

# 21st Century Schools Consultation Report

LLANCAEACH JUNIOR SCHOOL / LLANFABON INFANTS SCHOOL



Proposal : **Amalgamate Llancaeach Junior School and Llanfabon Infants School to create a new Primary School provision on the existing infants school site for those aged 3-11 years**

Formal Consultation Period : 20<sup>th</sup> October 2021 – 1<sup>st</sup> December 2021

This report is published in line with the requirements of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and the School Organisation Code 2018.



Ysgolion a Cholegau yr 21ain Ganrif  
21st Century Schools and Colleges



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government



caerphilly.gov.uk/21centuryschools



**Richard Edmunds**

Corporate Director for  
Education and Corporate  
Services

# FOREWORD

*“Working together to deliver the best outcomes for all our children”*

Caerphilly County Borough Council has embarked upon an exciting but challenging journey of improvement and change. We have bold ambitions to provide every learner with the best life chances and we are committed to doing this through the provision of high quality teaching, learning and leadership across our school settings as part of our ‘Shared Ambitions’ Strategy.

We have focused on improving young people’s outcomes and this is still a priority area moving forward incorporating a holistic view of education. The Council has adopted ‘Improving education opportunities for all’ as the first of its Wellbeing Objectives and has committed to an ambitious 21st Century Schools investment programme.

In collaboration with Welsh Government, the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools and Colleges Band B Programme is supporting investment in education within the County Borough. Our aspiration is the improvement of the condition of school buildings and maximising community usage.

Our current proposals support our commitment to increase school effectiveness and to narrow inequalities in achievement across groups; to understand the needs of more vulnerable children; promote the Welsh Language, and support those unable to access traditional learning pathways to ensure that all will benefit from the richness of learning and cultural opportunities. These principles help steer our decision making and prioritise projects.

As part of this proposal a consultation exercise has been carried out in line with the requirements of the School Organisation Code 2018. All stakeholders have had the opportunity to participate and make comments.

This Consultation Report has been produced to summarise the emerging themes raised by consultees during the consultation period including Estyn’s feedback. It aims to provide a balanced, transparent document to support Cabinet in deciding whether to progress with the proposal, make changes or not to progress.

I hope you find this document informative as a reflection of the activities undertaken to date and an insight into the journey we are on, shaping delivery and placing learning provision at the heart of our communities.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Introduction</b>	
➤ Executive Summary	<a href="#">Page</a>
➤ Statutory Obligations	<a href="#">Page</a>
➤ Purpose of the Consultation Report	<a href="#">Page</a>
➤ What is the 21 <sup>st</sup> Century Schools and Colleges Programme?	<a href="#">Page</a>
<b>Proposal</b>	
➤ What are we proposing to do?	<a href="#">Page</a>
➤ What is driving this proposal?	<a href="#">Page</a>
➤ Options Appraisal	<a href="#">Page</a>
➤ Benefits and Disbenefits	<a href="#">Page</a>
<b>The Consultation Process</b>	
➤ Consultation Process	<a href="#">Page</a>
➤ Implications of COVID19	<a href="#">Page</a>
➤ Stakeholder Engagement	<a href="#">Page</a>
➤ Consultation Information	<a href="#">Page</a>
➤ Response Methods	<a href="#">Page</a>
<b>Consultation Responses</b>	
➤ Consultation Responses	<a href="#">Page</a>
➤ Education Scrutiny Response	<a href="#">Page</a>
➤ Estyn's Response (summary)	<a href="#">Page</a>
<b>Learner Voice</b>	
➤ School Council / Pupil Engagement	<a href="#">Page</a>
○ Schools directly affected by Proposal	
○ Other schools identified as being affected	
<b>Other Considerations</b>	
➤ Local and National Strategies	<a href="#">Page</a>
<b>Next Steps</b>	
➤ Consultation Clarification	<a href="#">Page</a>
➤ Reasonable Alternatives Identified	<a href="#">Page</a>
➤ Recommendation	<a href="#">Page</a>
➤ Decision Making	<a href="#">Page</a>
➤ Reporting, Notification and Publishing of Information	<a href="#">Page</a>
<b>Supporting Information</b>	
➤ Annex 1: Key Consultation Documents	<a href="#">Page</a>
➤ Annex 2: Estyn's Response (Full version)	<a href="#">Page</a>



## INTRODUCTION

### **Executive Summary**

Schools in Wales need to be in good condition and suitable for the delivery of education. In some cases, schools can be modernised, repaired, refurbished, extended, or partially rebuilt to meet the standards needed for contemporary teaching and learning. However, some existing schools are no longer in the right place and in such cases, we might propose new schools or changes to existing schools.

Caerphilly County Borough Council aspires to continue to raise school standards and improve the quality of the learning environment to create fit-for-purpose 21<sup>st</sup> century schools and give every child in Caerphilly the best possible start in life.

The proposal to establish a Primary School in the Nelson area has been identified as one of the phase 2 projects in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Band B programme.

For proposals relating to schools, the School Organisation Code 2018, provides clear statutory guidance as to the processes that need to be adhered to. Undertaking a consultation exercise is one of the initial stages of progressing any proposal and is subject to Welsh Government scrutiny and Cabinet approval. From the 20<sup>th</sup> October 2021 to the 1<sup>st</sup> December 2021, a consultation exercise was undertaken. The purpose of the consultation was to gain views on the proposal to support and invest in the establishment of a new Primary School through the amalgamation of Llancaeath Junior School and Llanfabon Infants School.

