.

We looked forward to being able to walk our children to and from school as had the generations before and also it would allow in times where I was unable to be there at pick up time for their grandmother to walk and get them.

Since January 2018, and now with only circa 8 weeks to decide on Primary School's for our youngest it is extremely difficult for us as parents to make a decision, it has added stress onto what should be an enjoyable time, especially as we have been through 2 consultations, and the uncertainty still remains on what is going to happen, other options are now having to be explored as what we are wanting for our children, is the way of life that we have had, a small rural village school with a strong link to the community and all the values that are attached to this. This is something that if moved to an urban area it detracts from, with also the larger school.

We are all reminded that we as parents have the choice of which school we send our children too, removing the school whether under migration or transfer is still closing it and that takes away our choice.

The school is not just a school to us, it is the heart of the community along with the church and the local pub, we enjoy watching the children walking around the village and looking at the surroundings as part of their lessons, the annual Duck Race on the Ford where the whole community get involved.

Rachel

8.3.16 Sara & Gareth Tickner - Prospective Llancafarn Primary parents

We are residents of Llancafarn, and parents to two pre-schoolers. Part of our decision to live in this village was due to the thriving and well-regarded school on our doorstep, and even before becoming parents we have long enjoyed the close ties between school, village and church, particularly at events such as the Village Show, and various fairs held throughout the year. We registered interest in our eldest attending Llancafarn Primary School over a year ago, anticipating that he would start his school career in our excellent local primary school in September 2019, making use of the highly sought-after before- and after-school clubs. The proposals to close Llancafarn Primary School, besides the devastating effect on the community, also have a very personal and detrimental impact on the schooling of our own children.

Sending them to the proposed replacement school in Rhoose, some 6 miles away, in the opposite direction to our daily commute, is completely unfeasible.

There is no way we would send a four-year old child on a bus to school, even in the very unlikely event that the timings were compatible with our own commuting times.

As we both work north of the M4, this would add a 12-mile detour twice a day to our daily routine, affecting our work hours, as well as which this additional 24 miles a day would cost us over £2100 a year, assuming 39 school weeks in the year and using the Inland Revenue value of £0.45 per mile, which is design to give a realistic cost of motoring.

Besides this significant financial impact upon us, an even greater concern for us would be the loss of the rich learning environment that Llancafarn school currently enjoys, due to its rural position and close ties with the community, and which is recognised by its Estyn reports. Our own family history is entwined with that of the school, and we have long looked forward to our children being taught in the same school as three previous generations of our family. If the school were to be closed, all this history and diversity would be thrown away for a shiny box of a school in a large town; this is not the education that we wish for our children, and would be a very sad day for the whole of our community and the future generations.

Should the closure of Llancafarn Primary school go ahead, we would look to send our children to school elsewhere in the Vale, due to all the aforementioned issues.

8.3.17 Frances & Matthew Valencia – Current Llancafán Primary parents

We moved to Llancafán in 2003 after the birth of our third child. We were attracted by a number of features, the most important of which from our point of view were the rural setting and the village school, a mere 100 yards up the hill from our house.

The strong sense of community within the village and within the school has always been a compelling attraction and a support during our time there.

We chose Llancafán in part because of its good Estyn reports and the reputation the school had in the area. We were also impressed by how the school consistently used the facilities around it such as the church, nature walks and the village hall.

Four of our children have attended Llancafán Primary. It has given each of them a solid educational grounding, and just as importantly they learned a great deal from the uniqueness of Llancafán's character. They were also able to develop a sense of community, which we consider extremely important in a child's development.

Most importantly of all, they were always happy to go to school.

As a regular volunteer in the school for over a decade, most often in the garden, Frances has always been delighted to see just how happy the children in the school are and how the older years look after the younger pupils, and every child in the school really does know every other.

Our children's ages now range from 7 to 18. The two oldest benefited greatly from this positive school environment. They have grown up understanding the importance of community. We, their parents, firmly believe that the environment in which they went through primary school reinforced their wellbeing.

