

# 21st Century Schools Consultation Document



SCAN ME

## Proposal to create a Pupil Referral Unit

Centre for Vulnerable Learners, Pontllanfraith

20<sup>th</sup> October 2021 - 1<sup>st</sup> December 2021



This document is available electronically at

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



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg, ac mewn ieithoedd a fformatau eraill ar gais.  
This document is available in Welsh, and in other languages and formats on request.

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# INTRODUCTION

## What is this booklet about?

Caerphilly County Borough Council (CCBC) has embarked upon an exciting but challenging journey of improvement and change.

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.

We aspire 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.

This booklet is for anyone who has an interest in education in Caerphilly and may be of particular interest to parents/guardians of children attending or likely to attend a pupil referral unit. It sets out the changes we are suggesting and the rationale, linked to this type of educational facility which is accessible by all pupils referred to the Education Other Than At School (EOTAS) programme.

The consultation process represents an opportunity for people to learn about the proposal, ask questions and make comments that will be recorded and summarised in a consultation report. This report will be published on the Council's website and will be considered when Cabinet decides on the way forward.


## 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.

Band A funding in Caerphilly was used to deliver :

 Image of Islwyn High School	Project Name	Band A Investment
	✓ 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

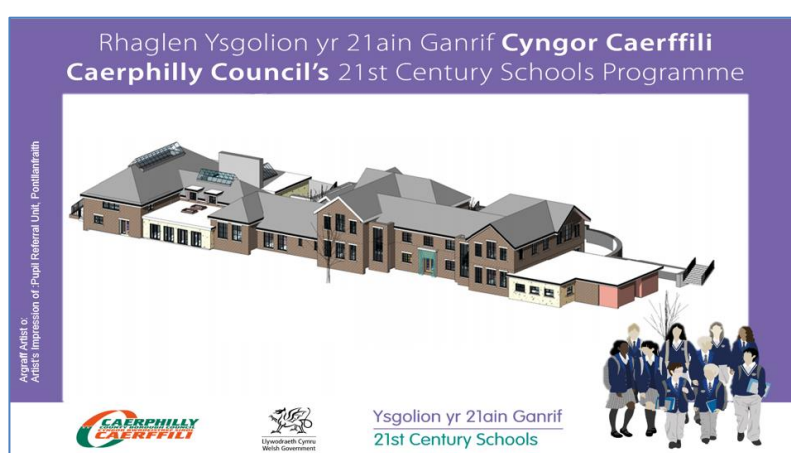
Caerphilly County Borough Council submitted a Strategic Outline Programme (SOP) and received Welsh government approval in principle for an identified investment of £78 million, subject to individual project consultation and approval. The SOP set the strategic vision for the Band B programme within the context of the priorities and wellbeing goals of the Council.

We identified a need to invest in improving our school buildings, meeting the demand for education in both Welsh and English, reducing surplus places and developing shared and co-located facilities. Our aspiration is to provide efficient and effective educational infrastructure that will meet current and future demand for places and for all facilities that receive investment committed to optimising the use of the infrastructure and resources, making assets available for community use.

## What are we proposing to do?

We are proposing to:

- **Create a Pupil Referral Unit for vulnerable pupils on the former Pontllanfraith Comprehensive site (NP12 2DA) with an anticipated completion date of September 2023.**
- The proposed centre of excellence will support vulnerable learners from across Caerphilly at Key Stage 3/4, sitting at the center of the Council's Education Other Than At School (EOTAS) Strategy and the [Cwmpawd hub and spoke model](#)
- The new facility will accommodate between 80 - 120 pupils and be equipped with high quality learning opportunities, indoor and outdoor sporting provision as well as access to first class support and will enable community use of the facilities outside of school hours





## CONSULTATION PROCESS

### Who are we consulting with?

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](#)

The School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 requires that the Welsh Ministers issue a School Organisation Code. The Code imposes requirements in accordance with which relevant bodies including local authorities must act when bringing forward proposals in respect of maintained schools as defined at Section 98 of the 2013 Act. That is a school in Wales, which is a community, foundation or voluntary school, a community special school or a maintained nursery school.

Unlike other 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools proposals which have been undertaken to date, this legislation does not apply to pupil referral units and as such the consultation process prescribed by the School Organisation Code 2018 does not apply in this instance

However, for the purposes of progressing this proposal and to enable transparent, balanced and open decision making, a consultation process will be undertaken and reflect the principles of the Council's Consultation and Engagement Framework 2020-2025. Utilising the "Spectrum of Engagement" approach, an appropriate level of engagement in informing and consulting stakeholders will be undertaken, mirroring the equivalent processes outlined in Section 3 of the School Organisation Code 2018 only.

We will therefore advise the following of our proposals by letter or email:

Table 1: 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
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*\*of schools directly or likely to be affected by the proposal only*

**Please note:**

- All responses received during the consultation period will be recorded and summarised in a Community Engagement Report.
- Any negative responses made during the consultation period will not be counted as objections and there is no requirement to issue a Statutory Notice as part of this process, however, they will be recorded as adverse comments.
- The Community Engagement Report will be presented for initial review and endorsement at Education Scrutiny Committee, with final approval to proceed to the planning application and full business case stage sitting with Cabinet.
- 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.

## How can you find out more?

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.

When undertaking a consultation process in connection with a school proposal, the Council will publish information to enable transparent, balanced and open decision making.

As part of this proposal, the following documentation has been produced:

- A Consultation Document outlining the proposal (this document)
- A Children and Young People's Summary
- An Integrated Impact Assessment

Information is made available on the Council's website and all documentation is published in Welsh and English and available in other languages or formats on request.

Further details in relation to the processes and timelines can be found later in this document in the **'Next Steps'** Section.

A separate Planning Application Process will be carried out by the Authority's Property Services Department subject to the final determination being made and Cabinet approval to progress this proposal. Details of all applications can be found on the Council's Website when the process is live.

## Views of children on the proposal

The Council has acknowledged that the voice of young people is about involving them as active participants in the development, delivery, management and improvement of their educational and student experience and needs to be at the heart of planning, provision and evaluation.

