

THE VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL

CABINET: 15TH OCTOBER 2018

REFERENCE FROM LEARNING AND CULTURE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE:
1ST OCTOBER, 2018

“ PROPOSED RECONFIGURATION OF PRIMARY PROVISION IN THE
WESTERN VALE (REF) –

The Chairman commenced by informing the Committee that proposals for the reconfiguration of primary provision in the Western Vale had been sent to the Committee by Cabinet, with the request that the Learning and Culture Scrutiny Committee consider the report, consultation report, including appendices and written representations received at the Cabinet meeting on 17th September and explained that scrutiny at the meeting should be related to the Cabinet report and proposals contained therein. The Chairman welcomed a full discussion, but within these broad limits.

She subsequently explained the process for the meeting, how the report had been broken down into sections for consideration, when she would bring in members of the public to make representations, and allow Members of the Committee to request points of clarification and ask questions.

(a) School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and School Organisation Code 2013

This section of the report was introduced by the Operational Manager, Legal Services, who informed the Committee that the Council had a number of general duties under Part 1 of the Education Act 1996, in particular those duties under Sections 13 and 14 of the 1996 Act.

However, in respect of the proposal, the Operation Manager stated that the Council must exercise its functions in accordance with Part 3 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 which was concerned with school organisation. The Council also had to have regard to relevant guidelines contained in the School Organisation Code published on 1st October, 2013. Chapter 2 of Part 3 of the 2013 Act dealt with school organisation proposals. An alteration which was a “regulated alteration” in relation to the type of school in question may be made to a maintained school only in accordance with Part 3 of the 2013 Act. The term “regulated alteration” was defined in Schedule 2 to the 2013 Act.

The following changes were “regulated alterations”:

- The transfer of a school to a new site was a regulated alteration (unless a main entrance of the school on its new site would be within one mile of a main

entrance of the school on its current site) (paragraph 2 of Schedule 2 to the 2013 Act).

- The alteration by a year or more of the lowest age of pupils for whom education was normally provided at the school was also a regulated alteration (paragraph 5 of Schedule 2 to the 2013 Act); and
- The enlargement of the premises of the school which would increase the capacity of the school by at least 25% or 200 pupils as compared with the school's capacity on the appropriate date was also a regulated alteration (paragraph 10 of Schedule 2 to the 2013 Act).

The Committee was informed that under section 42(1)(a) of the 2013 Act, a Local Authority had the power to make proposals to make a regulated alteration to a community school, and Section 48(2) of the 2013 Act provided that before publishing such proposals, a proposer must consult on its proposals in accordance with the requirements of the Code.

The Officer stated that if a Local Authority decided to proceed with a proposal to make regulated alterations to a maintained school, it must publish proposals to that effect in accordance with the Code. Any person wishing to object to the proposals published under section 48 had to do so within the objection period of 28 days. The Council must then publish a summary of all objections made to the proposal and its response to those objections before the end of seven days beginning with the day of the Council's determination. The Local Authority proposer must then determine whether the proposals should be implemented. Where a Local Authority's proposals had received objections, and required determination, those objections would be carefully considered before a final determination was made. Any determination had to take place before the end of 16 weeks beginning with the end of the objection period.

The Code contained a number of requirements which Local Authorities in Wales had to act in accordance with.

Paragraph 1.1 of the Code set out the key background principles and policies, which should be taken into account by the Council in developing school organisation proposals and in addition when developing school organisation proposals, the local plans to which Council should have regard included the following:

- Local plans for economic or housing development;
- Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (made under part 4 of the 2013 Act);
- Children and Young People's Plans (or successor plans);
- 21st Century Schools – Capital Investment Programme and the relevant wave of investment;
- The Council should also have regard to Welsh Government Guidance on related matters such as:
 - Learner Travel Operational Guidance;
 - Measuring the capacity of schools in Wales, Circular 09/2006.