This Consultation Report is the prescribed method as outlined by the School Organisation Code 2018 for reflection, review and assessment to provide Cabinet with the information to make an informed decision as to whether to proceed with the proposal to the next stage, amend the proposal taking into account further information that has come forward through the consultation process or to close this proposal with no further actions taken.

The Report is divided into several sections with the aim to:

- Outline the consultation processes undertaken
- Provide clarification in relation to the information provided and consultee engagement
- Summarise each of the issues raised by consultees
- Set out Estyn's response to the consultation in full
- Respond to issues raised by means of clarification, amendment to the proposal or rejection of the concerns, with supporting reasons

### **Statutory Obligations**

This report is published in line with the requirements of the [School Standards and Organisation \(Wales\) Act 2013](#) and the [School Organisation Code 2018](#).

The Consultation report will be published on the Caerphilly 21<sup>st</sup> Century School website with hardcopies available on request. All information is published in Welsh and English. In addition, a child friendly summary has also been produced to ensure information is provided in an accessible format for any children and young people affected by the proposals.

## Purpose of the Consultation Report

The publication of this Consultation Report discharges the Council of its duty under the School Organisation Code 2018.

The consultation period represented an opportunity for people to learn about the proposal, ask questions and make comments. Any negative responses made during the consultation period were not counted as objections to the proposal but as adverse comments.

Objections to a proposal can only be registered after the publication of a statutory notice.

The Consultation Report outlines the processes followed, provides clarity on the issues and comments received from consultees, ensures that the views of children and young people affected by the proposal are expressed and ultimately, provides Cabinet with the necessary information to take one of the following decisions:

- Proceed with the proposal
- Make changes to the proposal
- Not to proceed with the proposal

Full details of the decision making process and the stages of the proposal as outlined in the School Organisation Code 2018 have been published as part of the initial Consultation Document and is publicly available via the Council’s website with hardcopies made available on request.

## What is the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools and Colleges Programme?

The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools and Colleges programme is a major, long-term, strategic capital investment programme. It is jointly funded by the Welsh Government and local authorities and aims to create a generation of 21<sup>st</sup> century schools in Wales.

The first part of the programme (Band A) ran from 2014 to March 2019.

Caerphilly has benefited greatly from investments in the initial “Band A” 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools programme with approximately £56.5 million invested in schools for both educational and community use.

Table 1: Band A funding in Caerphilly was used to deliver

	Project Name	Band A Investment
 <p data-bbox="119 1883 363 1910">Image of Islwyn High School</p>	✓ Islwyn High School	£22.6m
	✓ Ysgol Gymraeg Cwm Rhymni, Y Gwyndy Campus	£19.2m
	✓ Idris Davies School 3-18	£8m
	✓ Newbridge School extension	£2.6m
	✓ Blackwood Comprehensive improvements	£2m
	✓ Blackwood Comprehensive 3G pitch	£865k
	✓ Trinity Fields School improvements	£1.3m

Educational transformation remains a vital outcome of our investment in Band B of the Programme. The second part of this funding (Band B) started in April 2019, with the priority areas being:

- Reduce the number of poor condition schools
- Ensure that we have the right size schools in the right location
- Provide enough places to deliver Welsh and English medium education
- Ensure the effective and efficient use of the educational estate

Further information is available on the [21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools webpages](#)



## PROPOSAL

### What are we proposing to do?

We are proposing to:

- **Amalgamate Llancaeath Junior School and Llanfabon Infants School to create a new Primary School provision on the existing infants school site for those aged 3-11 years with an anticipated completion date of September 2024.**
- It is proposed that the current Llanfabon Infants School site will be reconfigured to host the new Primary School provision. A new building will be built to accommodate Key Stage 2 pupils (Junior age) and a partial refurbishment of the existing Infants School building on site with the whole Primary School provision providing accommodation for 275 pupils plus 40 nursery places, ensuring the development and delivery of an inclusive all-through primary school provision delivering the full curriculum to pupils in a modern, safe and inspiring learning environment.
- The new primary school site will have improved outside learning space and facilities that will provide a stimulating teaching and learning environment with 21<sup>st</sup> Century facilities centered on the learning, self-esteem and well-being of all pupils.
- The proposed project will take into account the desire to encourage and facilitate community use of the asset. The design will seek to include measures to enable safe 'zoning' which can be utilised by the wider community.

### What is driving this proposal?

Proposals have been prioritised based on a number of factors including building condition, pupil projection and local and national drivers, however, the delivery of the curriculum and the Educational agenda remains at the core.

## Options Appraisal

The planning and development of effective school organisation proposals is crucial to the Welsh Government's goal of transforming education in Wales and providing better educational outcomes with a commitment to increase school effectiveness, and narrow inequalities in achievement between advantaged and disadvantaged areas, groups and individuals.

The Welsh Government's Options Framework approach has been followed to identify the widest possible number of feasible options, focusing on the following key dimensions: scope, service solution, service delivery, implementation and funding.

An options appraisal provides the opportunity to help councils make an informed and evidence based decision on how to deliver services. It does this by considering the relative advantages and disadvantages of a number of different delivery model options (including the current way in which the service is delivered).

The methodology helps decision makers to consider the:

- Desirability - the degree to which each option meets the strategic objectives and priorities of stakeholders
- Viability - the degree to which each option is financially viable and sustainable
- Feasibility - the degree to which each option can be implemented

As part of outlining the current proposal, an options appraisal was undertaken.

The options appraisal stage allowed for a number of different delivery model options to be explored and evaluated against a set of agreed criteria, leading to the selection of the preferred option.