In January, when we first heard of the Council's proposal to close the school at its Llancafán village rural location, our two youngest children, Freddie and Gabriel, were still attending the school.

We then heard that the new school in Rhoose would be a feeder to Barry or Llantwit, not Cowbridge, which our older children had all gone on to.

The thought of Gabriel, our youngest, not being able to attend the same secondary school as his siblings was very upsetting.

We naturally sought assurances from the Council that he too would be guaranteed a place in Cowbridge, but we were told that no firm guarantee could be given.

That left us with a difficult and painful decision – one that we had hoped not to have to make: either to keep Gabriel in Llancafán and face the risk that he would soon be moved out of a rural setting to a suburban primary school and then on to a different secondary school from the one his siblings had all attended; or to try to

move him elsewhere in order to guarantee a continuation of a close-knit rural education and also a place in Cowbridge, the school we had come to consider the local “family” secondary school.

We were also aware that other parents would be wrestling with the same issues, and possibly also reluctantly looking to move their kids, and that we should therefore act quickly if we did think moving him was best.

It was a wrenching and traumatic dilemma, and I stress again, not one we had sought or wished to be faced with. But we felt the Council’s out-of-the-blue proposal forced our hand.

We decided in the end to move Gabriel to an alternative small village school in the Vale that will continue to provide a similar setting and ethos to the one that had stood his older siblings (and him up to that point) in such good stead.

Even though we are now having to drive him, the distance is at least one mile less in each direction than the journey to the new site in Rhose would be.

In the meantime, that community spirit that brought us to Llancarfan means the son who is lucky enough to be able to finish his primary schooling in our village, 10-year-old Freddie, is now watched by fellow parents to ensure he safely completes the short walk to and from our village school while his mother drives his brother to Pendoylan.

We would love nothing more than for the current closure/transfer proposal to be dropped so that we could re-assess our options.

The closure of the Llancarfan school site would be a real loss to the options available to parents in the Vale, not all of whom choose 21st Century buildings and superfast internet over setting, ethos and a shared, closely-bound sense of community and history.

8.4 Other Documents

8.4.1 Alternative pupil yield modelling

Alternative pupil yield modelling

- The proposal states 700 new houses will increase demand by 194 places for primary pupils (162 English medium).
- This is calculated by multiplying 700 by 0.278, the Vale's pupil yield factor for primary provision.
- BUT the 347 houses North West of the railway line currently under construction include 30 one bedroom apartments that are unlikely to yield any primary school aged children.

NB The consultation report DENIES one bedroom apartments are included in calculations, but this is INCORRECT. The report says "...Studio apartments and one bedroom flats are excluded from any housing development calculations as is the case with the housing developments in Rhoose." But this is not the case, as VoG's own figures indicate ($700 \times 0.278 = 194$)

Table 1: Dwellings under construction North West of railway line

Type of dwelling (number of bedrooms)	Number of dwellings	Total number of bedrooms	Number of non-principal bedrooms
1 apartment	30	30	0
2 bed house	66	132	66
3 bed house	62	186	124
4 bed house	189	756	567
TOTAL	347	1,104	757

- Basing the calculation on the number of dwellings excluding one bed apartments (assuming the same number will be built to the North East of the railway line) there is a shortfall of 16 places from the proposal estimate (see Table 2).
- A more accurate approach to estimating pupil yields involves calculating demand for school places on the basis of the number of non-principal bedrooms in a development rather than the total number of dwellings.
- This takes into full account the fact that different types and sizes of property yield very different numbers of school aged children.
- The Vale does not have a pupil yield factor for the non-principal bedrooms calculation.
- However, if we use a proxy measure of 0.11 primary pupils per non-principal bedroom (source = Salford City Council*) the expected demand for primary school places from the 347 houses under construction would be **83 pupils**.
- Assuming the same profile of dwellings will make up the development to the North East of the railway line, that gives a total demand of **166 primary places** (including Welsh medium), which is **28 fewer** than the Council's estimate of 194.

