Appendix B

DIRECTORATE OF LEARNING AND SKILLS

Consultation Response Report

**Consultation on the proposal to increase the capacity for Welsh medium Education by expanding Ysgol Iolo Morganwg from 210 places to 420 places from September 2025.**



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# Background

This report presents the feedback received during the consultation that was undertaken from 27 February 2023 to 11 April 2023, in response to the Council’s proposals to increase Welsh Medium primary school places in Ysgol Iolo Morganwg. The statutory consultation was held to seek comments from relevant parties on a regulated alteration as defined in “the Code”.

## Proposal: To increase Welsh Medium places at ysgol Iolo morganwg

On 2 February 2023, the Council’s Cabinet authorised the Director of Learning & Skills to undertake a consultation to expand Ysgol Iolo Morganwg from 210 places to 420 primary school places from September 2025. The school would move into a new school building to accommodate this increased capacity within the ‘Land to the north and west of Darren Close’ housing development. Additionally the proposal also includes increasing nursery provision to 96 part time places and an adult education and Welsh language immersion centre for primary school aged pupils from 7 years old and above, as well as additional provision to offer Adult and Community Learning Programs after school hours.

This report outlines the consultation process, provides an overview of responses to the consultation, and offers further details of the key issues and favourable comments raised by stakeholders.

# Outline of the consultation process

The consultation process followed Welsh Government guidelines in compliance with the Schools Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and in line with the School Organisation Code 2018. The consultation process gave prescribed consultees the opportunity to learn about the proposal and for the Council to hear the views of all those with an interest so that they can be considered before any decisions are made.

## Publication of the consultation

Formal consultation was conducted through a consultation document and response form distributed electronically to prescribed consultees and published on the Vale of Glamorgan Council website on the 27 February 2023. Hard copies of the consultation document were available upon request.

The publication of a consultation document is central to the consultation process for school reorganisation and is prescribed by Welsh Government in the School Organisation Code 2018. The consultation document outlined the proposal being considered, the rationale for the proposal and the details of the consultation process. The consultation document also incorporated an individual response form. Consultees were advised of the availability of an online version to complete.

## Consultation stakeholder engagement

Engagement on the proposal was undertaken with prescribed consultees as contained within the School Organisation Code 2018.

The following groups were consulted:

Table : List of groups consulted as part of the consultation process

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Staff (teaching and non-teaching) at Ysgol Iolo Morganwg  | Governing Body of Ysgol Iolo Morganwg |
| Parents/Carers and Guardians of children at Ysgol Iolo Morganwg | Cowbridge Town Council |
| Vale of Glamorgan Children and Young People’s Programme Board | Vale of Glamorgan Early Years Development Partnership (EYDCP) |
|  Assembly Members (AM’s) / Members of Parliament (MP’s) / Regional Assembly Members | Local Councillors |
| Rhieni dros Addysg Gymraeg (RHAG)  | Welsh Language Commissioner |
| Estyn  | Neighbouring Primary and Secondary schools in the Vale of Glamorgan  |
| Welsh Government Ministers  | Central South Consortium Joint Education Service |
| Local Police and Crime Commissioner  | Trade Unions |
| Council’s Transportation Department | Directors of Education – All Neighbouring Authorities |

Consultees were invited to complete a formal consultation response form which could be completed in hard copy or online via the Council’s website at: [**https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/living/schools/Consultations/Expanding-Ysgol-Iolo-Morganwg.aspx**](https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/living/schools/Consultations/Expanding-Ysgol-Iolo-Morganwg.aspx)

Only responses to the consultation given in writing (either via post or the online survey) have been included in this report.

## Late Representations AND OBJECTIONS

The Governing Body response was received after 11 April 2023 and is therefore included separately at Annex G.

Although this late representation could not be considered directly in this report due to it not being received during the consultation period, the Governing Body have confirmed that they are in full support of this proposal and have raised no concerns.

It should be noted that if Cabinet considers it appropriate to move to the next stage of the statutory consultation, there is a further opportunity for any respondents to object to the proposals as part of the Statutory Notice stage. Objections must be made in writing or by email and sent to the proposer before the end of 28 days beginning with the day on which the notice was published. The statutory notice would be published on the Vale of Glamorgan Council website and posted at or near the main entrance to the school. Copies of the notice would be distributed to pupils, parents, guardians, and staff members.

## Consultation meetings

A series of consultation events were held at Ysgol Iolo Morganwg. These sessions included staff meetings, governor meetings, parents and community drop in events and pupil engagement sessions. The rationale behind the proposals was highlighted at each event and an explanation of the statutory process and the timescales involved was provided with the opportunity for open dialogue between all in attendance. These sessions were open to all stakeholders in the consultation process. A report on the outcome of the pupil engagement session can be found at Annex D.

## Consultation Questions

Consultees were asked for their opinion on a key question to each proposal:

|  |
| --- |
| **1) Do you support the proposal to increase capacity for Welsh medium education by expanding Ysgol Iolo Morganwg from 210 places to 420 places from September 2025?** |

Consultees were able to respond to each proposal with Yes, No or No opinion either way. Consultees were invited to respond to both proposals if they so wished.

Consultees were also offered the opportunity to comment further:

|  |
| --- |
| **If you would like to suggest any changes or alternatives to the proposals, please detail these below.** |

|  |
| --- |
| **Any other comments?** |

# Consultation responses

The consultation responses received in writing between 27 February 2023 and 11 April 2023 are outlined below.

## Summary of responses

91 individual responses were received by the consultation closing date. The breakdown of responses to each proposal are detailed in the tables and charts below.