Young people have a right to act to express their views in all matters affecting them and for their views to be heard and given due weight in accordance with their age and maturity. The Council recognises the potential of young people to enrich the decision-making processes, to share perspectives and to participate as citizens and facilitators of change.

This is also been reflected by the Estyn report 'Pupil Participation: a best practice guide', which highlights how effective participation benefits pupils and helps schools to improve.

The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Team in Caerphilly will ensure that when bringing forward any proposal, suitable arrangements are made to consult and involve children and young people throughout the process and post occupancy. A child friendly version of the Consultation Document will be produced and any feedback gained through the process or via alternative engagement with vulnerable children already receiving EOTAS provision will be included in the documentation forwarded to Cabinet for consideration once the consultation period has ended.

There has already been a degree of consultation with vulnerable learners whilst developing ideas around this provision. The key messages which came out of this process include:

- ❖ 96% of pupils stated that this type of provision allows them to make progress
- ❖ 88% of pupils indicated that a new PRU will provide them with the correct range of learning experiences to develop necessary skills and learn
- ❖ 66% of the pupils feel that they do not currently have enough opportunities for exercise. The development of sports facilities is integrated within this proposal.

This proposal will focus upon what is important for the individual, and what will work best for them. In this regard, responding to the pupil voice is vital. The pupil voice will be at the forefront of the design process and thus be highly influential in terms of the development of innovative, creative curriculum design that provides all learners with pathways which are secure, appropriate, coherent and aspirational. The final designs will take into consideration open-plan areas, individual/quiet learning areas and innovative spaces to learn and play. Recognition of the provision of flexible spaces to deliver Welsh Government education strategies including curriculum reform will also be given.



## **WHY ARE WE PROPOSING THESE CHANGES?**

### **Background Information**

Schools play a key role not only as places to inspire and educate our children but also as vibrant and dynamic learning environments in which all ages are able to learn and grow that are used not only by pupils but by families and the wider community. Our aim is to secure equality of access by promoting and supporting the development of inclusive education and giving a commitment to providing the best possible quality of education and services within available resources.

The Council is committed to providing all children and young people with high quality education, tailored to meet their needs, which will develop their potential, extend aspiration, promote social inclusion and contribute to the economic regeneration of the area. Progress has been made, however there is still work to be done to improve outcomes and wellbeing for all children and young people.

There is a direct link between socio-economic status, poverty and attainment in education. This is a national issue and one which Caerphilly places at the heart of its improvement plans. However, for comparison between authorities to be relevant, this must be factored in. Around half of all EOTAS pupils come from the more disadvantaged Lower Layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs) across Caerphilly; Caerphilly has 12.7% of its LSOAs in the 10% most deprived in Wales and 28.2% in the 20% most deprived in Wales (based on 2019 data).

Local Authorities can develop their own offer in terms of EOTAS provision. As a direct result of its commitment to inclusion, officers within the borough have developed an extensive offer which not only takes capacity into account but also the range of needs displayed by some of the most vulnerable students across the borough.

The Council has rigorous and robust established processes for identification and provision for those who require EOTAS. Both nationally and locally the number of pupils in need of this provision has increased. The current capacity within EOTAS facilities across CCBC stands at approximately 140. With current need at approximately 260 students, we are presently in the position of outsourcing provision for selected students. Through self-evaluation, we have concluded that current provision could be further developed and enhanced in order to improve pupils' outcomes and value for money.

The proposed PRU at Pontllanfraith will add to the existing portfolio, ensuring sufficient capacity and resources to support pupils through the most appropriate pathways and interventions as required.

## **Planning of school places**

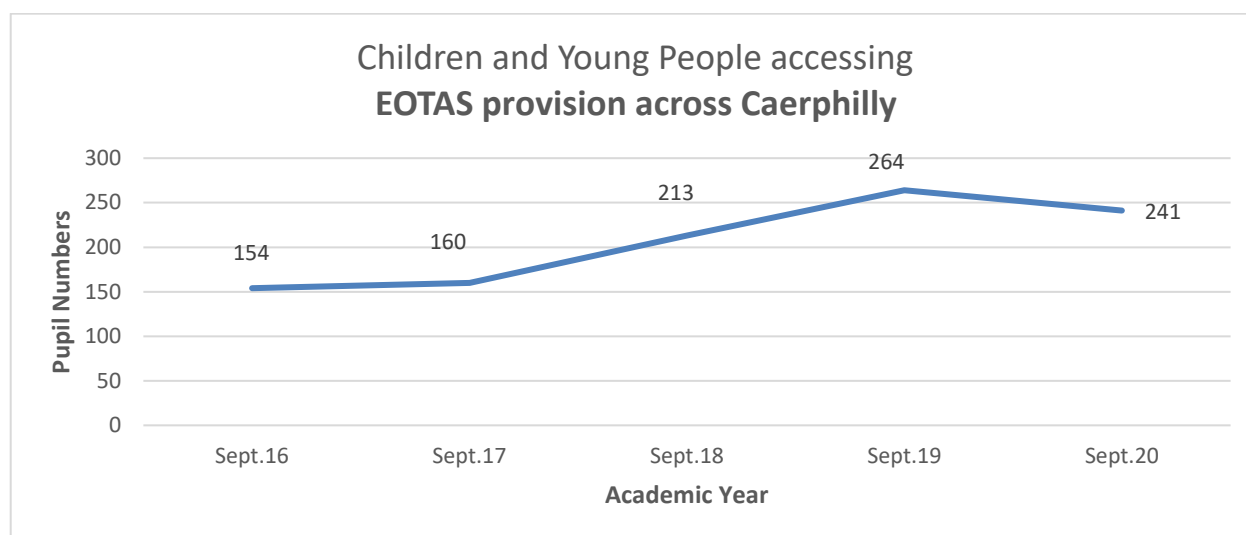
All Councils in Wales must make sure they provide enough school spaces for pupils of all ages in order to provide the best quality of education and ensure the funding provided by the Welsh government is used effectively. All Councils in Wales must also provide places that meet the needs of the pupils in Welsh, English or Faith medium and must be suitable for any additional learning needs.