Table 2: Alternative pupil yield models

Proposal figures	Proposal figures, excluding 60 one bed apartments	Non-principal bedroom calculation
$700 \times 0.278 = 194$ places	$640 \times 0.278 = 178$ places (difference = 16 fewer places)	$1,514 \times 0.11 = 166$ places (difference = 28 fewer places)

* Chosen because Salford City Council uses the same factor as the Vale of Glamorgan when calculating pupil yield using the number of dwellings, and has compared the accuracy of both methods against real world data.

8.4.2 Strategic Outline Programme

7.4 Project engagement

Outline the strategy for consulting with, and involvement of, stakeholders, the extent of consultation and involvement of children and young people, which has either been undertaken to date or is planned. Please also provide evidence that school governors generally are in support of programme proposals.

The consultation and involvement strategy to be applied throughout the programme is as adopted for Penarth Learning Community. The following summarises the various consultation meetings, workshops and visits that have assisted to the development of the design at this stage.

Governors and School Staff

- Initial consultation with Governors and Headteachers pre project inception and incorporation of views/ideas into options.
- Involvement of Headteachers and Governors in evaluation of options.
- User Group Meetings monthly to review progress and coordinate the development of the project with the Client (VOGC), School Head Teachers and the Project Team.
- Series of consultation meetings with School Head Teachers and Faculty Heads to review classroom requirements, specialist facilities, layouts and adjacencies within the overall building.
- To enable the design team to understand how each of the SEN schools function and the restrictions of the current facilities, a day was spent observing 'the life' of each of the three schools. All observations, comments and requests from the teaching staff were recorded providing a basis for the initial design response.
- Organising visits to recently built schools to enable the School Leadership Team to gain an appreciation for the facilities provided in a modern school, and the types of spaces the Schools' would like to see incorporated in the design.
- Series of presentation to Governors and staff.