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

Respondents were asked to indicate their role in relation to the proposal, respondents were able to tick more than one option.

Respondents were also asked to indicate the school they are connected to (if any) in relation to the proposal, respondents were able to tick more than one option.

Table : Responses in detail

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Annex**  | **Description**  |
| **Annex A**  | A summary of key issues raised by statutory consultees and the Council’s response to those issues can be found at Annex A.  |
| **Annex B**  | A summary of the comments received in favour of the proposal can be found at Annex B.  |
| **Annex C**  | The frequently asked questions (FAQs) document has been updated to include the key questions raised during the engagement sessions (Annex C).  |
| **Annex D**  | Consultation sessions were undertaken at Ysgol Iolo Morganwg. These sessions included parent and community drop in events, a staff meeting, governor meeting and pupil engagement sessions. These sessions involved all stakeholders in the consultation process. A report on the outcome of the pupil engagement session can be found at Annex D.  |
| **Annex E**  | Estyn formally responded to the consultation. Their response can be found at Annex E.  |
| **Annex F**  | The consultation document was referred to the Learning & Culture Scrutiny Committee on 9 March 2023. The minutes of this meeting can be found at Annex F, where Cabinet recommendations were endorsed.  |
| **Annex G**  | The Governing Body at Ysgol Iolo Morganwg submitted responses to the consultation outside of the consultation period but are fully supportive of the proposal. Their response can be viewed at Annex G. |

## Responses to Proposal To increase Welsh Medium places at ysgol Iolo morganwg

As Table 3 and Chart 1 below show, most responses (94.5%) were in favour of the Proposal.

Table : Breakdown of consultation responses (Proposal)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Total (individual) responses:** | **Total in support** | **Total not in support** |
| **No.** | **No.** | **%** | **No.** | **%** |
| 91 | 86 | 94.5% | 5 | 5.5% |

Chart : Split of responses supporting or not supporting the proposal.

As Table 4 and Chart 2 below show, the majority of the largest group of respondents (parents or guardians) were in favour of the Proposal. In total 91 respondents were received. In terms of the breakdown of respondents, 53 people were in the parent and guardian group with 3.77% of this group (3 people) not supporting the proposal.

The next largest respondent group related to local resident and parent or local resident and grandparent with a total of 11 responses received, 10 of which were in support of proposal (90.91%) and 1 (9.09%) which not in support of proposal.

It should be noted respondents were able to tick more than one option (e.g. they could be a parent and a member of staff).

Table 4: Breakdown of consultation responses by role

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Role** | **Support** | **Not Support** | **No preference** |
| Parent or guardian\* | 96.23% | 3.77% |   |
| Pupil\* | 100.00% | 0.00% |   |
| Governor\* or Governor/ Member of staff | 100.00% | 0.00% |   |
| Member of Staff\* | 100.00% | 0.00% |   |
| Local Resident and Parent/grandparent | 90.91% | 9.09% |   |
| Local Resident and Governor | 100.00% | 0.00% |   |
| Parent and Governor | 100.00% | 0.00% |   |
| Local Resident | 66.67% | 33.33% |   |
| Councillor  | 100.00% | 0.00% |   |
| Other | 100.00% | 0.00% |   |
| Total  |   |   |   |
|  |  |  |  |

Chart : Split of consultation responses by role

# Conclusion

Following consideration of the responses received throughout the consultation period, the Council has revisited the proposal to determine the likely impact on quality and standards in education, the local community and travel arrangements.

## Quality and standards in education

Estyn most recent inspection of the school took place in June 2022. The overall inspection was positive and provided three recommendations as seen below:

R1 Ensure that planning to develop pupils’ extended writing skills is rigorous enough in all classes

R2 Provide specific feedback so that pupils know exactly what the next steps are to improve the quality of their work

R3 Strengthen and sharpen the school development plan to be able to measure the effect of the actions for improvement on provision

In Estyn’s response to the consultation, they concluded that the proposal is likely to at least maintain the standard of education provision in the area. They also commented that the Council considers if the proposals are approved, these proposals would ensure the school is able to continue providing high quality education.

Estyn advised that the proposal could potentially result in improved teaching and learning experiences through the provision of modern education facilities. This includes break out spaces, Additional Learning Needs (ALN) learning areas and improved digital infrastructures throughout the new school building. They highlighted that the design of the building could help support effective pedagogy through improved facilities, standardised classroom sizes and through providing a building and outdoor spaces which reflect the space requirements of Building Bulletin 99. In addition, they reference that the design of the new building could improve transition from indoor to outdoor learning for the younger pupils.

## Community impact

A Community Impact Assessment was undertaken and published alongside the consultation document. The impact assessment identifies that the proposal would likely have a neutral impact on the local community across 2 of the 8 measures assessed. The proposal would likely have a positive impact on the local community across 6 of the 8 measures assessed. Overall, the proposal would likely have a positive impact on the local community.

## Travel arrangements

The Council has a statutory duty to provide free school transport for pupils of statutory school age who reside beyond walking distance to the nearest appropriate school. This is a distance of 2 miles for primary aged pupils in accordance with ‘The Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008’.

A number of concerns were raised during the consultation regarding increased travel due to the location of the new school building. Whilst this consultation focuses on the education merits of the proposal, if approved, the Council will be working with the school to form an amended school travel plan and will encourage as many pupils as possible to walk, cycle or scoot to school. Routes within Cowbridge have also been identified for walking/cycling improvement on our [Active Travel Network Map](https://gbr01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk%2Fen%2Fliving%2Ftransportation%2FActive-Travel.aspx&data=05%7C01%7Cnburton%40valeofglamorgan.gov.uk%7C403dbec5d2254dae82ce08db3ff40ce1%7Ce399d3bb38ed469691cf79851dbf55ec%7C0%7C0%7C638174089632529392%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=azD%2FuPNX2L72V1usMLz2H6YGj2jdA40Gd6KSerEsPX4%3D&reserved=0) and higher priority is given on routes to school.