Table 2: The following options were considered and scored:	
Option	Description
Option 1 *	<b>Do Nothing :</b> No change to existing schools
Option 2	<b>Do Minimum:</b> Internal refurbishments of both school sites
Option 3	<b>Do Intermediate:</b> Expansion of the existing Llanfabon site via modular buildings to become a new primary school to accommodate 275 pupil and 40 nursery provision
Option 4	<b>Do Major:</b> Expansion of the existing Llanfabon site via a permanent building and internal reconfiguration to become a new primary school to accommodate 275 pupil and 40 nursery provision
Option 5	<b>Do Maximum</b> New primary school building to accommodate 275 pupils and 40 nursery provision on a different site yet to be identified

\*Please note, Option 1 is considered the status quo option and is always included in the shortlist as a benchmark for value for money.

Each option was evaluated against the investment objectives outlined in the Consultation Document and the extent to which it met the Critical Success Factors. This stage was an important part of the process, to raise important questions at an early stage and assist in developing proposals.

This resulted in options either being discounted, carried forward for further consideration in the short list with an eventual option identified as a preferred way forward. It is the option identified as the preferred way forward upon which the consultation exercise was based as all other options have been discounted at this point.

The process utilised was outlined in detail in the Consultation Document and resulted in

**Option 4** being identified as the preferred option, namely, **expansion of the existing Llanfabon site via a permanent building and internal reconfiguration to become a new primary school to accommodate 275 pupil and 40 nursery provision**

### **Benefits and Disbenefits**

There are common challenges faced by all Local Authorities when adopting new proposals. The vast majority of Council policies are delivered through projects and programmes of various forms. It is therefore vital that projects are delivered successfully in order to realise their intended benefits for citizens.

Evidence shows that the best way to ensure successful delivery is by setting up projects correctly in the first place. The most common causes of failure, among others are a lack of clear objectives, insufficient resources and over-ambitious cost and schedule that impact on the level and amount of benefit that can be realised and can be avoided if tackled in a project's early stages.

As part of the development of the proposal, a number of benefits and disbenefits were identified as outlined in the Consultation Document. The consultation process was an opportunity to consult with relevant stakeholders to understand what they see as positive outcomes and what negative consequences may be delivered.

The Council recognises that people have different needs, requirements and goals and we will work actively against all forms of discrimination by promoting good relations and mutual respect within and between our communities. An Integrated Impact Assessment was carried out to initiate discussion and invite comments as to whether the principles for the proposal are supported.

All comments have been recorded and Cabinet members will be provided with copies of all the responses received within the consultation period and in their original format as part of the decision making process.



## CONSULTATION PROCESS

### Consultation Process

The consultation process has followed the Welsh Government guidelines as set out in the School Organisation Code 2018.

As the proposal relates to a ‘regulated alteration’ to a Maintained school under Section 42 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013, the proposals have been published on the Council’s website.

### Implications of COVID19

Due to the implications of COVID-19 place and after taking advice from Welsh Government, this consultation process refrained from undertaking any face-to-face consultation sessions to support social distancing and maintain safe working practices for all.

It should be noted that there is no obligation to consult face-to-face and therefore a written paper consultation exercise was undertaken to discharge the Council of its duty under the School Organisation Code 2018. However, a number of alternative methods were utilised for engagement including use of social media, face-time technology and the creation of a ‘Frequently Asked Questions’ Document.

### Stakeholder Engagement

Through [TeamCaerphilly - Better Together](#), the Council is committed to ensuring high quality, citizen focused services for the communities that comprise our county borough. In future-proofing public services, we recognise the need to ensure effective engagement which is central to our decision making - [Read more about our approach to Consultation and Engagement here](#)

For this proposal, our consultation process must follow the Welsh Government Statutory guidance as set out in the School Organisation Code 2018.

Proposals must be published when we make a ‘regulated alteration’ to a maintained school under Section 42 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013.

The following consultees were advised of our proposals on the 20<sup>th</sup> October 2021 by letter or email:

Table 3: Consultee List	
Pupils and Pupil Councils*	Welsh Ministers
Parents, prospective parents, guardians and carers*	Assembly Members and Members of Parliament representing the area served *
Headteacher, Staff and Governing bodies*	Local CCBC Members
Directors of Education for Neighbouring Authorities	Local Town and Community Councils
Teaching and Support Staff Associations	Estyn

Parent Network	Welsh Education Forum
Diocesan Directors / Boards of Education	South East Wales Consortium (EAS)
Gwent and South Wales Police and Crime Commissioners	South East Wales Transport Alliance (SEWTA)
Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership	Mudiad Meithrin, Menter Iaith and voluntary nursery providers

*\*of schools directly or likely to be affected by the proposal only*

In addition to advising those we were obliged to under the stakeholder criteria, the following were also contacted and advised of our proposals in writing:

- All Headteachers in the Borough

### **Consultation Information**

The School Organisation Code 2018 states that when undertaking a consultation process in connection with a school proposal, the Council must publish information to enable transparent, balanced and open decision making.

The consultation document must be published on a school day and consultees must be given at least 42 days to respond to the document, with at least 20 of these being school days as defined by Section 579 of the Education Act 1996. The consultation period opened on Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> October 2021 (a school day) and concluded at midnight on Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> December 2021.

As part of this proposal, the following documentation was produced:

- Consultation Notification Letter
- Consultation Document
- Consultation Response Form (Online)
- Consultation Response Form (Printable PDF)
- Integrated Impact Assessment

All documentation was published in Welsh and English, complying with the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards. Information was also available in other languages and formats on request, however, no such requests were received as part of this process.

Hardcopies of the documentation were issued to the schools directly affected by the proposal including the child friendly summary for discussion with the pupils.

In addition to notifying the consultees in writing of the proposal, distribution of information was supported via the school text messaging service direct to parents and staff.