There are approximately 27,000 school aged children in Caerphilly. Education is provided through 73 primary, 1 voluntary aided school, 1 special school, 1 x 3-18 school and 11 secondary schools. Caerphilly County Borough Council recognises that children and young people who may require provision outside of school at a given time via the EOTAS provision, are some of the borough's most vulnerable learners.

EOTAS numbers across Wales have risen in recent years. At the most recent census (18/19) they represent 3.8 per 1000 students.

Currently, there is provision within Caerphilly as well as access to procured external providers. This provision can vary considerably in terms of cost and quality.





## Condition and Suitability of school buildings

It is the Council's priority to provide the best possible education for all pupils, particularly those most vulnerable to under-achievement. There is a commitment and determination to lessen reliance on external provision and bring processes in house via the development of a centre of excellence through a portfolio Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) approach to ensure an enhanced offer which will meet the needs of all pupils and provide a bespoke pathway appropriate to their needs. The principles here are consistent with the Welsh Government approach to reshaping the Additional Learning Needs (ALN) agenda in terms of person-centered practice.

In Caerphilly we have developed a PRU at the Learning Centre, Glanynant which at present accommodates Key Stage 2 - 4 pupils. This centre is designed to support students experiencing social, emotional and behavioral difficulties.

However, alongside the provision at Glanynant, the Council has developed:

- The Innovate Project – a project run by the Local Authority's Youth Service where young people are encouraged to grow in confidence, self-esteem and independence. Though not exclusively, this does cater for students further into their educational journey and specializes in ensuring a successful transition into education post-16.
- Community Tuition at the HIVE – a small group setting with a high ratio of adult support for students with reported high levels of anxiety who may be supported by Caerphilly My Support Team (CMYST), Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) or open to Social Services.
- Home Tuition – a team of tutors who deliver education to students who are currently unable to access their mainstream school for a range of reasons. This can take place in the home or also in some community settings.

Allied to the above, the increase in numbers evident from September 2018 is directly linked to a school led development in provision through the sector-leading development of Learning Progress Centres (LPC)

- LPC – there are currently 3 of these across the authority. Carefully designed and situated on mainstream school grounds, they focus on short-term intervention work with students

experiencing social and emotional difficulties. Provision is through small group tutoring with the overarching goal to re-integrate students back into mainstream education.

The proposed PRU at Pontllanfraith will form the central component of our provision and become our centre of excellence. Both PRU facilities will operate under the same umbrella, with the PRU at Glanynant reconfiguring to offer provision for Key Stages 2, and the PRU at Pontllanfraith catering for Key Stages 3 and 4, thereby ensuring sufficient capacity and resources to support pupils through the most appropriate pathways and interventions as required.

The proposed location of the new facility is situated on part of the former Pontllanfraith Comprehensive grounds (outlined in red). The proposal seeks to remodel the former grammar school building (shown in purple) for the PRU and provide additional outdoor facilities including a sports hall, multi-use games area with a 3G carpet on the lower level.

Current Site



Proposed site plan



A site investigation and topographic survey has been undertaken on the site and no issues have been identified. The current grammar school building has been vacant for a number of years and it is acknowledged that the current Condition Survey is now 2-3 years out of date and will need updating to identify any further issues with the fabric or structure of the existing building.

The site has a dedicated access route for vehicles and pedestrians and will accommodate specialist transportation vehicles as required as well as onsite parking facilities.

The land is already in ownership of the authority and the proposal to repurpose these premises would result in additional EOTAS places with a continuity of intervention support and the creation of a Centre of Excellence provision at a single location.

## Illustrative Master Plan

'A Foundation for Success' provides a framework for the future regeneration of the County Borough up to 2023. The document sets out strategic priorities for regeneration under four key themes:

- Supporting People (reducing inequality, building capacity and resilience to create healthier, prosperous, cohesive communities)
- Supporting Business (creating employment opportunities, increasing entrepreneurial activities, encouraging innovation and improving access to employment)
- Supporting Quality of Life (providing the right physical environment for our communities that encourages them to prosper)
- Connecting People and Places (improving connectivity locally, regionally and globally)

The Regeneration Strategy is supported by a suite of targeted action plans and strategies aimed at capturing regeneration opportunities and developing key sites and premises throughout the County Borough.

The Masterplan identifies a number of projects in the area that could deliver substantial economic and community benefit, and it will provide a framework for the delivery of those projects.

In addition, the number of school aged children is expected to increase within the Masterplan Area as a result of new development and it is important that there are opportunities for schools to expand to accommodate additional pupils. The Council has recently agreed in principle the provision of additional school places within the wider area subject to funding being confirmed for individual projects, business cases being approved by Welsh Government and the outcome of individual consultations will be considered as part of the 21st Century Schools programme.

This proposal forms part of that Strategy moving forward.

## HOW WOULD OTHER SCHOOLS BE AFFECTED?

Changes in one part of the Education sector in the County has a wider 'ripple' effect on other schools and their pupils. When considering any proposals, the sustainability and enhancement of the education network and wider area is considered. Due regard will be given to the impact of this proposal and consultation will be undertaken with any affected schools.

### **Projected Demand**

Both nationally and locally the number of those pupils in need of this provision has increased, as evident from the volume of provision required to meet demand and the year on year trends.

- EOTAS numbers across Wales have risen in recent years. At the most recent census (18/19) they represent 3.8 per 1000 students.
- EOTAS figures in Caerphilly bear a similar trend.
- The current capacity within EOTAS facilities across the Caerphilly borough stands at approximately 140.

The current cohort of students are spread across the various types of provision.

**Table 2: Actual and Projected Numbers in attendance**

	The Learning Centre	Innovate	HIVE	PRU	LPC	Home Tuition	External Agencies	Total
Current	28	32	30	0	60	80	50	280
2023	28	32	40	40	60	60	40	300
2024	28	32	50	60	60	40	30	300
2025	28	32	50	80	60	20	20	290

There is a degree of approximation with the figures above as they depend on the emerging needs of young people. Inherently difficult to accurately predict, this task will now have to face the unknown variable of how students will adapt when returning to classrooms following the removal of COVID restrictions. The investment must also consider the general growth in student numbers across all schools within the authority. At currently just over 1% of school aged children, as projected figures grow in Caerphilly, the EOTAS 1% will represent more students.