Local Authorities had to also consider whether proposals would improve access for disabled pupils in accordance with requirements under the Equality Act 2010.

In considering the Public Sector Equality Duty, the Council was required, in carrying out their functions, to have due regard to the equality needs set out under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, as set out in the Cabinet Report.

There being no points of clarification sought from the Committee, the Chairman welcomed the first public speaker. There were two public speakers for this item, Mrs. Kate Jenkins, Llancafarn Primary School Community Governor, and Dr. Oliver Spencer, Llancafarn Parent Governor.

Mrs. Jenkins informed the Committee of her role as a Llancafarn Primary School Community Governor and stated that she had responded to both consultations on this proposal. The public speaker informed the Committee that she first heard of the proposals to reconfigure primary provision in the Western Vale on Friday, 12th January, 2018 before they were officially published on Wednesday, 17th January, 2018. She informed the Committee that this gave the Governing Body no time to convene, or discuss the proposals with parents. In her opinion, this undermined the work and role of the Governing Body. She noted that staff were also finding it difficult to carry out their duties with the proposals ongoing.

Mrs. Jenkins informed the Committee that the Governing Body had met with officers to discuss the 21st Century Schools Programme and was informed that this funding would only be available for new builds. Subsequently, she had learned that money was available to refurbish existing schools in 21st Century Schools' bids and therefore she felt that the Governing Body was misled.

Mrs. Jenkins then noted that the proposed reconfiguration of primary provision in the Western Vale referred to the proposals as a transfer of the existing Llancafarn Primary School building into a new school building, however she stated that the Governing Body did not see how the proposals as detailed in the report would achieve this. Whilst the report indicated that this would be a transfer from the existing building into a new school building, the Llancafarn School Community Governor stated that under the proposals, in her opinion, once the existing site was closed Llancafarn Primary School would not exist.

Finally, Mrs. Jenkins stated that if the proposals were carried out as in the report, she would not stand as a Community Governor, as she felt that the new school building would not be in the same community.

Dr. Spencer was then invited to speak to the Committee, and begun by addressing the categorisation of Llancafarn Primary School, noting that the School had been placed in the Yellow Support Category, and he stated that the categorisation system for schools was not a tool to determine the closure of a site. Dr. Spencer informed the Committee that the Governing Body would like Llancafarn Primary School to be placed in the Green Support Category, which they believed would not require significant improvements and therefore they disputed the statement in the report that referred to Llancafarn Primary School not being in the top 50% of primary schools in the Vale of Glamorgan.

The public speaker noted that a fall in pupil numbers had been observed. The consultation document suggested that the number of pupils attending the school was low, however following publication of the proposal, he informed the Committee that this had led to a reduction in enrolments, and therefore the proposals were having a direct impact on the school's budget and staffing. Dr. Spencer also informed the Committee that as a result of the proposals, parents had stated that they had to find alternative primary provision or leave.

Dr. Spencer requested that the Committee ask Cabinet to protect funding and maintain it at existing levels. The Committee was informed that nursery provision could be provided at Llancarfan Primary School, however the report stated that there was no funding for this possibility, which he found hard to believe given the available funding for new school buildings. Dr. Spencer also informed the Committee that there was a lack of evidence for the benefit to educational standards as laid out in the report and he strongly felt that Llancarfan Primary School already met the criteria for Clever Classrooms, and a proposed Rhoose site was environmentally unsuitable.

In conclusion, Dr. Spencer informed the Committee that Section 106 funding from new developments in Rhoose could be spent on developing primary provision in the Rhoose area, and Llancarfan Primary School's new status as a Rural School could allow the Governing Body to access additional funding and keep the school thriving.

Members indicated that they had no points of clarification or questions on the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and School Organisation Code 2013 section of the report, and some points raised by the public representations on this section would be addressed under later sections.