The location of the new school building would result in a no changes to the catchment area.

## PROCESS Following Close of Consultation Period

The Consultation Report in the sub-section Key Dates under The Statutory Consultation Process Section (Table 9), listed the indicative dates for the statutory process. An updated table of key dates is detailed below:

Table : Updated Key dates of the process

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Statutory Process** | **Timescale** |
| Issue consultation document  | **27 February 2023** |
| Closing date for views on the proposals | **11 April 2023** |
| Consultation report considered by Cabinet and published on the school and Council’s website | **25th May 2023** |
| Subject to Cabinet approval, Statutory notice issued during which time formal written objections will be invited  | **5th June 2023** |
| End of Statutory Notice Period | **3rd July 2023** |
| Determination by Cabinet with objection report. | **September 2023** |
| Decision notification | **September 2023** |
| Proposed Implementation date  | **September 2025** |

# Annex A - A summary of key issues raised by statutory consultees

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

## Issues raised in relation to THE proposal:

### Theme 1

**English Medium education should be prioritised over Welsh Medium**

Some respondents contended that we should focus on the English medium language over Welsh Medium language.

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

 'Cymraeg 2050 – A million Welsh speakers' is a Welsh Government strategy which introduces a long-term vision for a Wales where the Welsh language thrives. Welsh Governments ambition is to increase the number of Welsh speakers by 1 million by 2050. The Welsh Government strategy places a duty on all local authorities in Wales to increase the proportion of all school year groups that receive their education through the medium of Welsh and places a particular emphasis on increasing the number of learners in Year 1 taught through the medium of Welsh. The Vale of Glamorgan Council have plans in place to support Welsh Government targets and have set our own objectives through the [Welsh Education Strategic Plan (WESP).](https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/living/schools/Welsh-Medium-Education/Welsh-in-Education-Strategic-Plan-2022-2032.aspx)

The School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 places a duty on all Local Authorities in Wales to consult on, produce and review a Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) that provides the strategic direction for the planning and delivery of Welsh medium and Welsh language education in their locality. The Councils WESP aims to support access to Welsh medium provision, and to increase demand for Welsh Medium education.

The Councils Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme priorities projects based on considerations relating to demand, capacity and the condition and suitability of all of our schools. This proposal will not only increase the capacity to accommodate Welsh Medium provision for pupils in Cowbridge area, it will also address condition and suitability concerns with relation to the current school building. Plans are already underway to increase English medium primary provision in Cowbridge, with a new 210 place primary provision at Cowbridge School due to open in September 2023.

The new larger school building would provide many benefits for the Welsh Language and the Cowbridge community due to the inclusion of an adult education and Welsh language immersion centre for primary school aged pupils from 7 years old and above, as well as offering Adult and Community Learning Programs after school hours.

### Theme 2

**Losing the feeling of a close Community**

Respondents emphasised the school has a strong community feel where all of the children know each other regardless of year group and the parents know each other as well. Doubling the size of the school would in time, lose this.

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

The school community is not formed by its building but by the pupils, staff and parents as well as the wider community it serves. The Council would work closely with the school leadership, staff, governing body, parents, pupils and the community to ensure that the spirit of the school transfers with its pupils and staff. The school community will be fully involved with developing the plans for the new build to ensure the building meets their needs. This will ensure the new building forms part of the local and wider community by enhancing the facilities that would be available to the community. The proposal would enable the school to continue its success while catering for a greater pupil population. It would provide innovative and creative learning environments which are adaptable to change and would challenge and support children to reach their full potential.

The proposal would increase the level of community access and interaction through the use of the school’s educational facilities whilst meeting the needs of the school.

### Theme 3

**Concerns over new travel arrangements**

Respondents were concerned that the location of the proposed new school building is on the outskirts of Cowbridge with poor active travel links to Cowbridge & Llanblethian.

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

The new location would improve access from across the Western Vale with improved transport links being developed. Whilst this part of the consultation focuses on the education merits of the proposal, if approved, the Council will be working with the school to form an amended school travel plan and will encourage as many pupils as possible to walk, cycle or scoot to school.  Routes within Cowbridge have been identified for walking/cycling improvement on our [Active Travel Network Map](https://gbr01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk%2Fen%2Fliving%2Ftransportation%2FActive-Travel.aspx&data=05%7C01%7Cnburton%40valeofglamorgan.gov.uk%7Ce64b815d605e48f6d55a08db3ff67d97%7Ce399d3bb38ed469691cf79851dbf55ec%7C0%7C0%7C638174100111680678%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=dh%2F%2Fa%2BK2i%2BVmnj1kfKayMzYGQe9ZLBWcmuvUFXZawH8%3D&reserved=0) and higher priority is given on routes to school.

### Theme 4

**Early years issues**

Respondents raised concerns around closures of Early Years Welsh medium education and Mudiad Meithrin settings in the local area and how this proposal to increase WM capacity will be affected if there is lack of early years settings. ESTYN commented that the consultation document does not take into account the effect of the proposal on other institutions, including private and third sector providers or the extent it will integrate early years education with childcare services.