A child friendly consultation summary and advocacy video was also produced to support the consultation process with pupils of the affected schools to present information in a manner relevant to their likely understanding, allowing them to participate in the consultation process and reach an informed opinion. In addition to this documentation, the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Team and local teaching staff provided assistance to children and young people who wished to submit a consultation response in their preferred format and language.

The Council's Social media channels were also utilised. Messages relating to the consultation were released in phases throughout the consultation period to maintain public awareness and provide as far a 'social media reach' as possible.

## **Response Methods**

As outlined in the Consultation Document, anyone wishing to comment in relation to the proposal could do so in writing by:

- Completing the online response form on the Council's website
- Completing a response pro forma and posting it to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century School Team at Caerphilly
- Emailing comments to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Team at Caerphilly

Pupils of the schools directly affected by the proposal were also give the opportunity to engage in the process through focused 'Pupil Voice' sessions.

The response forms were designed in such a way as to capture the relevant information required to discharge the Council's obligations required under the School Organisation Code for undertaking a consultation linked to the regulated alteration of a maintained school.

This consultation was undertaken to capture the views of consultees in relation to the proposal. These views have been incorporated into this document, which will be published and considered by Cabinet when determining whether to proceed to Statutory notice stage. A separate Planning Application Process will be undertaken in respect of this proposal. The separate statutory processes were outlined in the consultation document and any adverse comments received as part of this process have been recorded as such.



## **CONSULTATION RESPONSES**

### **Consultation Responses**

Overall a total of 11 responses were received during the consultation process.

*Please note:* The figure above and the data reported on for Questions 1 to 7 does not include the responses received by Estyn or captured as part of any pupil engagement sessions. These are outlined in more detail later in this document.

Of the prescribed methods for providing a response during the consultation period:

- 11 responses received via Online Survey
- 0 responses received via email
- 0 responses received via post
- Pupil Voice Sessions at both schools open to entire combined pupil cohort (247 pupils excluding nursery)

0 responses (0%) were returned in the medium of Welsh.

The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Team received no requests for the documentation to be provided in any other format or language.

### QUESTION 1

The consultees were asked to identify a category that best described them in relation to the proposal for the school affected. The options provided were selected to demonstrate that the key consultee groups as outlined in the School Organisation Code had been engaged with. These included, Pupil, Parent, Staff Member, School Governor, Elected Member, Local Resident, Group and Other.

Of those who responded, the following categories were selected:



18.18%	18.18%	9.09%	9.09%	36.36%	9.09%
Parents	Staff Members	School Governors	Elected Members	Local Resident	Other

For those selecting 'other', the opportunity was given to elaborate further as they felt appropriate and the respondent in this case indicated they were a past employee.

### QUESTION 2

As part of the consultation process, consultees were asked to provide basic contact information, including their name, address and email. This psychographic data was collected in order to help paint a picture of the consultee and enable the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools team to understand trends in response data and response groupings that would assist in compiling this Consultation Report.

As information can be collected for many purposes, the Caerphilly County Borough Council's privacy notice for consultations/surveys was referenced, which outlined the purpose and legal basis for collecting the information, data usage and data retention periods.

For the purposes of this Consultation Report, Cabinet will be provided with a separate digest of the consultation comments received. Please note that comments that are considered to be offensive or compromise anonymity have been edited or removed.