(b) The Public Sector Equality Duty

The Operational Manager, Legal Services, presented this section of the report, informing the Committee that in respect of the Public Sector Equality Duty the equality duty arose where the Council was deciding how to exercise its statutory powers and duties under the 1996 Act and the 2013 Act. The Council's duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act was to have "due regard" to the matters set out in relation to equalities when considering and making decisions in relation to its statutory duties under those Acts. Accordingly due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality and foster good relations needed to form an integral part of the decision making process and the Council needed to have an adequate evidence base for its decision making.

The Officer stated that the duty was not to achieve the objectives or take the steps set out in Section 149. Rather, the duty on public Authorities was to bring these important objectives relating to discrimination into consideration when carrying out its public functions (which included the functions relating to school reorganisations). "Due regard" meant the regard that was appropriate in all the particular circumstances in which the Authority was carrying out its functions and there had to be a proper regard for the goals set out in Section 149. At the same time, the Council also had to pay regard to any countervailing factors, which it was proper and reasonable for them to consider. The weight of these countervailing

factors in the decision making process was a matter for the Council's Executive in the first instance.

The Committee was informed that the duty covered the nine protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. However, Section 149, so far as relating to age, did not apply to the exercise of a function relating to the provision of education to pupils in schools (paragraph 1 of Schedule 18 to the 2010 Act). Finally, the Council also had to comply with the specific equality duties imposed by the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011, particularly Regulation 8 (imposing specific duties to make arrangements for assessing the impact of its policies / practices and monitoring of the same).

The Chairman then invited the first public speaker for this section, Mrs. Rachel Edwards, a prospective parent at Llancafarn Primary School, to make her representations.

Mrs. Edwards informed the Committee that she was a resident of Llancafarn and a prospective parent at Llancafarn Primary School, who had always explained to her children that Llancafarn Primary would be their new school. She stated that she now had one child who was due to start in September who did not know where their school would be. She stated that this was a difficult decision for her and her partner as parents to make, and no such conversation was required with their previous children, who would be the fifth generation of their family to attend the village school.

Mrs. Edwards stated that parents were told they had choice for primary provision for their children, however in her opinion, this was not the case and she now had a short time to find alternative primary provision. Instead, Mrs. Edwards informed the Committee that she would like the same opportunities for all her children.

Mr. Matthew Valencia, as a current parent with children at Llancafarn Primary School, then spoke to the Committee, informing them that he had two children at primary school age and had to ask his children to change their preference from Llancafarn Primary School to another primary school due to the proposals.

Mr. Valencia informed the Committee that he lived 100 yards from Llancafarn Primary School and that he had chosen to live in Llancafarn due to its close relationship with the primary school. In his opinion, the school provided his children with a solid grounding, an excellent sense of community and this was good for child development; the school environment having reinforced their wellbeing.

Mr. Valencia informed the Committee that he now had to make a difficult decision: should he keep his children in Llancafarn Primary School, or move elsewhere for the same rural setting. Mr. Valencia informed the Committee that he felt the Council had forced his hand and moved his children's primary provision to Pendoylan Primary School which provided a similar rural setting. He informed the Committee that he had to drive his son to Pendoylan, however this was still one mile less than it would be to Rhose.

In conclusion, Mr. Valencia stated that he would recommend the proposal be dropped, as the closure of the Llancafarn Primary site diminished options for

parents, as not all parents wished for their children to go to 21st Century Schools with fast internet.

There were no points of clarification or questions from Committee Members on this subject heading.

(c) Reasons for the Proposal, Options Considered and Consultation Process

The Head of Strategy Community Learning and Resources informed the Committee that the Council had to ensure that there were sufficient schools providing primary and secondary education for their area. Under the School Organisation Code (2013) with regards to the quality and standards in education, the Vale of Glamorgan Council had to place the interests of learners above all others. Relevant bodies also had to consider the ability of the school or schools which were the subject of the proposals to deliver the full curriculum at the Foundation Phase and each Key Stage of education. This consideration had to include the quality of curriculum delivery and the extent to which the structure or size of the school was impacting on this.