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

The Council works closely with Mudiad Meithrin to identify areas for growth and as part of the commitments made in its [WESP](https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/living/schools/Welsh-Medium-Education/Welsh-in-Education-Strategic-Plan-2022-2032.aspx), the Council will ensure ongoing dialog with Mudiad Meithrin and child care providers in the area continues to be a high priority. The Council collaborates with Mudiad Meithrin as part of its Childcare Sufficiency Assessment which in turn facilitates progress with the development of Welsh medium pre-school childcare within the Western Vale, providing options for future opportunities and planning. The opportunity to increase the Adult and Community Learning provision in the area as part of this proposal will support opportunities for a 'whole family approach' to learning the language, which we anticipate will help with engagement and compliment work being done with our early years partners in the area.

The Council has committed, as part of its WESP, to ensuring that the benefits of bilingualism and multilingualism in relation to academic success and future careers are highlighted to parents of pre-nursery age children. The importance of providing relevant information that enables parents to make considered decisions about the options available to them when considering Welsh-medium education for their children at different access points within their area is recognised.

### Theme 5

**Funding**

Funding is not yet secured from Welsh Government.

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

The Vale of Glamorgan Council have an excellent track record for delivering Education Infrastructure projects as part of the Sustainable Communities for Learning (SCfL) Programme. The Welsh Government have been in discussion with the Council regarding their plans to proceed with their Rolling Programme.

The process requires submission of robust Business Cases which will be based on the five key areas that underpin the Better Business Case Process (Five Case Business Model - Strategic, Economic, Commercial , Finance and Management). This specific proposal links with many key objectives as part of the Welsh Government SCfL Programme, more information on the key objectives can be found at:

<https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2022-01/sustainable-communities-for-learning-business-case-guidance-2022.pdf>

The Vale of Glamorgan Council has submitted multiple Business Cases throughout Band A and Band B of the SCfL Programme and have been successful in securing funding.

### Theme 6

**Disruption**

The local authority notes that management of staff and resources may be disrupted during the transition to the increased capacity and that there is potential for disruption for pupils and staff as they become accustomed to their new environment. Nevertheless, the proposal does not consider how the local authority will minimise these disruptions for learners.

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

The Council has a strong track record in successfully transitioning staff and pupils to new sites. As part of the Vale of Glamorgan Council’s Sustainable Communities for Learning programme, over the last four years we have undertaken seven transitions between existing and new educational facilities on existing and new sites.

For construction works undertaken on an existing site, consideration and planning was provided to assist with teaching throughout the development programme, specific dates and events were fed into the construction programme to reduce the impact and disruption for pupils and staff, especially around examinations times, sporting events for example, as much as possible.

In the case of Ysgol Iolo Morganwg, one of the advantages of the proposal is the construction works are located on a separate site which will result in no impact or disruption to pupils and staff prior to their move to the new building due to building works.

During the construction programme, pupils and staff will be invited to attend engagement sessions to discuss the new school building. These engagement sessions will also include the road map to handover and opening of the new facility. Opportunities to attend the development site, when it is safe to do so, will provide an introduction to pupils, staff and governors to the new accommodation they will be accessing on completion of the school development.

Our road map to decant the existing school buildings will commence approximately three months prior to the moving date. Staff will be provided with guidance and assistance in order to start organising their current resources. Pupils will be shown their spaces virtually until safe to do so on site, to allow all parties to familiarise themselves, thereby reducing the impact of relocating and change.

Theme 7

**Drop in sessions**

(Cowbridge with Llanblethian) Council welcomed the use of Community Drop-In Sessions but feels they could have been better publicised and signposted. Also the use of display boards would have been useful. These could have shown things such as the proposed site for the new school, the likely the layout of the new school and photographs of the facilities to be provided based on other new schools.

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

The Vale of Glamorgan Council ensured that all prescribed consultees were contacted directly on the first day of the consultation and the school ensured that all parents received direct notification of the drop in sessions. A sign advertising the consultation was also displayed in the school grounds. In addition, the consultation was widely promoted on social media. A number of parents and community members attended the sessions on both days.

It is however relevant to note that this consultation focusses on the education merits of the proposal. Although slides showing recent builds, the proposed site and other items of interest were displayed in the hall for the duration of the drop in sessions, there will be other opportunities to view potential designs and other planning considerations at a later consultation should this proposal progress to the next stage. There would be other opportunities as part of the planning process and consultation to view potential designs and other planning considerations.

# Annex B - A summary of comments received in favour of the proposal.

This section provides the key themes raised during the formal consultation period by those in favour of the proposal. The following presents an overview of responses and are not exhaustive or intended to be verbatim. All written responses have been made available to Cabinet Members.

All comments relate to the individual proposal.

### Theme 8

**Capacity issue**

Respondents noted that the school has been at capacity for some time and historically has had to refuse catchment applications for families moving into the area.

**Council’s response**

The new school would provide a 2 form entry with capacity for 420 pupils achieved via a phased year group approach, plus 96 nursery places. The Council must ensure that schools serve their local communities and are reflective of demand, support emerging demand and reflect the councils ambitions in growing Welsh medium education. There is a need to meet future demand from the new housing developments in Cowbridge and the wider catchment area for the school, as well as the increased demand for Welsh medium education. A new 420 place school building would accommodate the projected increase in pupil numbers from the new development. The increased capacity would also accommodate the projected increase in parents choosing Welsh medium education to meet the Council’s WESP targets.

There is no change to the catchment area proposed in this consultation. Although the transferring of the school to the new building is included as part of this consultation, this is not subject to the statutory process as the transfer would be within 1.6 kilometres. The new school site is 1.3km from the existing school.