### QUESTION 3

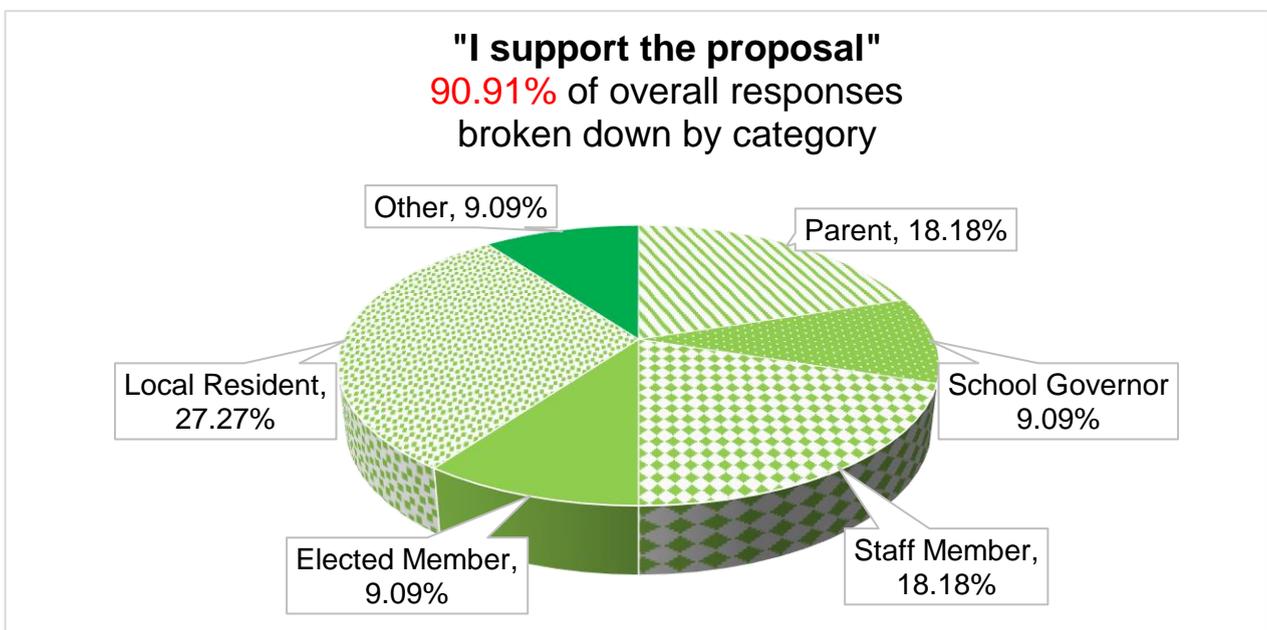
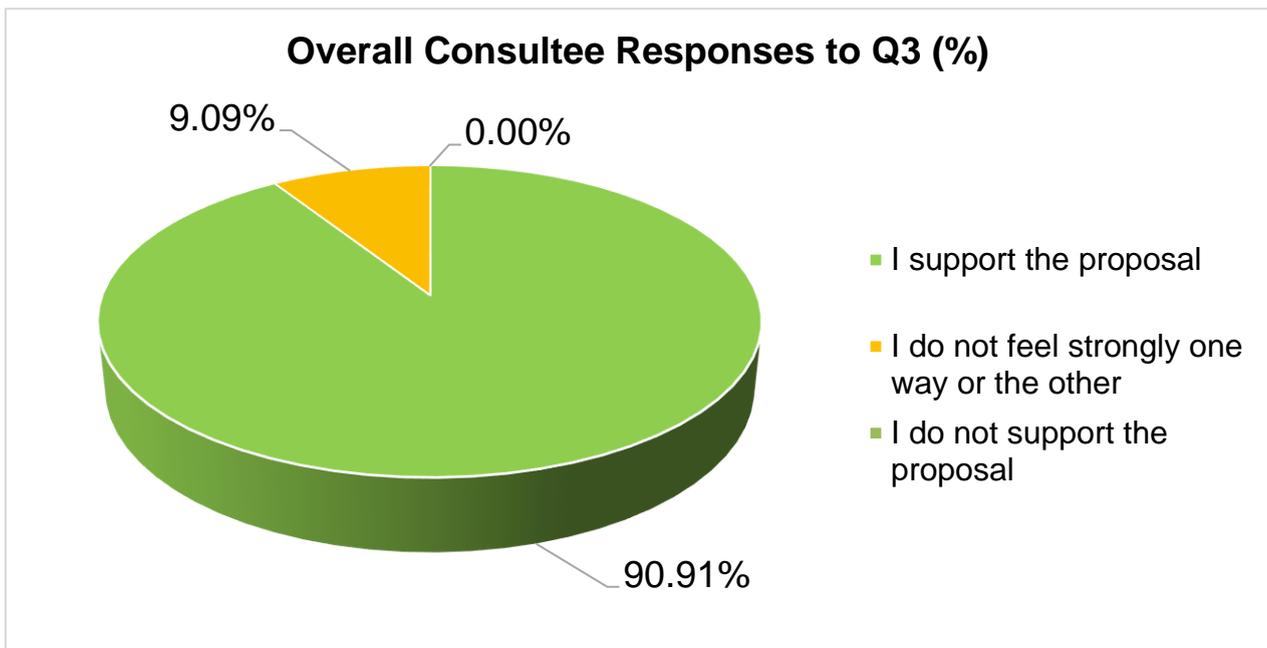
Consultees can submit their views either in favour of or against the proposals.

Consultees were asked to indicate which of the following statements most accurately reflected their views about the proposal. Consultees were reminded to read the consultation documentation prior to providing any responses during this consultation exercise and that unfavourable comments made during the consultation period will not be treated as objections at this stage.

The options available were:

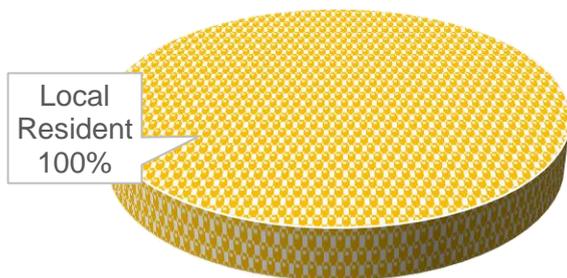
- I do not feel strongly one way or the other
- I support the proposal
- I do not support the proposal

Of the responses returned, 10 support the proposal, 0 do not support it, 1 either didn't feel strongly either way or failed to select an option. That equates to 90.91% in support, 0% opposed with the remaining 9.09% either providing a neutral response or no comment.



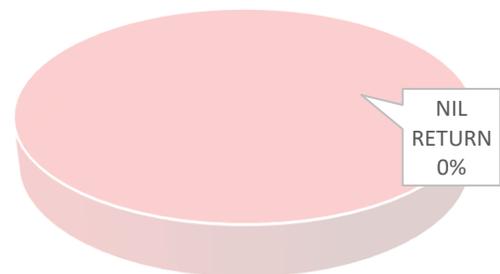
**"I do not feel strongly one way or the other"**

9.09% of overall responses broken down by category



**"I do not support the proposal"**

0% of overall responses broken down by category



It is prudent to bring to the attention of readers that the commentary provided as part of Question 4 may offer additional insight into the views of the consultees and that the response provided to Question 3 should not be considered in isolation.

#### **QUESTION 4**

This was a free text box, enabling consultees to provide additional comments on the proposal. All comments received have been read and analysed.

General themes that emerged from the consultation:

- Advantages of a single combined Primary school
- Community and Intergenerational facilities
- Traffic Management
- Construction process and potential impact

These themes are outlined in more detail in the section on 'Consultation Clarification'.

#### **QUESTION 5**

As part of our duty under the School Organisation Code 2018, consultees must be given the option to request notification as to the publication of this Consultation Report. Contact information has been collected to this end and the preferred method for communication will be notification via email if this information has been made available by the respondent.