However, the figures are a realistic representation of the Council's EOTAS strategy.

Amongst many other benefits listed within this document, the development of a new PRU at Pontllanfraith will allow:

- A reduction in the need to use external agencies
- More pupils to transition from Home Tuition into Community Tuition

## Catchment Area Arrangements

The Council believes that this proposal represents the best opportunity to safeguard and sustain educational standards for the future and provides a platform for improvement in PRU provision through significant investment in permanent facilities. This will provide a stimulating teaching and learning environment with 21<sup>st</sup> Century facilities including improved ICT facilities, outdoor play, sporting pitch and extended access provision for community use, centred on the learning, self-esteem and the wellbeing of all.

Due to the nature of the EOTAS provision, pupils may access the service from across the whole Borough. The demand on the service from day to day is often difficult to predict, due to the specific intervention requirements for that individual pupil as they could require long or short term support, however, despite a somewhat 'revolving door' scenario, it is the responsibility of the Council to ensure an adequate solution that will meet demand at all times. This proposal will help support this ethos and enable reliance on external providers to be reduced.

Presently the Council incurs costs of procured services and external agencies to meet the extra demand for places. Financially the annual cost of procuring external services to support EOTAS students for 19/20 was £1,128,754. In addition to this, £1,838,543 was spent on agency staff during the same period. Whilst it is acknowledged that developing in-house provision and a dedicated team of staff will require an approximately similar budget, the Council will be able to provide a lot more places which equates to value for money rather than savings in this instance.

## **Impact on other schools**

In relation to PRU specific facilities, there is only one other PRU facility in the borough which is at capacity, supporting up to 24 pupils at any one time across Key Stages 2 to 4 at present. Recently, we have had to increase this capacity to 28 to cope with demand. The Council is investing in the Glanynant facility through its Capital Programme, to increase capacity by a further 16 students (2 classrooms). There are however, restrictions on the site to enable any further expansion and future projected need has resulted in this proposal being put forward. It is envisaged that both premises will work in harmony, under the same umbrella, with the PRU at Glanynant reconfiguring to increase provision for Key Stages 2, and the PRU at Pontllanfraith catering for Key Stages 3 and 4, to provide enough capacity and support for these vulnerable pupils.

## **Disruption to pupils**

The proposal seeks to create a new Pupil Referral Unit facility. The site is in ownership of the Council and is already designated for Educational use as part of the deed package and within the designation for the purposes of the adopted Local Development Plan.

Through utilising an existing site, during the build phase, the development would have no impact on any existing pupil setting until the site is ready to be accommodated at which time learners would be supported through any transplantation process where relevant.

## **Secondary Provision**

The proposal will support the effective delivery of education within all secondary schools by ensuring the needs of their disaffected pupils are being met.

The service will be delivered to vulnerable young people regardless of race, gender, sexuality, language or religious belief and, in addition, the positive consequences for young people will be greater support to remain in education and training.



## **WHAT WILL BE THE IMPACT OF THE PROPOSAL?**

### **Education Standards, Quality and Leadership**

Quality and standards in schools in Caerphilly are monitored by Estyn and the Local Authority (LA). Estyn is the office of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales. It is a Crown body, established under the Education Act 1992. Estyn is independent of the National Assembly for Wales but receives its funding from the Welsh Government under Section 104 of the Government of Wales Act 1998. Estyn inspects quality and standards in education and training providers in Wales.



Welsh Government and Estyn have also historically reviewed practices in relation to pupil placement and EOTAS. The documents outlined below for information have also been used as the context for developing the LA strategy in terms of effective practice and legislation.

#### **Estyn:**

Effective use of managed moves (2018)  
Healthy and Happy (2019)  
Pupil registration practices (2019)  
EOTAS (2016)

#### **Welsh Government:**

Framework for action (2017)  
Statistical release (EOTAS)

This proposal will ensure that the Local Authority discharges its duty and is able to meet the recommendations contained within the Estyn remit report on EOTAS 2016, to which Caerphilly was a contributing authority, which includes:

- Recommendation 8 from Estyn states *“provide pupils with suitable education within 15 days of a decision being made that they should receive EOTAS”*.
- Recommendation 9 from Estyn states *“provide all pupils receiving EOTAS with a full-time curriculum”*.

### **Governance Arrangements**

As the proposal seeks to create a new Pupil referral Unit, there is not currently a management committee in place and this will be established moving forward. Consideration will be given to utilising existing frameworks in place within the EOTAS provision to maximise expertise in this area. The proposed changes would be planned carefully so that the schools leadership and governance supports educational outcomes.

### **Staff Matters**

School staff play an important role in ensuring pupils are learning in a safe and supportive learning environment. They can foster positive, trusting relationships with pupils and improve the school climate by encouraging parent and family involvement in education.

By forging strong relationships, staff can affect virtually every aspect of their pupils' lives, teaching them the important life lessons that will help them succeed beyond just academia. It is not always easy to change a pupil's life, which is why it takes a great teacher to do so.

The Council recognises this newly established facility will require a team of suitably trained staff to deliver curriculum content alongside specific therapy / interventions to support the wellbeing of all young people. The Council's recruitment processes will be followed as appropriate.

The Council is also committed to the principles underlying Schools as Learning Organisations. All staff are committed to professional growth and an extensive menu will be available to commit to action based research and aspire to be a better teacher, all underpinned by the Professional

Standards for Teaching and Leadership. The PRU will act as a centre of excellence in supporting staff development from within the borough and beyond.

## **Financial Matters**

Funding has already been set aside for the Council's share of the capital costs of the project. The recurrent (revenue) costs will be considered as part of budget planning moving forward. Any additional costs or savings will be factored into the Council's Medium-Term Financial Plan.

Caerphilly CBC Members have already agreed to set aside an earmarked reserve for the Council's contribution to capital costs associated with the Authority's 21<sup>st</sup> Century Band B proposals. The value of this reserve is currently £6.975m.