### Theme 9

**A modern school with more space and better facilities**

Respondents felt that the proposal would benefit the pupils as their current learning environment is not fit for purpose and has limited spaces. A 21st century learning environment will encourage children to thrive whilst learning. Other respondents noted that the children do not have adequate outdoor facilities such as a field for sports day, a large outdoor yard or grass to play on for break times and are having to share outdoor facilities with another school.

**Council’s response**

The current site is small with no opportunities to grow. Transferring Ysgol Iolo Morganwg and increasing the number of school places from 210 to 420 offers a more efficient and sustainable model of education in a building designed specifically for a 21st century learning environment. The proposal addresses issues with the existing building, such as the restricted outdoor space and irregular sized classrooms. Pupils would be educated in a high-quality modern building which would be able to support the delivery of a broad and balanced curriculum.

The proposal will ensure that the new building will meet modern building standards to reduce recurrent costs and be net zero carbon in operation. The new building will also meet BREEAM (Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method) Excellence standards.

### Theme 10

**Promotion of Welsh Medium education**

Respondents support the proposal for increasing the capacity of Ysgol Iolo Morganwg to provide more opportunities for children in the area to be taught through the medium of Welsh. Some respondents felt the current school does not allow for an increase in the numbers of pupils opting for Welsh language.

**Council’s response**

Although there is currently sufficient capacity for both English and Welsh medium places within the catchment area, it is projected by 2025/26 that there would be insufficient capacity for the required number of Welsh medium primary school places.

Creation of new demand for Welsh medium education is a legislative requirement for Local Authorities and is a key deliverable of the Council’s 10 year Welsh in Education Strategic Plan. Evidence shows that where the Council has provided additional Welsh medium capacity, the number of Welsh medium learners has increased. An example of this is Ysgol Dewi Sant, a Welsh medium primary school in Llantwit Major which opened in September 2011. In the first year of opening, the reception class contained 3 pupils. In 7 years, the September 2018 intake was oversubscribed with 32 applicants for 30 places.

However, it is noted that providing an increase in the number of places available will not guarantee increased demand. Therefore, a key element of the proposal is to actively encourage parents/carers to opt for Welsh medium education through the inclusion of a Welsh language immersion centre as part of the development of the new school. This would be a self-contained unit within the proposed school which would provide Welsh medium immersion placements for primary school aged pupils from 7 years old and above, as well as offering Adult and Community Learning Programs after school hours.

Theme 11

**Community facilities**

This is an opportunity to create community facilities at both the old and new sites and that the opportunity should be taken to include permanent provision for community facilities at the new site.

**Council’s response**

A key aspect of all Sustainable Community for Learning projects is the development of Community spaces. This proposal would also mean the creation of an adult education and Welsh language immersion centre as well as offering Adult and Community Learning Programs after school hours.

No decision has been made with relation to any potential use of the existing school site should this proposal be approved. Consultation with the community and Town Council would of course take place prior to any decision being made with regard to the existing site.

# Annex C - Frequently asked questions.

This section provides updated frequently asked questions in relation to the proposal.

What if the increased demand for Welsh medium education does not materialise?

The Council is confident that there is sufficient evidence to suggest demand for Welsh medium education will continue to grow, reflective of Welsh Government's national strategy. It is anticipated that a pro-active approach to promoting bilingual education and creating additional provision to support parents and pupils who decide to transition into Welsh medium education via an immersion centre or similar provision as outlined in the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan will further increase uptake over the long term. Any interim surplus capacity within schools would be managed as it would with any other school or Council asset.

What are the advantages of Welsh medium education?

Bilingual children tend to achieve higher within the curriculum and perform better in exams. Learning a second language at a young age helps children develop an ear for languages and gives them a head start at learning a third or fourth language as they get older. In Wales, speaking Welsh is a workplace skill, especially within the public and service sectors, and due to recent changes to the law more and more employers will need a bilingual workforce. Learning through another language helps children develop a greater sensitivity to other cultures and backgrounds. Speaking Welsh gives people a closer relationship with the history, heritage and traditions of Wales.

What support is available for parents who do not speak Welsh?

This proposal includes the development of an Adult and Community Learning setting at the school that would offer adult learning Welsh programs after school hours to support families. The vast majority of parents who send their children to Welsh medium schools in the Vale don’t speak Welsh themselves. This is why Welsh medium schools in the Vale of Glamorgan always communicate with parents in both Welsh and English. In almost all cases homework for Primary aged pupils will have an English explanation provided with it so all parents can help their children with the work. There are also a number of Welsh medium pre-school playgroups in the Vale run by the organisation Mudiad Meithrin. Adult Welsh education is also promoted across the Vale of Glamorgan with a wide range of courses available from beginners to proficiency. More information can be found from the being bilingual booklet: <https://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/Documents/Working/Education%20and%20Skills/Admissions-Guide/Being-Bilingual-booklet-English.pdf>

What is the intended timescale of development?

It is intended building would start on the new school site by July 2024 and be completed by September 2025.

When would staff and pupils transfer to the new school building?

The proposal is that the new school would open by September 2025.

Will there be a new headteacher?

All staff employed at the school on the date of transfer would transfer automatically to the new site with no change to their terms and conditions of employment.

# Annex D - Consultations undertaken with young people.

## Consultation to increase the capacity for Welsh medium Education by expanding Ysgol Iolo Morganwg from 210 places to 420 places from September 2025.

### Background

The Vale of Glamorgan Council is committed to ensuring that all pupils within the Vale have every opportunity to attain the best possible outcomes. In order to achieve this ambition, it is essential that we ensure schools remain sustainable, reflect the needs of our local communities, and are equipped with the best possible learning environments.

