

DIRECTORATE OF LEARNING AND SKILLS

Community Impact Assessment

Consultation on the proposal to meet increased demand for English medium primary education in Cowbridge from September 2022 by:

- changing the age range of Cowbridge Comprehensive School from 11 - 19 to 3 - 19;
- increasing the capacity of Cowbridge Comprehensive School from 1,586 places to 1,796 places to accommodate 210 English medium primary school places with an additional 48 part-time nursery places; and
 - constructing a new school building on the Cowbridge Comprehensive School site to accommodate the primary and nursery phases.



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1. Introduction

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.

The Council is committed to ensuring that consultations are meaningful, relevant and appropriate for the communities that are involved, and the Council has a duty of care to ensure that proposals are clear, transparent, and reflective of those affected. This is a vision that can only be realised by working in partnership with schools, governors, parents and the wider communities we all serve.

The proposal is to establish a new 3 - 19 all through school, with 48 part-time nursery places, from September 2022 by:

- Changing the age range of Cowbridge Comprehensive School from 11 - 19 to 3 - 19;
- Increasing the capacity of Cowbridge Comprehensive School from to 1,586 places to 1,796 places to accommodate 210 English medium primary school places with an additional 48 part-time nursery places; and
- Constructing a new school building on the Cowbridge Comprehensive School site to accommodate the primary and nursery places.

This proposal is considered under section 2.3 of the School Organisation Code (2018). Section 2.3 refers to Regulated Alterations of a school, which includes increasing the capacity of the school by at least 200 pupils and extending the age range of a school by a year or more.

2. National Context

The key statutory guidance for local authorities in developing statutory proposals for changes for school organisation is in accordance with section 42 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and the School Organisation Code 2018. When considering proposals the Council must consider the impact on the local community, particularly in rural areas and in areas designated for communities' first programmes or successor programmes.

3. Local Policy Context.

Echoing national policy outlined in the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, the Council has committed as part of the Corporate Plan 2016-20 to achieving a vision of – **'Strong Communities with a bright future'**.

The Vale of Glamorgan is committed to achieving the objective of an 'Aspirational Vale' raising overall standards of achievement by modernising education in the Vale to ensure children and young people receive a first class education.

We believe that in order to achieve this it is important that we support teaching and learning outcomes by providing modern and fit for purpose buildings that meet the needs of modern day education. Schools need to be able to provide the best possible learning experience to make sure that children and young people have the best opportunities available to them and that they are able to reach their full potential.

4. Current Challenges

The proposal would address a number of challenges and would:

- Ensure the Council is able to accommodate the future demand for English medium primary education in Cowbridge.
- Enable 'excellent' provision at Cowbridge Comprehensive School to continue whilst catering for a greater pupil population.
- Provide innovative and creative learning environments which are adaptable to change and will challenge and support children to reach their full potential.
- Increase the level of community access and interaction through the use of the school's educational facilities whilst meeting the needs of the school.

There are also a number of opportunities associated with the all-through school model as outlined in the 'What is an all-through school?' section of the Consultation Document.

5. Community Profile

There are currently three schools in Cowbridge:

- Cowbridge Comprehensive School is an English-medium community school serving 11 to 19 year olds in the Cowbridge area. In terms of admissions, there are 240 pupils per year group with a total capacity of 1586 pupils.
- Y Bont Faen Primary School is an English-medium community school serving 3 to 11 year olds in the Cowbridge area. In terms of admissions, there are 30 pupils per year group with a total capacity of 210 pupils.
- Ysgol Iolo Morganwg is a Welsh-medium community schools serving 3 to 11 year olds in the western Vale. In terms of admissions, there are 30 pupils per year group with a total capacity of 210 pupils.

Cowbridge lies on a Roman settlement and some of its walls from the medieval age survive. Cowbridge hosts an annual food and drink festival, a music festival and is home to many sporting teams.