The Officer stated that where proposals involved the transfer of learners to alternative provision, there should normally be evidence that the alternative would deliver outcomes and offer provision at least equivalent to that which was currently available to those learners (including learners with SEN) and proposers should ensure that the disruption to learners was minimised.

The Committee was then informed of key sections of the School Organisation Code (2013) that the Council had to follow as part of the proposals:

Section 1.4: Need for places and the impact on accessibility of schools. Local Authorities had to ensure that there were sufficient schools providing primary and secondary education for their area. Schools were regarded as sufficient if they were sufficient in number, character and equipment to provide for all pupils the opportunity of appropriate education.

Section 1.5: Resourcing of education and other financial implications. It was important that funding for education was cost effective. Relevant bodies had to take into account the following factors in relation to the resourcing of education:

- Whether proposals would ensure a fairer and more equitable distribution of funding between mainstream schools within the Local Authority's area;
- What effect proposals would have on surplus provision in the area;
- Whether proposals formed part of the Local Authority's 21st Century Schools Investment Programme and contributed to the delivery of sustainable schools for the 21st Century and to the better strategic management of the school estate through the removal of maintenance backlogs and school buildings which were in efficient or in poor condition.

Section 1.8: Specific factors to be taken into account for proposals to add / remove nursery class. The Council had to consider the standard of nursery education and

the sufficiency of accommodation and facilities offered, both in the classroom and outdoors, and the viability of any school that wished to add nursery places.

Therefore, the Head of Strategy, Community Learning and Resources informed the Committee that there were not enough places in Rhoose to meet demand, and the Council had a statutory duty to meet this demand. He stated that Llancafarn Primary School had a catchment area population of 55 primary age children set against a capacity of 126 places and only 29 of the 55 primary aged children living in the catchment area attended the school.

Half of those living outside the Llancafarn Primary School catchment area resided in the Rhws Primary School catchment area and the Officer detailed the trend of declining pupil numbers and revenue implications. There were projected surplus places in 2023 at 22%, which was over double the target agreed by Welsh Government and there were no nursery provision available at Llancafarn Primary. Finally, site constraints at both Rhws Primary and Llancafarn Primary limited investment opportunities to expand.

The Officer informed the Committee of relevant facts and figures on Standards and Improvement Categories from the Cabinet report regarding Llancafarn Primary School. He stated that under the Standard Improvement categories, the Primary School had an overall category of Yellow and confirmed to the Committee that these colour categorisation systems were not meant to penalise schools but were simply a measure of support that was required, and as an officer, his duty was to consider what aspects of a school prevented progress. The Head of Strategy, Community Learning and Resources noted the outcomes of recent Estyn inspections, which included the capacity to improve. He also noted that 50% of primary schools in the Vale of Glamorgan were classified as Green in the standards and improvement categories, and that Llancafarn Primary School was the fifth highest primary school in terms of revenue costs per pupil. The Committee was also informed of the Reception intake from 2014 to 2018.

The Officer then provided the relevant facts and figures from the report for Rhws Primary School for pupil projections and available school places. These included the school capacity projections going forward, noting that with a population of approximately 7,000 people, and a projected shortfall of 90 school places by 2022/23, it would be reasonable to have two schools in the Rhoose area. The Head of Strategy, Community Learning and Resources explained the methodology for the Committee, and confirmed that in recent projects for pupil yield at Rhoose Point, the Council's projections had been correct within 3%.

The Head of Strategy, Community Learning and Resources then provided the Scrutiny Committee with an overview of the options considered as part of the proposal which were:

Extending Llancafarn Primary School

- The site was a constrained site and too small to expand to meet Building Bulletin requirements;

- Business case for 21st Century Funding would not meet criteria for satisfying Building Bulletin regulations;
- Site was sloped which limited development;
- The school was not in the right place to serve the additional increase in numbers emanating from Rhoose;
- Transportation issues would arise given the narrow country lanes providing the only access to the school;
- There was insufficient space to do any construction on site while the school was occupied.