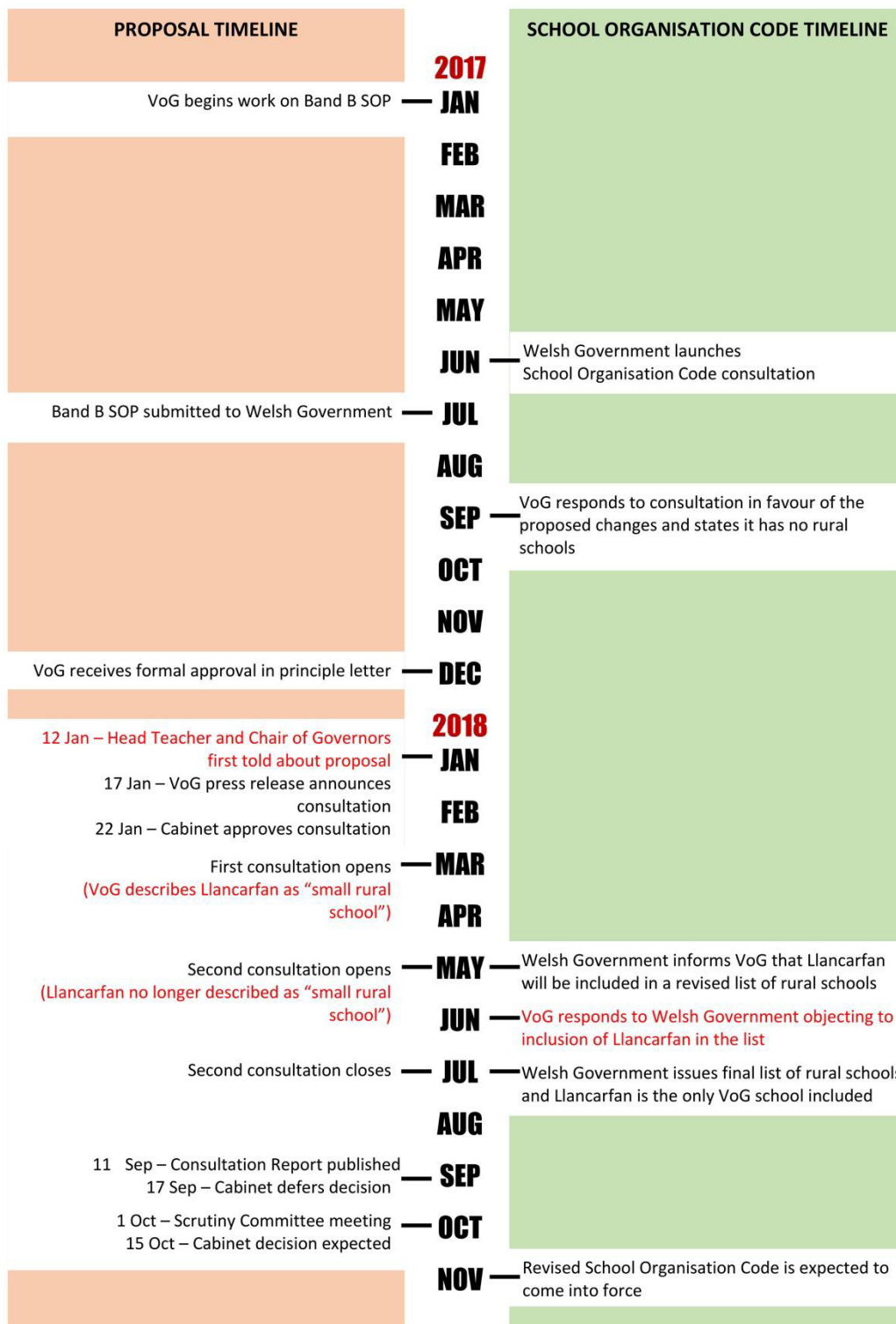
Pupil Consultation

- Through the School Councils the Project Team has worked with the pupils to share ideas that can be incorporated into the design.
- Through the Eco-Schools group pupils have presented their initial ideas on how the project team can make the new school eco-friendly.
- Series of presentation to pupils and parents.

Other Stakeholders

- Engagement of Members through area member working groups and series of presentations.
- Involvement of stakeholders (WAG, DCfW,VOGC Planning,VOGC Highways, Safer Routes in the Community, SEN Transport) to ensure the design response conforms to the VOG's development plans and addresses the restraints affecting the surrounding area.
- Involvement of various organisations (Children's Services, Lifelong Learning, Leisure, Touch Trust, Sports Council for Wales, Youth Services, local sports clubs) to incorporate facilities where possible into the design that will enhance the delivery of their services or provide a venue that otherwise is not available in the vicinity.
- Series of public consultation meetings to obtain feedback on the proposals and identify relevant issues to be addressed.

8.4.3 A timeline showing development of Vale of Glamorgan Council’s proposal in parallel with the Welsh Government consultation on School Organisation Code



8.4.4 Extension plans for Llancaf Primary School

NICK RENWICK ARCHITECT

RIBA 
CHARTERED
ARCHITECT

26 Sept 2018

Save Llancaf Primary School Action Committee,
Llancaf Primary,
Vale of Glam.

Dear Sirs,

CLOSURE OF EXISTING SCHOOL BUILDINGS

Minded by the rather erroneous reports I have heard I thought I would provide you details of the study I provided to the school & LEA in 2007 on extending the existing school premises.

In 2005/2007 I acted as Architect on the extension of the school hall completed in 2007. In designing this, I with the aid of a Structural Engineer, inspected the existing roof structure and we ascertained that a new floor structure could be inserted to allow conversion of the roof space to provide two new classrooms. The new extension was thus planned to allow future access to the new classrooms. Plans of this are attached. This work was of course never carried out. I have in the past send the drawings to new headteachers in case the idea is lost.