On 2 February 2023, the Council’s Cabinet authorised the Director of Learning & Skills to undertake a consultation from 27 February 2023 to 11 April 2023 on the proposal to increase capacity for Welsh Medium education by expanding Ysgol Iolo Morganwg from 210 places to 420 places.

### ENGAGMENT ACTIVITY with children AT Ysgol iolo MorganwG

* A Welsh interactive workshop took place with pupils at Ysgol Iolo Morganwg with 30 pupils.
* They were given a presentation on consultation and proposal:
	+ Explaining the purpose of the session
	+ The process of the consultation, timeline and the next steps
	+ The changes if the proposal is approved
	+ They were shown example images of schools before and after development
* The pupils were divided into 3 groups work to discuss the following:

**Activity 1**

* What they like and dislike about their school.

**Activity 2**

* What they would like to see in their new school (indoors and outdoors)

**Activity 3**

* Ideas for encouraging wildlife within the school.
* Would they like to ride a bike or scooter to school?
* How colourful would they like their new school to be?

Following the feedback pupils were given information on the advantages and shortcomings noted in the consultation document, they were reminded of the timeline and it was explained to them that their comments would be fed into a report on this session and that it would be presented to Cabinet as part of the evidence gathered on this consultation.

### METHODOLOGY WITH Pupils’ responses (around 30 pupils from School council at different YEAR GROUPS)

**Activity 1 - What they like and dislike about their school?**

**Like**

* **Teachers**
* **Friends**
* **Tir Glas (outdoor facilities)**

**Dislike**

* **Toilets**
* **Canteen**
* **Main hall**
* **Not enough space**

**Activity 2 - What they would like to see in their new school (indoors and outdoors)?**

* **A bigger hall**
* **Outside spaces with room to grow plants, fruit and vegetables**
* **Better Wi-fi**
* **Bigger canteen**
* **Cooking room and facilities**
* **Forest, ponds, green houses**
* **Bigger toilets**
* **More room in general**
* **Create their own murals for the wall of new school representing school colour.**

**Activity 3**

**Ideas for encouraging wildlife within the school.**

**Would they like to ride a bike or scooter to school?**

**How colourful would they like their new school to be?**

* They liked the idea of knowing there are otters near the river
* They would love to have wormeries in their school
* They would like to have bird houses to encourage birds into the school.
* Most of them liked the idea of cycling or riding a scooter to school.
* They would like for the school to be bigger, with more light and lots of colours, some preferred a colour scheme that represented the school uniform.

# Annex E – Response from Estyn

In accordance with the requirements of the School Organisation Code 2018, a copy of the consultation document was sent to Estyn.

**Estyn’s response to the proposal by the Vale of Glamorgan Council**

**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.

The proposal is to increase capacity for Welsh medium education by expanding Ysgol Iolo Morganwg from 210 places to 420 places from September 2025.

**Summary/ Conclusion**

Estyn considers that the proposal is likely to maintain the standard of education provision in the area.

**Description and benefits**

The local authority has set out a clear and detailed rationale for its proposal. There is a need to meet future demand from the new housing developments in Cowbridge and the wider catchment area for the school, as well as the increased demand for Welsh medium education.

The local authority provides a clear description of the proposal and a projected timetable for statutory procedures. The proposal would mean constructing a new 420 place primary school building on the Section 106 land within the ‘Land to the north and west of Darren Close’ housing development. Upon completion of the building, Ysgol Iolo Morganwg would transfer to the new site. This would provide an additional 210 Welsh medium primary places and 30 nursery places. This would support growth in Welsh medium primary education, supporting the Council’s WESP and Welsh Governments ‘Cymraeg 2050 strategy.

The proposal would also provide state of the art facilities for staff and learners of Ysgol Iolo Morganwg, as the current school is on a very confined sloping site with limited outdoor recreational space and no prospect of substantially increasing the site to meet the Sustainable Communities for Learning standards. The existing internal building has an internal area of 1,117.05m2, which is below the recommended gross area detailed in the Building Bulletin 99: Building Framework for Primary School Projects which stands at 1,286m2. The school building including demountables are also in a poor condition. The current figure for the backlog maintenance work is £798,590.

To support Welsh medium expansion within Cowbridge and across the Vale, an additional facility would be established onsite to support adult education and immersion for late learners to Welsh medium education.

The local authority identifies clearly and fairly the expected benefits and disadvantages when compared with the status quo. For example, it noted that some pupils living closer to the current school site will have further to travel and that there might be associated increased costs with this. To support this further it has noted clearly within the proposal that the new school site is only 1.3km from the existing school and therefore will not affect the current catchment area.

The local authority identifies appropriately the potential risk linked with the proposal if they cannot secure Welsh Government funding. The local authority aims to secure

65% of funding for the proposal from the Welsh Government’s Sustainable

Communities for Learning Programme. This will be subject to approval of a business case submission. The remaining funding for the new school building will be funded by the Council. However, the only mitigation for the risk associated with the proposal is that the Council will produce robust business case submissions. There is no mention that the Council would be fully responsible for all costs relating to the proposal if the funding was not approved by the Welsh Government.

The local authority sets out three suitable alternatives to its proposal and gives acceptable reasons as to why they have discounted them.

The proposer has considered appropriately the impact of the proposal on learner travel arrangements, which is likely to be limited as the new school site is only 1.3km from the existing school. In addition, the proposer has analysed current pupil’s travel arrangements and noted that the school relocation would result in a reduction of 7 pupils requiring free school transport based on current pupil data.