Extending Rhws Primary School

- The site was a constrained site and too small to expand to meet Building Bulletin requirements;
- Business case for 21st Century Funding would not meet criteria for satisfying Building Bulletin regulations;
- Any additional structures onsite would need to be built on existing playing fields;
- School was one of only two Grade 2 listed buildings in the Vale, limiting the scope for change;
- There was no opportunity to address half form entry challenges at Llancarfan;
- No investment for pupils at Llancarfan Primary School;
- The extended school would be too large causing a situation of surplus capacity in 2021 of 19%.

New 210 Primary School in Rhoose and retain Llancarfan Primary School in situ

- A 210 place school would introduce significant surplus places, against an agreed target of only 10% per Welsh Government;
- There was no opportunity to address half form entry challenges at Llancarfan Primary School;
- No opportunity for investment in pupils at Llancarfan Primary School;
- Federation could be considered with Rhws Primary however this required excellent leadership and experience. New Headteacher for Rhws Primary starting in January 2019;
- Additional annual revenue funding required from Mainstream School Funding Formula of approximately £725k.

New 210 Primary School in Rhoose, reduce Rhws Primary School to 255 and retain Llancarfan Primary School in situ

- A reduction to 255 pupils at Rhws Primary could only be achieved through a phased reduction from the Reception intake which would not be realised until 2026. Additional capacity needed by 2023;
- The current admission number of Rhws Primary was 53. A reduction to 255 places would yield a new admission number of 36. Educationally this was difficult to manage class organisation, school structure, curriculum planning, and would necessitate mixed age teaching when considering statutory class size limits of 30 children;

- Additional annual revenue funding required from Mainstream School Funding Formula of approximately £500k;
- Additional funding would be required for the Band B programme to offset the loss of any capital receipt from the current Llancarfan Primary School site;
- New catchment areas would need to be drawn to divide the existing Rhws Primary pupil population to correlate with the new capacities in both schools, or both schools shared the catchment area, with prioritisation given to the new school for newcomers to the catchment area.

Do Nothing

- Based on current projections, by 2023 there was an anticipated shortfall of 90 primary school places in the Rhoose area;
- The trend of falling numbers at Llancarfan continued to challenge the efficiency and sustainability of Llancarfan Primary;
- Under the law, the Council was required to ensure adequate provision for school places within its borders to meet demand.

As part of the options considered, the Officer confirmed to the Committee that pupil demand and location had been fully considered and was quantifiable data, and the Council had to consider options that were within the context of the School Reorganisation Code.

The Head of Strategy, Community Learning and Resources provided the Committee with the legal definition of consultation, which was generally considered a process to help understand problems as part of larger systems, and to seek views. It was not a referendum or a method for obtaining permission. The Officer stated that due to high levels of interest and consultation engagement that had been undertaken, the consultation report was subsequently very long. He also noted that there were no right or wrong answers with the options considered, however he considered the proposed reconfiguration of primary provision in the Western Vale as detailed in the Cabinet report was the option that most complied with the School Organisation Code 2013.

The Officer presented Committee with a timeline of both consultations with regards to the proposal, and stated that it was appropriate the matter was referred again to the relevant Scrutiny Committee. The Committee noted that Section 48 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 required that before school organisation proposals were published they must first be subject to consultation. The Committee was then informed that consultation processes had to follow Welsh Government guidelines, in compliance with the Schools Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and School Organisation Code 2013.