9 out of the 11 respondents have requested notification (9 via email, 0 via post). These individuals have been added to the notification list and will be contacted concurrently with stakeholders when this document is made publicly available through the Council's website. Hardcopies of the documentation will be made available on request.

## QUESTION 6

In line with the Caerphilly County Borough Council's Strategic Equality Plan 2016-2020 and the Consultation and Monitoring Guidance 2016 document, a reduced version of the Equalities and Monitoring questionnaire was included as part of the consultation response to support effective planning and to ensure that a representative sample was achieved to identify any equality issues.

The option to include information relating to the consultees Gender, Age, Disability Status, Welsh Language Skills and any influencing factors relating to their response were included but not mandatory.

From the responses received, of those that completed the Equalities monitoring section:

Are you ...			
Male	4	Other	0
Female	7	Prefer not to say	0

Age			
Under 16	0	40-65	5
16-25	0	Over 65	2
26-39	3	Prefer not to say	1

Disability			
I am not Disabled	10	Learning Difficulties	0
Physical / Mobility Impaired	0	Visually Impaired	0
Hearing Impaired	0	Speech Impaired	0
Prefer not to say	1		
Other	0		

Welsh Language Skills				
	A Little	Moderately	Quite Well	Fluently
Speak	4	3	0	2
Understand	2	2	0	2
Read	1	2	0	2
Write	1	2	0	2
No Welsh Language Skills	1		Prefer not to say	1

## QUESTION 7

In relation to equalities implications that respondents highlighted, responses indicated that their decision was influenced as per the list outlined in the consultation response form. 0 responses were provided for this question.

## Education Scrutiny Response

The Council's Education Scrutiny Committee is a consultee for any policy or service developments in relation to Education within the Borough.

A digital meeting via Microsoft teams took place on Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2021 at 5.30pm.

As part of this meeting, the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools and Colleges Band B Programme and consultation in respect of the proposal to create a new Primary School through the amalgamation of Llancaeach Junior School and Llanfabon Infants School was discussed. All consultation documentation was made available to members as part of the agenda reports pack and officers linked to the proposal were available to take questions.

It was agreed that a vote in respect of the proposal would be taken and be officially recorded for inclusion in this Consultation Report. The Committee members voted 12 For, 0 Against, 0 Abstentions in relation to the proposal.



Education Scrutiny Committee - 2 November 2021

A recording of the session is available on YouTube:

[Education Scrutiny Committee Meeting](#)

The agenda item linked to this proposal starts 53 minutes and 45 seconds in to the recording.

The [Notice of the Decisions](#) document is also available to view on the Council's website.

## Estyn's Response

Under the terms of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and the School Organisation Code 2018, the Council, as the proposers, is required to send a notification with regards to the consultation to Estyn.

Estyn is the education and training inspectorate for Wales and their vision is to improve the quality of education and training and outcomes for all learners in Wales. However, Estyn is not a body which is required to act in accordance with the Code and the Act places no statutory requirements on Estyn in respect of school organisation matters. Therefore, as a body being consulted, Estyn will provide their opinion only on the overall merits of school organisation proposals.

Estyn has considered the educational aspects of the proposal. The full response from Estyn is included as Annex 2 at the end of this document. However, in summary:

***"The proposals are likely to at least maintain the standard of education provision in the area."***

The Council acknowledges Estyn's response.





Images from Consultation Sessions undertaken with pupils at Llanfabon Infants School (Red Uniform) and Llancaech Junior School (Blue Uniform). Schools provided images on the understanding that parental permission was obtained.

### Other Schools identified as being affected

The 4 other schools identified as 'affected' in relation to this proposal were, Greenhill Primary, Ystrad Mynach Primary, Ysgol Gynradd Bro Allta and Ysgol Gymraeg Penalltau

Table 4: The schools identified as being affected by the proposal are:	
School	Reason
Greenhill Primary CF82 9EU	Nearest alternative community English Language Primary school in Borough. Proximity of 2.4 miles from Llanfabon site Impact on projected numbers, demand and learner travel as a result of the proposal requires consideration.
Ysgol Penallta CF82 6AP	Welsh Language Primary School Proximity of 3.2 miles from current site Impact on projected numbers and demand as a result of the proposal requires consideration.

Ystrad Mynach Primary CF82 7AQ	English Language Primary School Proximity of 3.3 miles from current site Impact on projected numbers and demand as a result of the proposal requires consideration.
YG Bro Allta CF82 7XQ	Welsh Language Primary School Proximity of 3.3 miles from current site Impact on projected numbers and demand as a result of the proposal requires consideration.

The Head Teachers of these schools were contacted during the consultation period whereby the consultation proposal was discussed and the pupils, governing body and staff at the school invited to provide their responses as part of the consultation process. Where information has been submitted, responses are included as part of the separate annex available to Cabinet.

## OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

	<p><i>"Priorities for the coming year are to renew and reform, putting learners' progression and wellbeing at the heart of everything we do."</i></p> <p><i>Jeremy Miles MS Minister for Education and Welsh Language</i></p>
--	---

There are a number of local and national strategies that drive Educational reform and underline the rationale for the proposals being considered as part of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools and Colleges Band B programme in Caerphilly.