The Authority's contribution to Phase 1 of the programme is currently estimated at £6.413m. This figure includes a contribution of £647k from a Social Services Capital earmarked reserve to support additional spend on the Trinity Fields Project, subject to full planning application approval. Consequently the balance remaining as uncommitted from the £6.975m is currently £1.209m.

The Authority's contribution towards phase 2 of the programme is estimated at £5,925,000, as detailed above. This cost will be met from the remaining funding of £1.209m already earmarked for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools, plus a figure of £4.716m from the Authority's Place-Shaping Reserve.

The proposal to create a Pupil Referral Unit in Pontllanfraith is one of 3 projects identified in Phase 2 of the programme. At this time cost estimates have been developed based on published cost data for the known requirements of the project as defined in the preferred way forward option. A reasonable assessment has been made to establish likely cost of abnormalities in relation to the site. The project cost forecast currently indicates a budget requirement of £5,500,000. This project budget is supported by the Council, and Caerphilly County Borough Council's funding contribution at £1,375,000 (25%) has been included in the Council's capital programme as supported borrowing.

## **Impact on Welsh Language Provision**

The First Minister's programme for Government 2016-2021 Taking Wales Forward, is working towards one million people speaking the Welsh language by 2050.

The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011, the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and the Legislation (Wales) Act 2019, provides a series of standards and places a statutory duty on the Council to assess the demand for Welsh medium education in the area. One of the key standards is a requirement to develop a 5 year Welsh language strategy, with the aim of increasing the number of Welsh speakers and which will enable us to facilitate the use of the Welsh Language within the county borough.

The Council is fully aware of its obligations to support the provision of Welsh Language Education as set out in its Welsh in Education Strategic Plan where Caerphilly County Borough Council's commitment to the promotion of Welsh language and the provision of quality, attractive educational facilities is evident.

The Council is committed to developing opportunities for provision to be delivered through the medium of Welsh where possible. Currently a 12<sup>th</sup> of students that access the EOTAS provision

could potentially come from Welsh Medium Schools across the county and it should be noted that external procured services do not offer any Welsh delivery. This proposal would address that imbalance by bringing provision back inhouse and would therefore have a positive effect on the opportunity for persons to use the Welsh language. In addition, as part of any recruitment process, the ability to speak Welsh would be desirable.

## Learner Travel Arrangements

There is a Statutory duty placed upon the Council to provide pupils with free transport to their nearest suitable school/education provider if they reside beyond 'walking distance' to that provision. All pupils are assessed in accordance with the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008. Currently the Council has a Learner Travel policy that is more generous than the statutory requirements of the Measure.

The table below details the nearest available alternative in-house EOTAS provision:

<b>Table 3: Nearest Alternative in-house EOTAS provision</b>	
<b>Facility</b>	<b>Distance / Travel</b>
<b>Glanynant PRU, Learning Centre</b> NP12 3XP	3 miles
<b>Lewis Pengam, Learning Progress Centre</b> CF81 8LJ	3 miles
<b>Heolddu, Learning Progress Centre</b> CF81 8XL	5.1 miles
<b>HIVE</b> CF83 1FR	8.7 miles

It is the intention of the Council to provide a system of transport that will seek to ensure pupils can safely and comfortably access their education. The proposed new location was a former school site and as such a number of 'Safe Travel' routes, as far as reasonably practicable, are already established. These include designated bus/taxi points, lighting and designated footpaths.

Whilst the on-going cost implications have been considered and a contingency has been factored into the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan, it is not possible at present to determine the exact cost due to individual pupil needs determining the method of transport required.

## Equalities

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.

Impact assessments help us to show that the council has due regard in the exercise of its equality duty under the Equality Act 2010. They are a tool we use to ensure the policies, practices, projects and activities which shape our work are ensuring equal access to all our services.

Impact assessments look at whether changes to how we do things (like working practices or ways we deliver services) are likely to have a positive or negative impact on the people we serve and on those who deliver our services. They help us to plan to reduce or remove negative impact – for example by making reasonable changes to how a group receives a service (perhaps providing information in a different format or providing ramped access into a building etc.).

A new socio-economic duty set out in section 1 of the Equality Act 2010, came into force on 31st March 2021. The Caerphilly Council's Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) template will be utilised to undertake an initial Equality Impact and Welsh Language Impact Assessment which will be further reviewed in the light of any additional elements highlighted through the statutory consultation processes as the proposal progresses.

The utilisation of the new IIA design will shape the Council's work in ensuring equal access to all services and further help support the Council in making informed and effective decisions whilst ensuring compliance with a range of relevant legislation, including:

- Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011
- Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011
- Socio-economic Duty – Sections 1 to 3 of the Equality Act 2010
- Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015
- Statutory Consultation v Doctrine of Legitimate Expectation and Gunning Principles

A full Integrated Impact Assessment has been undertaken. This document is available to view a part of the consultation pack on the website.

## **Specialist Facilities / Additional Learning Needs**

A key responsibility of the Council is to ensure that there are sufficient pupil places in the most appropriate locations and maintain an awareness of demographic changes (i.e increases and decreases in the pupil population). The Council is also required to identify an authority-wide strategy for community provision in schools, as well as specialist provision for pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN) or disabilities.

The Authority recognises the impact of the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act (2018) and the need to future proof provision. Through the Band B programme, consideration of the correct types, quantity and quality of provision to meet the future needs of the population has been considered.

This proposal aims to provide a new model of working within the EOTAS provision, one capable of meeting the changing needs of vulnerable learners, through providing high quality support and learning environments and to ensure compliance with the Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Act. The aspiration is to secure excellence in pupil wellbeing, improve provision and outcomes for vulnerable groups through transforming the learning environment to the benefit of all through the creation of this additional PRU facility within the County, located on the former Pontllanfraith Comprehensive Site.