The proposal shows a detailed breakdown over time of surplus places at the school and in neighbouring schools. In terms of Welsh medium provision, Ysgol Iolo Morganwg is the only Welsh language school which serves pupils within the catchment area. Although there is currently sufficient capacity within the catchment area it is projected by 2025-2026 there would be insufficient capacity for Welsh medium places. It is noted the 2018 based projections anticipate a reduction in demand by 2028-2029, however, the Council and Welsh Government have policies in place to improve Welsh medium take-up which is anticipated to offset this decline. In addition to this, it is noted within the proposal that providing an increase in the number of places available will not guarantee increased demand. Therefore, a key element of the proposal is to actively encourage parent/ carers to opt for Welsh medium education through the inclusion of a Welsh language immersion centre, as well as offering Adult and Community Learning Programs after school hours.

The proposal identifies the financial costs of the proposal and estimates the cost of the new build at £12 million. The Council is expected to receive £7.8 million in Welsh Government match funding through the Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme. However, this funding is not yet secured and the proposer does not explain what will happen if this funding is not available.

The proposer has completed a suitable community impact assessment. The proposer believes that the proposal will maintain and increase the level of community access and interaction through the use of the school’s educational facilities whilst meeting the needs of the school. It would also better meet the needs of the wider community to ensure the sustainable balance between supply and demand for school places.

**Educational aspects of the proposal**

The proposer considers well the educational aspects of the proposal. It identifies in useful detail the outcomes of the most recent Estyn inspection and the school’s recommendations for improvement. It considers usefully how the move to the new site will help to address these recommendations.

The local authority considers appropriately the impact of the proposals on the quality and standards in education, including pupil standards, wellbeing, teaching and learning experiences, care support and guidance and leadership and management. For example, the proposal identifies positive impacts on standards as increasing the capacity of the school will result in the relocation of the school and the learning environment and infrastructure, including both indoor and outdoor facilities. These are key elements in supporting both teachers and learners. It assumes fairly that pupil wellbeing and attitudes to learning would benefit from a larger and more accessible hard and soft play areas.

The proposal could potentially result in improved teaching and learning experiences through the provision of modern education facilities. This includes break out spaces, Additional Learning Needs (ALN) learning areas and improved digital infrastructures throughout the new school building. Furthermore, the design of the building could help support effective pedagogy through improved facilities, standardised classroom sizes and through providing a building and outdoor spaces which reflect the space requirements of Building Bulletin 99. In addition, the design of the new building could improve transitions from indoor to outdoor learning for the younger pupils. The proposal considers the impact on vulnerable groups, including children with ALN. It gives detailed ALN information for Ysgol Iolo Morganwg and explains how the new school would support pupils with ALN through the design of break out spaces. In addition, within the wider design to future proof the proposal, capacity to include a specialist resource base would be possible due to the larger site area. In terms of accessibility, the new building will be fully accessible and compliant with the Equality’s Act 2010, although there was no direct mention of the act within the proposal. The proposal noted that the proposed new location would provide ‘full access for the whole community with full disabled access to internal and external areas’.

The proposal would ensure that disruption to learners is minimised as the new school building is on a different site to the current school building. The local authority notes that management of staff and resources may be disrupted during the transition to the increased capacity and that there is potential for disruption for pupils and staff as they become accustomed to their new environment. Nevertheless, the proposal does not consider how the local authority will minimise these disruptions for learners.

The proposal includes increasing the capacity of the nursery provision from a 66 place part-time nursery to a 96 place part-time nursery. The proposal takes into account the sufficiency of accommodation and facilities offered and the increased levels of demand for a Welsh medium provision. However, it does not take into account the effect of the proposal on other institutions, including private and third sector providers or the extent it will integrate early years education with childcare services.

# Annex F – Minutes of CABINET & the Learning and Culture Scrutiny Committee on the proposal

**CABINET**

**Minutes of a Remote meeting held on 2nd February 2023**

**C214 STATUTORY CONSULTATION TO EXPAND YSGOL IOLO MORGANWG FROM 210 PLACES TO 420 PLACES FROM SEPTEMBER 2025 - (EAWL) (SCRUTINY – LEARNING AND CULTURE) –**

**The Cabinet Member presented the report, the purpose of which was to seek Cabinet approval to undertake a statutory consultation to expand Ysgol Iolo Morganwg from 210 places to 420 places from September 2025.**

**This was a matter for Executive decision.**

**Cabinet, having considered the report and all the issues and implications contained therein**

**RESOLVED –**

**(1) T H A T the Director of Learning and Skills be authorised to undertake a consultation on the proposal to expand Ysgol Iolo Morganwg from 210 places to 420 places from September 2025 starting on 27th February 2023 for a 6-week period ending on the 11th April 2023.**

**(2) T H A T the report be referred to the Learning and Culture Scrutiny Committee for consideration as part of the proposed consultation exercise.**

**Reasons for decisions**

**(1) To seek Cabinet authority to carry out a statutory consultation in compliance with the requirements of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and the School Organisation Code 2018 on the proposal to expand Ysgol Iolo Morganwg from 210 places to 420 places from September 2025.**

**(2) To ensure that the** **Learning and Culture Scrutiny Committee are consulted on the proposals.**

**The proposal was considered by** Learning and Culture Scrutiny Committee on 9th March 2023

820 STATUTORY CONSULTATION TO EXPAND YSGOL IOLO MORGANWG FROM 210 PLACES TO 420 PLACES FROM SEPTEMBER 2025 (REF) –

The reference was presented by the Operational Manager (Strategy and Resources).