After the extension was completed we then looked at a further extension linking the hall to the old school buildings and found that it would be perfectly possible to link the two buildings. This would start at high level above the existing entrance to the reception area to the hall and then joining the old building at ground level. This would provide either at least one new classroom or additional offices or ancillary accommodation.

The end result of this is that it would be feasible to remove at least three of the 'temporary classrooms and relocate them permanently in the altered and extended buildings so allowing replanning of the whole school site to provide better car parking and soft and hard play areas.

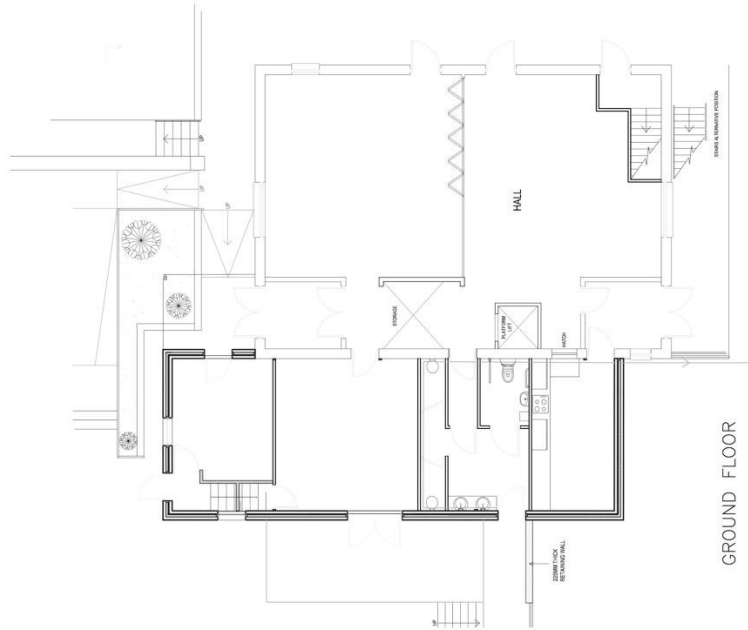
Yours sincerely



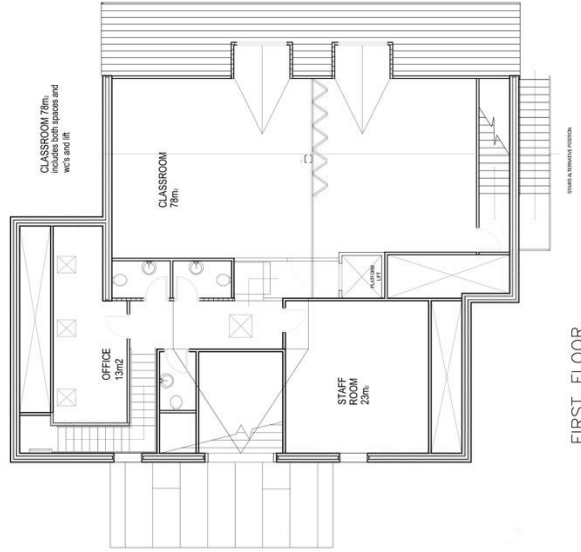
A N Renwick.

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GROUND FLOOR



FIRST FLOOR

Project Name and Address
PROPOSED EXTENSION
LLANGARFAN PRIMARY SCHOOL
VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL
ROOF CONVERSION SCHEME

VALE OF GLAM. CBC		Sheet
Nov. 2007	1:100	

Architect:
 Nick Renwick, Chartered Architect
 Ty Catwg, Llangarfan, Barry,
 Vale of Glamorgan, CF62 3AL

8.4.5 Forest School Wales Practitioners Map

<https://www.forestschoolwales.org.uk/accessing-forest-school/yg-ar-draws-cymrufs-across-wales/>