## **Community Impact and Community Benefit**

The proposed project will take into account the desire to encourage and facilitate community use of the asset. Our aspiration and a pre-requisite for Welsh Government investment, is to commit to making assets available to support educational need, community use, promote community resilience and contribute to meeting several Local Authority Strategies. To optimise the use of the new infrastructure and resources, as part of the proposal, flexibility will be built into the school suited to local demand.

## **Community Provision and Community Use**

The proposed project will take into account the desire to encourage and facilitate community use of the asset. To this end the design process will seek to include measures to enable usage of the new facilities both internal and external, including sporting provision once the curriculum needs of the pupils have been met.

It is also the intention to develop a Community Café on site where, at dedicated times of the day, members of the community will be invited into a hospitality area to enjoy refreshments designed, developed, prepared and served by the young people who are part of the PRU. Consideration is also being given to other areas of skill and social development and how this could be incorporated as part of this proposal if given authorisation to proceed.

## **Digital Inclusion**

Caerphilly Council has clear aspirations for all schools to become community learning centres as part of their Hwb Programme. As such, community use and the appropriate infrastructure required to achieve this is now one of the key elements of the project and planning process moving forward and representatives from the Local Council's Digital Services and Building Consultancy departments advise as part of the project team.

Over the next 5 year period, resources have been allocated to ensure that all schools within the borough will meet the Education Digital Standard and any new developments will have the required infrastructure built into the specifications in advance to ensure compliance which will include community wifi.

In addition to providing the physical infrastructure, the Adult Education team within the Council has developed robust operational plans to deliver the Digital 2030 Strategic Framework and widen access to learning activities at a time and place flexible to the needs of the community, implemented in accordance with the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the five principles of working.

## **Sport and Outdoor Play Facilities**

The Curriculum for Wales identifies 6 areas of learning and places a great emphasis on Health and Wellbeing above all others.

The Council recognises that children's physical development, enthusiasm and energy for movement should continually be promoted through helping them to use their bodies effectively, by encouraging spatial awareness, balance, control and coordination, and developing motor and manipulative skills across all Areas of Learning, indoors and outdoors.

Children should be encouraged to enjoy physical activity. The provision of physical education through sporting and outdoor facilities plays a vital role in encouraging pupils to explore and develop the physical and mental skills essential to taking part in a variety of different activities.



*'Our vision for sport and active recreation is to encourage healthy lifestyles and support our pupils and residents to be more active, more often'* as reflected in Caerphilly's Sports and Active Recreation Strategy 2019-2029 and the health and wellbeing priorities set in the Corporate Plan 2018-2023.

As part of the design process, this proposal will provide bespoke sporting and outdoor facilities. Whilst these are yet to be finalised, discussions include a sports hall containing a climbing wall and boxing ring in addition to an outdoor multi-use games area with 3G surface.

### **Community Benefit**

Projects include Community Benefits as a Core Requirement and will therefore be scored as part of the Quality evaluation. It sets out a number of targets around local targeted recruitment & training, supply chains, community & education initiatives and environmental matters such as minimising waste and reducing energy consumption. Protecting habitats, biodiversity and reducing pollution is a matter of course throughout the contract period and relevant surveys will be undertaken and included within the procurement documentation.



## **WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF THE PROPOSAL?**

### **Benefits**

The principal benefits of the scheme are as follows:

- Provides an 'inhouse' facility with a minimum of 80 places to cater for the needs of disaffected pupils.
- Space maximisation through reconfiguration of site
- A stimulating environment to deliver learner outcomes specific to the needs of each individual pupil and support the delivery of the '4 purposes' that underpin the new Curriculum for Wales
- New outdoor activity facility to enhance curriculum need for pupils
- Centre of Excellence for professional development
- Facility that is central to the delivery of the CCBC EOTAS Strategy
- Innovative approach based on a hub and spoke model for the delivery of the 'Cwmpawd' programme
- Reutilisation of a former school site and grammar school building
- Community Use of the school facilities, after meeting the curriculum needs of pupils during school session times

### **Disbenefits**

The principal disbenefits of the scheme are as follows:

- The proposed location is within less than a 3 mile radius of the only other PRU facility for the Authority, however it should be noted that it has intentionally been identified for use as it is a central location and through reconfiguration of the existing provision, the PRU at Glanynant will accommodate Key Stages 1 to 2 and the PRU at Pontllanfraith Key Stages 3-4.

## Risks

Risks will be managed pro-actively in accordance with our risk management procedures. The programme makes an allowance for a risk contingency to cover unforeseen events, having regard to the results of the optimism bias assessments.

The Council also recognises the risks associated with construction procurement especially in light of current Covid implications on the industry.

The principal risks of the delivery of the scheme are identified as follows:

<b>Table 4: Risks and Mitigation</b>	
<b>Principal Risks</b>	<b>Mitigating Factors</b>
Planning process (this is separate to this consultation document)	The planning process will be managed by Property Services in line with legislative requirements
Impact of any planning conditions on cost	Full Tender process will be undertaken
Sufficiency of funding to deliver scope including abnormals	Contingency planning will form part of the tender process
Availability of resources/ contractors	The South East & Mid Wales Collaborative Construction Framework (SEWSCAP) framework will be accessed
Rising costs due to regional supply/demand dynamic	Will be managed through contingency planning
Design development	In house architect service will be accessed
Adverse weather conditions	Factored into project management timelines
Sufficiency of Utilities services	Factored into project management timelines
Project Governance and decision making	Full Project Board will be established
Benefits realisation (meeting end user requirements)	As the consultation process prescribed by the School Organisation Code 2018 does not apply to Pupil Referral Units in this instance, the Council's Consultation and Engagement Framework 2020-2025 and "Spectrum of Engagement" will be utilised to ensure the appropriate level of engagement in informing and consulting stakeholders and mirror the processes

	outlined in Section 3 of the School Organisation Code 2018.
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## Options framework

The Welsh Government's Business Case Guidance in relation to utilisation of the 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.

As such, in development of this proposal, an options appraisal has been undertaken to consider the relative desirability, viability and feasibility of a proposal.