Committee:

RECOMMENDED – T H A T the contents of the report be noted and the proposal to expand Ysgol Iolo Morganwg from 210 places to 420 places from September 2025, be supported.

Reason for recommendation

To put forward Committee’s support for the proposed expansion of Ysgol Iolo Morganwg, as part of the consultation exercise.

# Annex G – Responses from Governing Body & Cowbridge Community COuncil

## Annex G – LATE Response from ysgol iolo morganwg governing body

1. **Do you support the proposal to expand Ysgol Iolo Morganwg from 210 places to 420 places from September 2025?**

The governing body of Ysgol Iolo Morganwg wholeheartedly supports the proposal to expand Welsh medium primary provision in Cowbridge, by building a new 21st Century School on the Darren Park site in Cowbridge. Thus doubling capacity in the school.

For many years now, the school has been fighting against the tide with regards to the building and maintenance issues of its current building. Leaking roofs, poorly insulated rooms, broken boilers and a veritable rabbit warren of rooms have made for a challenging environment in which to educate and enrich the lives of the students of Iolo Morganwg.

Despite these challenges, the school has managed in the words of the recent 2022 Estyn Inspection, to provide a ‘stimulating and happy environment that places a high priority on its pupils’ wellbeing. In addition to creating a ‘warm and Welsh ethos’. Pupils have thrived, thanks to the dedication of the Head, Mrs Rees, Senior Management and teaching and support staff. Truly, if the school has been this successful despite these challenges, imagine the capacity for progress that a new building could provide. Staff and pupils will surely thrive in a building that has been designed to purpose and can aid staff in facilitating the new Curriculum i Gymru, allowing learners to reach their potential.

In no uncertain terms, the staff and students of Ysgol Iolo Morganwg deserve a building that will help to facilitate their learning and create an environment in which students and staff can continue to thrive and evolve. With the implementation of the CiG, where much emphasis is placed on students becoming ‘healthy and confident individuals’ and ‘Enterprising, creative, contributors’ a brand new school will go a long way in realising these aims. Indeed, how are students able to remain healthy and be enterprising in a building that was only really fit for purpose in the early part of the last century? The September 2022 Condition report identified that the condition of the building was ‘poor’. Quite frankly our staff and learners deserve better.

The new site will also address transportation and parking issues, as on the current site it is a real challenge to safely transfer 100 students from 8 different mini buses, given that there is no onsite parking for the buses. The minibuses coupled with parents’ cars, make for health and safety issues that should not have to be faced. Designated bus bays and visitor parking will eliminate these health and safety concerns, making the morning drop-off and afternoon pick-up far more efficient and safe for all.

The proposal for the new building shows that students will all be housed under one roof. This will make the lives of both students and staff far easier; less health and safety concerns will arise during transition periods between lessons and playtimes, allowing more funding for staff to focus on providing exciting learning experiences for students. There is no doubt that having access to bright airy spaces will improve pupil and staff wellbeing, instilling a sense of pride in students and a confidence in knowing that Welsh Medium Primary provision in the Vale is no longer in the shadow of English medium provision.

In implementing this proposal, the Vale will be aligned with WESP in further developing the provision of Welsh medium education in the county. This in turn will go some way in aiding the WAG in reaching its target of a million Welsh speakers by 2050.

The school has faced challenges during the transition period between primary and secondary, sometimes losing up to a third of leavers to English medium secondary education. By building a school that not only meets the requirements of its staff and students but also serves the community through the Welsh Immersion Centre, with initiatives for parents and the wider community, the council will be promoting a greater commitment to the Welsh language and Welsh medium education, and a greater commitment to bilingualism. Ultimately, our hope is that through this proposal, Welsh medium secondary education in the Vale will also improve, as higher numbers at primary level should translate into higher numbers for secondary Welsh medium places. A Welsh medium high school in the locality could help to eliminate some of the geographical issues cited by parents for choosing Cowbridge High over Ysgol Bro Morgannwg, for secondary education.

As part of the new Curriculum i Gymru, students are expected to be ‘active participants in the learning process’ and what better way to do this than by allowing students to become involved in the planning and design of the school? This week Iolo students were thrilled to meet with representatives from the council to share their ideas as to what facilities could be included in the school. Swimming pools, gyms and dance studios aside, it stands to reason that being a part of the process will only serve to promote enterprise and creativity. The school’s Eco panel could take pride in their school being carbon neutral which in turn allows students to be ethical and informed, thus impacting on their life choices in the future. As a governing body we look forward more than we can express to ‘the spade being put into the ground in 2024’ and welcoming a new era of Welsh medium primary education in Cowbridge in September 2025.

## Annex G – Response from Cowbridge with llanblethian community council

Cowbridge with Llanblethian Town Council supports in principle the proposal to increase capacity for Welsh medium education by expanding Ysgol Iolo Morganwg from 210 places to 420 places from September 2025 and awaits more details on which it wishes to be consulted. These details include the facilities to be provided, access, drop off/pick up etc., the use to be made of spare capacity and the plans for the existing building.

With regard to the use of the existing site and spare capacity at the new site the Council strongly recommends that the public be consulted before plans are formulated bearing in mind that a Consultation by Cowbridge with Llanblethian Town Council in 2020 showed a very high degree of support for youth facilities.

The Council believes that this is an opportunity to create community facilities at both the old and new sites and that the opportunity should be taken to include permanent provision for community facilities at the new site.

The Council welcomed the use of Community Drop-In Sessions but feels they could have been better publicised and signposted. Also the use of display boards would have been useful. These could have shown things such as the proposed site for the new school, the likely the layout of the new school and photographs of the facilities to be provided based on other new schools.