- [Welsh Language Act 1993 / Welsh Language \(Wales\) measure 2011](#)
- [Additional Learning Needs and Educational Tribunal \(Wales\) Act 2017](#)
- [The Childcare Act 2006 \(Local Authority Assessment\) \(Wales\) Regulations 2016](#)
- [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#)
- [Welsh Government - Education in Wales: Our National Mission](#)
- [Welsh Government - Cymraeg 2050: Welsh Language Strategy Action Plan 2019- 2021](#)
- [Welsh Government - 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools and Colleges Programme](#)
- [Caerphilly - 'Shared Ambitions' Education Attainment Strategy 2019 - 2022](#)
- [Caerphilly - #Team Caerphilly: Better Together Transformation Strategy](#)
- [Caerphilly - Welsh Education Strategic Plan](#)
- [Caerphilly - Welsh Language Strategy 2017-2022](#)

- [Caerphilly - Corporate Plan \(including Wellbeing Objectives 2018-2023\)](#)
- [Caerphilly – Education Other Than At School \(EOTAS\) Strategy 2020](#)
- [Caerphilly - Strategic Equality Plan 2020-2024](#)
- [Caerphilly - Communication and Engagement Strategy 2019-2022](#)

As Wales embarks on a renewed vision of success for all learners, we can reflect on our rich heritage and proud history for promoting access to education in Caerphilly. Our transformational reforms are taking place within a challenging environment. This includes the uncertainties associated with Brexit, the technological transformation and the divergence in the qualification systems across the home nations. These are all challenges and opportunities for the Council.

## NEXT STEPS

### Consultation Clarification

When analysing all consultation response comments received as part of the consultation period, a number of emerging themes became evident.

Table 5: Summary of Response Themes		
Theme	Overview	Number of Mentions
<b>Advantages of a single combined Primary school</b>	One point of contact for parents	2
	Bringing inset days, start and finish times into line	1
	Improved Pupil wellbeing linked to attending one school for longer period	3
	More opportunities for staff	1
	Building and Location related issues linked to Llancaeath Junior School	1
	Enhanced Outdoor Space	2
<b>Community and Intergenerational facilities</b>	Use of wider site facilities for community groups	2
	Wraparound Childcare Provision on site	1
<b>Traffic Management</b>	Parking concerns at Llanfabon Infants School site and call for better drop off zone	2
	Increased traffic flow at proposed site	2
<b>Construction process and potential impact</b>	Impact of new building on neighbouring properties	1

To assist Cabinet in the decision making process, the following information is provided by Council Officers involved in the formulation of the proposal by means of response for clarification with supporting reasons.

<b>Table 6: Council Response - Theme Clarification</b>
<b>Theme: Advantages of a single combined Primary school</b>
<b>Council's Response</b>
<p>The Council appreciates the level of support shown from consultees in relation to this proposal and the general consensus that the amalgamation of Llancaeath Junior School and Llanfabon Infants School will benefit pupils, their families, and the wider community.</p> <p>As outlined in the Consultation Document, a single Primary School provision can bring many benefits from an academic, social and practical perspective, enabling a greater sense of community for all.</p> <p>The design of the new building adjacent to the existing Llanfabon Infants School building, will include a 2 story build, mirroring other Primary Schools within the Educational Estates across Caerphilly. It will be located away from neighbouring properties maximising the existing school site configuration and ensuring out door space can be accommodated.</p>
<b>Theme: Community and Intergenerational facilities</b>
<b>Council's Response</b>
<p>It is a pre-requisite of Welsh Government funding that Council's optimise the use of infrastructure and resources to enable flexibility for space and facilities to be made available as community assets. Whilst the internal design of the proposed extension is yet to be finalised, subject to Cabinet approval to progress, the Council will work closely with School Staff and local residents to understand need and how this may be accommodated on a booking basis.</p> <p>Childcare provision is being considered as part of a separate funding proposal through the Welsh Government's Childcare Grant.</p>
<b>Theme: Traffic Management</b>
<b>Council's Response</b>
<p>This proposal will be subject to a full planning application process and a wide range of consultees will be invited to comment, including the Highways Department.</p> <p>As part of any development, the Council is committed to providing safe, efficient and effective traffic management. As a highway authority, we have a duty to manage the road network to ensure, as far as possible, the safe and convenient movement of traffic, which includes pedestrians and other vulnerable road users. The planning and design of the facility will establish safer routes with designated pick up and drop off points, including car parking which should alleviate congestion.</p>
<b>Theme: Construction process and potential impact</b>
<b>Council's Response</b>
<p>The developments on site will be designed and orientated in such a way as to minimise impact to any neighbouring residential properties.</p>

The proposal will be subject to a full planning application process led by our experienced Building Consultancy Team and subject to building regulation requirements relating to a number of factors such as dust, noise etc.

### **Reasonable Alternatives Identified**

As outlined in the Consultation Document, the proposal under consideration is to amalgamate Llancaeath Junior School and Llanfabon Infants School to create a new Primary School provision situated on the existing Llanfabon Infants School site. This was the preferred option as identified through the options appraisal process and scored against the critical success factors of Strategic fit, Educational fit, Accessibility, Financial fit and Environmental impact.

Through the consultation process and the comments returned, there has been an acknowledgement of the need to invest in a new Primary school.

Following the consultation period, the Council is required to carry out a further assessment for the proposal. The purpose of this further assessment is to take account of any further information that has come forward through the consultation or otherwise.

No reasonable alternatives have been highlighted as a result of the Consultation Process.

### **Recommendation**

In reviewing the proposal to take account of further information that has come forward through the consultation and in consideration of the likely impact on quality and standards in education, the community and travelling arrangements, it is the recommendation of this report that the proposal is progressed as outlined in the Consultation Document, namely:

#### **Amalgamate Llancaeath Junior School and Llanfabon Infants School to create a new Primary School provision on the existing infants school site**

### **Decision Making**

To deliver our reforms across the entire system, we will need a bold commitment to effective collaboration along with integration of services where appropriate. This will include Welsh Government, the teaching profession and the wider education workforce, our key partners in local authorities, diocesan authorities, regional services, Estyn and others. Successful implementation of any proposal will require effective and honest engagement between all facets of the education system and our local communities and we are committed to providing the conditions to enable this to happen.