A cross-departmental working group consisting of representatives from the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Team, Education Directorate, Sport and Leisure, Inclusion Services, Property Services, Finance and Health and Safety was established to:

- Prepare and appraise a longlist of options
- Evaluate and score each option as to the extent to which each option meets the investment objectives and critical success factors identified and weighted as priority areas by the Council.
- Discount or carry forward options for further consideration in the shortlist based on the preliminary analysis and scoring to identify viable options.
- Recommend a preferred way forward which will form the basis for the consultation exercise

## Options Longlist

The following options were considered and scored: -

Table 5: Options Appraisal Longlist	
Option	Longlist Options: Description
Option 1 *	<b>Do Nothing :</b> No additional EOTAS provision.
Option 2	<b>Do Minimum:</b> Bring existing grammar school (former Pontllanfraith Comp site) building back into use with new heating system and internal decoration
Option 3	<b>Do Intermediate:</b> Full Remodelling of Grammar School and car parking
Option 4	<b>Do Major:</b> Full Remodelling of Grammar School including sports facilities on the lower level, car parking and community facilities
Option 5	<b>Do Maximum</b> Brand New building on Pontllanfraith site including sporting and community facilities

\*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 initially discussed between a selection of Council Officers from across multiple-department. Each option was evaluated against the investment objectives and the extent to which it met the Critical Success Factors. This results in options either being discounted, carried forward for further consideration in the short list or identified as a preferred way forward.

### Critical Success Factors:

- Building Bulletin compliant school
- Low carbon, low energy eco-friendly environment
- Building suited to local environment and acceptable to planning Authority
- Education facility that is acceptable to stakeholders
- Delivered within budget and within required timescales
- Agreement of the proposal by Welsh Government

As well as considering the Critical Success Factors, the Officers also considered the Strategic Fit, Educational Fit, Accessibility, Financial Fit and Environmental Impact as key Investment Objectives.

### Investment Objectives:

The Investment Objectives were weighted based on the current priority areas for the Council. Priority Investment areas were given a 5 (High) to 1 (Low).

Each option was then scored against the criteria outlined above

**5** exceeds the criteria

**4** meets the criteria

**3** neither meets/does not meet the criteria

**2** partially meets the criteria, and,

**1** does not meet the criteria

The score was then multiplied by the weighting for each section and an overall total for each option.

**Table 6: Weighted Decision Matrix**

Investment Objectives			Options									
			1		2		3		4		5	
		Weight	Score	Total	Score	Total	Score	Total	Score	Total	Score	Total
1	Strategic Fit	5	0	0	1	5	3	15	5	25	5	25
2	Educational	5	0	0	1	5	2	10	5	25	5	25
3	Accessibility	4	0	0	2	8	4	16	4	16	5	20
4	Financial	4	0	0	2	8	4	16	5	20	4	16
5	Environmental	4	0	0	3	12	3	12	5	20	4	16
			0		38		69		106		102	

Decision Matrix Key:

Weight: 5 is a high priority investment objective – 0 is low

(Weighting reflects current Council Priorities)

Score: 5 fully meet the investment objective criteria - 0 does not meet the needs

Total: Score x Weighting

Table 7: Options Appraisal - Longlist scoring and ranking			
Option	Description	Appraisal Score	Appraisal Ranking
Option 1	<b>Do Nothing :</b> No additional EOTAS provision.	0	5
Option 2	<b>Do Minimum:</b> Bring existing grammar school (former Pontllanfraith Comp site) building back into use with new heating system and internal decoration	38	4
Option 3	<b>Do Intermediate:</b> Full Remodelling of Grammar School and car parking	69	3
Option 4	<b>Do Major:</b> Full Remodelling of Grammar School including sports facilities on the lower level, car parking and community facilities	106	1
Option 5	<b>Do Maximum</b> Brand New building on Pontllanfraith site including sporting and community facilities	102	2

### Options Shortlist

The outcome of the options analysis resulted in the highest 2 scoring options being taken forward to a shortlist, where the benefits if the options were considered.

For this proposal, Options 4 and 5 are outlined in more detail below:

Table 8: Options Appraisal Shortlist	
Option	Description
Option 4	<b>Do Major:</b> Full Remodelling of Grammar School including sports facilities on the lower level, car parking and community facilities
Option 5	<b>Do Maximum</b> Brand New building on Pontllanfraith site including sporting and community facilities



The tables below illustrate this based on comparative analysis:

<b>Table 9 : Option 4 Overview - Critical Issues, Benefits and Disbenefits</b>	
<p>Option Overview: Full Remodelling of Grammar School including sports facilities on the lower level, car parking and community facilities</p>	
<p>Critical issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ A full remodelling of the existing Grammar School building on the former Pontllanfraith Comprehensive site to provide high quality, modern educational facilities fit for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century</li> <li>➤ It would meet the recommendations of BB 104</li> <li>➤ The new facility would be able to accommodate additional numbers of vulnerable pupils</li> <li>➤ This would be a better use of resources and economy of scale by improving the existing estate of a former school and its operational cost effectiveness</li> <li>➤ It would minimise the need for procurement of external providers for a cohort of pupils who are identified as vulnerable learners</li> <li>➤ It would maximise the significant investment already made into improving and developing EOTAS provision across the county borough</li> <li>➤ It will provide continuity of provision on one site and act as a centre of excellence to encompass all EOTAS provision and support the enhancement of workforce skills</li> <li>➤ It provides facilities to support both mental and physical health and wellbeing</li> <li>➤ It offers the possibility to increase and enhance community use and income generation opportunities</li> </ul>	
<b>BENEFITS</b>	<b>DISBENEFITS</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An additional physical building to support EOTAS strategy</li> <li>• Will provide an adequate and equitable teaching environment to meet Building Bulletin requirements</li> <li>• Involves the redevelopment of a Brown Field site and reutilisation of a former educational facility</li> <li>• It will comply with all National and Local policies including the new Curriculum for Wales</li> <li>• There will be improved accessibility</li> <li>• It will improve the outside learning space and provide access to sporting facilities which will support the Health and Wellbeing of the pupil cohort</li> <li>• It is expected to improve the learning outcomes for vulnerable pupils</li> <li>• There will be continuity of provision at one location meeting the needs of pupils who are EOTAS</li> <li>• It will increase capacity within strategic allowance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The remodelled buildings will be located on a site away from the existing PRU provision at Glanynant</li> <li>• The facility will not be fully BREEAM compliant and carbon neutral as it is a remodelling of an existing building</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It will cater for the educational needs and preferences of the local community and will provide sufficient, permanent, fit for purpose and sustainable accommodation</li> <li>• The land is already in the ownership of the Council and this will minimise delay</li> <li>• The location is geographically central to the local authority boundary</li> <li>• The project can be delivered within the identified investment envelope</li> </ul>	
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**Table 10 : Option 5 Overview - Critical Issues, Benefits and Disbenefits**