The Cowbridge 1 Ward has a population of 1,629 (Office of National Statistics, 2019). According to the 2014 Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) Cowbridge 1 is ranked 1649 out of 1909 Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in Wales, placing it amongst the 50% least deprived. Only 6% of working age people within Cowbridge 1 are in receipt of employment-related benefits.

Housing Developments

A number of housing developments in Cowbridge have been included in the Council's Local Development Plan 2011 - 2026. The largest of these developments being the 'Land to the north and west of Darren Close' with 475 dwellings. This development has obtained planning permission and construction has begun on site.

The projected number of pupils emanating from a development is calculated using a formula derived from census data of householders in the Vale of Glamorgan. The formula is contained within the Council's Supplementary Guidance for planning purposes.

The development in total is projected to yield around 48 nursery and 132 primary school pupils.

6. Impact Assessment

This section of the Community Impact Assessment assesses the potential impact this proposal could have on the local community. The information analysed in this process represents a snapshot of the current situation. The impact assessment is an evolving document that will continue to be developed throughout the statutory process. Feedback received during the consultation period will be used to further inform the Community Impact Assessment, which will be presented to Cabinet as part of the Consultation Report.

Eight key measures have been identified:

Ref.	Measure
CI1	Children living in the catchment are attending their local school
CI2	Services provided by the school for the local community, including extra-curricular activities
CI3	Community facilities used regularly by the school
CI4	Community facilities provided by and activity undertaken within the school premises

CI5	Impact on local businesses
CI6	Impact on local employment
CI7	Impact on local infrastructure
CI8	Transport arrangements

The eight measures were assessed to identify any negative or positive impacts on the local community, and a score was applied ranging from -3 to +3 based on the balance of the evidence available.

Measure Score	Measure Assessment
-3	Large deterioration
-2	Moderate deterioration
-1	Slight deterioration
0	No overall change
1	Slight Improvement
2	Moderate Improvement
3	Large Improvement

Impacts on the Local Community

Ref.	Measure	Score	Impact of Proposal
CI1	Children living in the catchment are attending their local school	3	<p>Recent housing developments have resulted in increased pupil numbers in the Western Vale. Within Cowbridge there are a number of new housing developments. The largest of these developments being the 'Land to the north and west of Darren Close' with 475 dwellings. The development is projected to yield around 48 nursery and 132 primary pupils. Due to the limited surplus capacity in Cowbridge, the Council's Cabinet approved a phased approach to increasing capacity in Cowbridge with English medium being addressed as part of phase one and Welsh medium as part of phase two.</p> <p>This proposal would result in an additional 210 English-medium primary school places and an additional 48 part time nursery places. This would ensure the Council is able to meet its statutory duty to provide sufficient school places.</p> <p>If English-medium primary capacity was not increased, projected demand would exceed the existing capacity from September 2020.</p> <p>This proposal would result in a more efficient supply and demand for school places in the Cowbridge area.</p>
CI2	Services provided by the school for the local community, including extra-curricular activities	2	<p>It is intended that all existing services for children, parents and the community would continue if the proposal was to go ahead. The proposal would result in increased pupil numbers which is likely to result in increased demand for school services, as well as providing the opportunity to expand the number of services offered. With a 3-19 all through school, there is the potential to deliver additional services across all age ranges.</p>

			<p>The proposal forms part of Band B of the Council's 21st Century Schools Programme. This would include the creation of new state of art facilities fit for the 21st Century. A key element of the 21st Century Schools Programme is the provision of community facilities.</p> <p>Services provided at Y Bont Faen Primary School and Ysgol Iolo Morganwg would also continue.</p>
CI3	Community facilities used regularly by the school	2	<p>The existing schools in Cowbridge regularly use community facilities, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the park, not only for recreational purposes but to study wildlife and nature, as well as for art; • the High Street for geographical purposes; • local Churches; • The Town Hall; • the wildlife pond and physic garden; • St. Quentin's Castle; • the River Thaw; • visits to the shops e.g. Fabras, Waitrose, Tesco and The Gem offices; and the Library. <p>These facilities would continue to be used by Cowbridge Comprehensive School, Y Bont Faen Primary School and Ysgol Iolo Morganwg. The additional pupils at Cowbridge Comprehensive School would likely increase the use of community facilities.</p>
CI4	Community facilities provided by and activity undertaken within the school premises	2	<p>A key aim of the 21st Century Schools Programme is to ensure school facilities are developed to meet the needs of the local community. Members of the local community would be involved throughout the development of the plans for the new school building to ensure services meet the needs of the community and enhance the facilities available.</p>