Cabinet Members are asked to:

- a) Consider the information contained in the Consultation Report.
- b) Approve the recommendation to proceed to Statutory Notice in relation to the proposal

### **Reporting, Notification and Publishing of Information**

Should Cabinet decide to proceed with the proposal, a Statutory Notice will be published providing a 28 day notice period for objections. The School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 provides that anyone wishing to make objections to a school organisation proposal has

the opportunity to do so. To be considered as statutory objections, objections must be made in writing and sent to the Council within the 28-day period.

Cabinet will then consider the outcome of the Statutory Notice at a future meeting and determine whether to implement the proposal having given due consideration to all the information provided.

In the event of objections, the Council will publish an objection report providing a summary of the objections and Cabinet's response to those objections within 7 days or the day of the determination of the proposal. This report will be available for all persons to view on the Council website and paper copies will be available on request.

Should Cabinet approve the proposal, a full Business Case will be submitted to the Welsh Minister for final approval and the works will commence.

## SUPPORTING INFORMATION

### **Annex 1 :**

[Consultation Notification Letter](#)

[Consultation Document](#)

[Consultation Frequently Asked Questions](#)

[Original Integrated Impact Assessment](#)

### **Annex 2:**

**Estyn's response to the proposal to establish a new Primary School through the amalgamation of Llancaeath Junior School and Llanfabon Infants School, Caerphilly.**

This report has been prepared by Her Majesty's Inspectors of Education and Training in Wales.

Under the terms of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and its associated Code, proposers are required to send consultation documents to Estyn. However, Estyn is not a body which is required to act in accordance with the Code and the Act places no statutory requirements on Estyn in respect of school organisation matters. Therefore, as a body being consulted, Estyn will provide their opinion only on the overall merits of school organisation proposals.

Estyn has considered the educational aspects of the proposal and has produced the following response to the information provided by the proposer.

### **Summary/ Conclusion**

The proposals are likely to at least maintain the standard of education provision in the area.

### **DESCRIPTION AND BENEFITS**

The proposer has given a clear rationale for the proposal, which includes a detailed description of the project and a projected timetable for completion. The proposal is that the council will work with the contractor to ensure there would be minimal disruption to the daily operations of the existing school cohort, on the Llanfabon Infant School site. There are no interim arrangements

proposed for the Llancaeath Junior School as the project will have no impact on the existing provision.

The proposer appears to have set out clearly and fairly the expected benefits and disadvantages when compared with the status quo. The two schools concerned currently work closely together. The proposer has identified suitable risks associated with the proposal, for example the impact on other neighbouring schools, and has identified possible ways to manage the risk, for example by phasing in an admission number of 40.

The proposer has considered using the Llancaeath Junior School site, in place of the Llanfabon Infant School site, but has discounted this alternative because of the likely limited vehicular access, and the apparent worthwhile opportunities for extended school provision (community use and wraparound childcare) at the larger of the two sites. Using the Llanfabon Infant School site appears to be a sensible solution.

The proposer has considered the impact of the changes on learner travel arrangements and on the accessibility of provision. The proposer has identified limited impact on travel as the two sites are within 0.5 miles of each other, and a likely reduction in traffic in the locality between the two sites as siblings will be on the same site. The new build is proposed to be DDA compliant, which will improve access for children and adults with a disability. In addition, the proposer has undertaken initial discussions to determine the viability of using adjacent redundant community land to provide increased drop off and parking provision, which is currently unavailable on the junior school site. This seems a pragmatic consideration.

The proposal appears to address suitably the need to reduce the current surplus places, especially in the junior school, while catering for enough headroom overall to provide for the predicted housing development and likely increased pupil numbers in the locality over the foreseeable future.

The proposal appears to take enough account of the likely impact on Welsh medium provision within the local authority. It is likely that the proposal would have minimal impact on the local authority's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP).

Llancaeath Junior School and Llanfabon Infants School have been identified as one of the priority projects in the 21st Century Schools Band B programme. However, the proposer has not identified the specific, likely financial costs of the proposal or any potential savings.

## **EDUCATIONAL ASPECTS OF THE PROPOSAL**

The proposer has considered the impact of the proposals on the quality and standards in education, including the likely positive impact of a new building and amalgamated school on pupil wellbeing and the systems for care, support and guidance. The proposal takes account of the likely positive benefits of increased capacity for support and improvement due to a wider pool of staff in a bigger school. The proposal identifies the likely increased opportunities for staff to progress their careers in a larger school setting. The proposal also considers the likely benefits of wrap around childcare on site and the transition from an onsite nursery and childcare setting into the school. These proposals seem realistic and worthwhile.

The proposal takes suitable account of the most recent Estyn reports for each of the two schools, including recent improvements since the core inspection at Llanfabon Infants School. It identifies a likely positive impact to ensure delivery of the full curriculum provision at the foundation phase and key stage 2. However, the proposal does not appear to take account of the LA/consortium view on the quality of leadership and management at the schools.

It is not clear from the proposal whether the intention is for the governing body to become a single entity, or whether a federation arrangement would continue. It may be pragmatic to set out intentions to support a smooth transition and to ensure that everyone understands how the governance arrangement will work in practice, for example with reference to staffing decisions and potential communications with parents.

The proposal does not consider the impact of the proposals on children with Special Educational Needs, although it does broadly consider the likely positive impact of the new and improved provision on pupils' wellbeing, including for vulnerable pupils.