<p>Option Overview: Brand New building on Pontllanfraith site including sporting and community facilities</p>	
<p><b>Critical Issues</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ A new EOTAS facility to provide high quality, modern educational facilities fit for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century</li> <li>➤ It will meet the recommendations of BB 104</li> <li>➤ There will be improved access to outdoor learning facilities</li> <li>➤ The new facility would be able to accommodate additional numbers of vulnerable pupils</li> <li>➤ This would be a better use of resources and economy of scale by improving the existing estate of a former school and its operational cost effectiveness</li> <li>➤ It would minimise the need for procurement of external providers for a cohort of pupils who are identified as vulnerable learners</li> <li>➤ A new school building that will be more energy efficient</li> <li>➤ A fully accessible facility ensuring compliance with Equality Act 2010</li> <li>➤ A new building with facilities to meet community needs</li> </ul>	
<b>BENEFITS</b>	<b>DISBENEFITS</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A brand new fit for purpose building</li> <li>• It will provide an adequate and equitable teaching environment to meet Building Bulletin 104 requirements</li> <li>• It will comply with all National and Local policies including the new Curriculum for Wales</li> <li>• There will be improved accessibility</li> <li>• It will improve the outside learning space</li> <li>• It will provide continuity of provision at one location meeting the needs of pupils who are EOTAS</li> <li>• It will cater for the educational needs and preferences of the local community and will provide sufficient, permanent, fit for purpose and sustainable accommodation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The increased capacity would be outside of strategic allowance and financial envelope</li> <li>• This development would require significant spend profile reconfiguration at the detriment of mainstream provision</li> <li>• Demolition costs will be relevant on site identified</li> <li>• A new build would take longer to achieve and given the projected demand for places for EOTAS pupils it would not assist the Council in meeting its Strategic Objectives.</li> </ul>

### **Preferred Option and Alternative options that have been discounted**

On the basis of the above analysis, the preferred way forward is the Do Major Option, as this meets all the investment objectives and Critical Success Factors, strongly in most cases.

Taking the appraisals together delivers the conclusion that a Remodelling scheme provides the best balance of costs, benefits and risks, with the new and limited rebuild options offering poor value for money and high risk. Option 4 is confirmed as the preferred option following the full economic appraisal.

<b>Table 11: Recommended Preferred Option</b>	
<b>Option</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Option 4</b>	<b>Do Major:</b> Full Remodelling of Grammar School including sports facilities on the lower level, car parking and community facilities

The remaining options do not fully meet the spending objectives and are therefore discounted.

## **NEXT STEPS**

### **Consultation Period and key dates**

#### **The formal consultation process begins on Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> October 2021**

This consultation document and response form are available electronically on the Council website.

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

A Children and Young People's Everyday Summary Version of this consultation has also been produced. Both this and the full version are available via the Caerphilly County Borough Council website and printed copies are also available on request.

If you would like this information in any other format, for example large print, or help with interpretation in a different language, please contact us on 01443 864817 or [21stCenturySchools@caerphilly.gov.uk](mailto:21stCenturySchools@caerphilly.gov.uk) so that the necessary arrangements can be made to provide this service.

In keeping in line with mirroring the processes for maintained school proposals, a 42 day consultation period will be undertaken to give sufficient time for feedback to be gained.

#### **The closing date for responses to this consultation is midnight on Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> December 2021**

Unfortunately, we will not be able to consider any responses received after this date.

## Reporting and Decision Making

Following consultation, Caerphilly's Cabinet will receive a Community Engagement Report which will outline the proposal and all the comments received from the public during the consultation period. At this stage, the members can decide whether to proceed with the proposal, make changes to the proposal or not to proceed with the proposal.

Should Cabinet decide to proceed with the proposal, there is no requirement to publish a Statutory Notice as this proposal is not subject to the requirements under the School Organisation Code 2018. Subject to approval, the proposal would progress to Full Business Case submission to Welsh Government and a full planning application process.

## Have your say

Your views matter and we want you to tell us what you think about the changes we have proposed in this document. We would like you to consider the information contained within the document and to hear your views as to whether or not you support the proposal. All views are welcomed in support of or opposed to the proposal. This is your chance to ask questions and make comments that will be considered when the Council decides how to proceed.

For this proposal, we will be undertaking a paper consultation exercise. Due to the current implications of COVID-19 we will refrain from undertaking any face-to-face consultation sessions to support social distancing and maintain safe working practices for all.

If you would like to comment on the proposal, you can do this by:

- Completing the online response form on the Council's website
- Complete a printed response form and return via post it to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century School Team at Caerphilly
- Email your comments to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Team at Caerphilly

## Your views matter

Please complete the questionnaire and return via post or email to:

### Consultation Response 'Pupil Referral Unit'

c/o 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Team  
Directorate of Education and Corporate Services  
Caerphilly County Borough Council  
Penallta House  
Tredomen Park  
Ystrad Mynach  
CF82 7PG

[21stCenturySchools@caerphilly.gov.uk](mailto:21stCenturySchools@caerphilly.gov.uk)



Please note that we are only able to receive comments in writing, either via the online form, pro forma or via email. You must include your full name and postal address as part of the information provided.

## **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

The Council and the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Team have a history of delivering innovative and transformational projects as part of the Band A 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Programme and beyond.

The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Team will be collating a list of potential queries based on experience from leading on prior proposals in the form of an 'Frequently Asked Questions' document that will be posted on the website along with this consultation documentation.