			<p>Existing facilities available for the community to book at the Cowbridge Comprehensive site include a 3G All Weather Pitch, MUGA, sports hall, fitness suite, drama theatre, and meeting rooms.</p> <p>This proposal would increase the community facilities available with an additional MUGA, sports hall and meeting rooms available or hire.</p>
CI5	Impact on local businesses	0	There are no perceived impacts on local businesses as a result of this proposal. Cowbridge Comprehensive School, Y Bont Faen Primary School and Ysgol Iolo Morganwg would continue to operate, working alongside local businesses.
CI6	Impact on local employment	2	<p>This proposal would lead to an increase in employment opportunities at the school as additional pupil numbers would lead to growth in future staffing levels.</p> <p>There may also be professional development opportunities for staff within an all-through school environment.</p>
CI7	Impact on local infrastructure	1	<p>This proposal would result in two English medium primary sites in Cowbridge which could reduce travel time to school. Increasing the number of primary school places available within the catchment area would also reduce longer journeys to alternative primary schools.</p> <p>Should this proposal be implemented, traffic and transport implications at the Cowbridge Comprehensive site would be considered as part of the Transport Assessment required to achieve building works planning consent. This would ensure transport implications are factored into the design of the new school.</p>
CI8	Transport arrangements	2	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. In accordance with 'The Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008'.

		<p><i>“This is defined as more than 2 miles to the nearest suitable school for Primary Pupils and more than 3 miles for Secondary School Pupils. Distances are measured by the nearest available walking route.”</i></p> <p>Due to the limited primary places available in Cowbridge, this proposal would reduce the reliance on transport to nearby primary schools by providing an additional 210 places within the catchment area.</p> <p>The catchment area is relatively small due to the dense population meaning very few areas would be entitled to free learner travel.</p> <p>A full transport assessment would be undertaken as part of the design process for the new school building. This would assess the impact on the local infrastructure and include a swept path analysis to ensure compliance with current legislation on accessibility for all emergency services. This would also include assessment of safe walking routes. The transport assessment would be used as part of the design process to mitigate against any negative impacts identified.</p> <p>There is scope through the design and build process to improve connecting pathways to enhance the safety and enjoyment of the routes. Designs would be subject to the formal planning process which includes a statutory consultation with local residents.</p> <p>The school could operate phased start and end times for the primary and secondary phases to minimise disruption, as happens at Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Morgannwg, a 3-19 all-through school in Barry. The school could further separate peak traffic times through wrap-around care and afterschool clubs.</p>
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7. Scoring Summary

Ref.	Local Community
CI1	3
CI2	2
CI3	2
CI4	2
CI5	0
CI6	2
CI7	1
CI8	2
Average Score	1.75

8 Conclusions

The impact assessment identifies that the proposal would likely have a neutral impact on the local community across 1 of the 8 measures assessed. The proposal would likely have a positive impact on the local community across 7 of the 8 measures assessed. Overall, the proposal would likely have a positive impact on the local community.

The proposal would enable Cowbridge Comprehensive 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 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.

Transport implications would need to be carefully considered during the design of the new school to limit the impact of the increase pupils traveling to the site.

It is concluded from the Community Impact Assessment that the proposal to establish an all-through school to accommodate 210 English medium primary places with an additional 48 part-time nursery places would better meet the needs of the community to ensure the sustainable balance between supply and demand for school places.