The Head of Strategy, Community Learning and Resources stated that the consultation developed on the feedback received, and during the first consultation it was requested that different sites or options should have been available for consideration, so the Officer confirmed that these were then being consulted upon as a second process. He also confirmed that all responses from the first consultation were carried over, and the Community Impact Assessment was altered based on the feedback received. The officer noted that there had been technical challenges,

informing the Committee that the survey software had cut the end off ten responses due to technical character limits. Once the error had been confirmed, each of the respondents affected were contacted to add their final amendments to their responses. The Committee was informed that all of the consultation issues and themes that were outlined during the consultation were included in the report, and the Head of Strategy, Community Learning and Resources confirmed that over 50 issues were raised, and the School Organisation Code 2013 stated that responses had to be provided. As part of the consultation report, the Council considered both consultation exercises, had two meetings with the Governing Body and staff, held two sessions with pupils at Llancarfan Primary School, four public drop-in sessions, and considered 1,136 individual pieces of correspondence on the proposals. The officer confirmed that individual responses were available in the Members' Room for review.

Mr. Jim Barratt, current parent with pupils at Llancarfan Primary School, was invited to speak to the Committee. The public speaker informed the Committee that he felt the whole consultation process had been too narrow and focused on the one option as detailed in the proposal. In his opinion, Mr. Barratt stated that the Council had pursued the one option in a single minded fashion. He stated that at the earliest conceptual stages of the proposals, the Council had not engaged with anyone else, and he wished that the Authority had talked to Governors of Llancarfan Primary School and Rhys Primary School at a much earlier stage to ensure that the favoured option would be fit for purpose. This best practice approach would honour the public engagement process.

Mr. Barratt queried why the Council had not met with key stakeholders at an earlier stage of the process before preferred options were drawn up, and stated that the Local Authority had had plenty of opportunities, as the start date of Band B 21st Century Schools was January 2017.

Mr. Barratt stated that the consultation was flawed, and based on four false premises which were as follows. Firstly, that a transferral of staff and pupils from the existing Llancarfan Primary School building into the new school building would be a relocation. Mr. Barratt instead stated that the proposals were for a school closure in all but name. Secondly, there was a demand for placements in Rhoose. Mr. Barratt stated that these calculations were based on one approach to modelling, whereas other methods of population modelling predicted less demand than anticipated. Thirdly, demand for additional places in Rhoose could not be met through only one school. In his opinion, Mr. Barratt stated that the proposals in the report risked dividing the community. Fourthly, the designation of Llancarfan Primary School as a "Rural" school. Mr. Barratt concluded that this designation was an opportunity to sustain the future of Llancarfan.

Finally, Mr. Barratt queried why the single option had been pursued in the proposals, and wondered if it could be related to the blueprint that was developed in December 2012 as part of a Task and Finish Group of the Scrutiny Committee. That report contained similar recommendations to those as suggested in the current proposals. Mr. Barratt stated that in 2012, Cabinet had decided not to follow the recommendations of the Task and Finish Group and he urged the current Cabinet to

come to the same conclusion for the proposals being considered by the Committee today.

Members of the Committee then sought points of clarification from the public speaker, requesting more information on the other modelling method referenced by Mr. Barratt. In response, the member of the public stated that there were various ways to calculate pupil yields from housing numbers. In this instance, the Council had taken the number of houses being built in the Rhoose area, which was 700, then multiplying it by 0.278. This gave a 90 place shortfall. Mr. Barratt noted that there were different approaches taken by other Local Authorities, for example Salford City Council had tested different approaches to estimates and looked at non-principaled bedrooms, for example one bedroom apartments which would not necessarily yield primary school places. Using a non-principaled bedrooms method calculation, Mr. Barratt calculated that Rhoose would only face a shortfall of 28 places. In a school with 210 places, this would still be a significant proportion, however could lead to a significant surplus in any new school in Rhoose.

The same Member of the Committee then sought more information on the statement that Llancarfan being a rural primary school was an opportunity and not a threat. Mr. Barratt responded by stating that the rural school designation would allow Llancarfan Primary School to qualify for additional Welsh Government funding, and Llancarfan Primary School would be the only school eligible for this funding in the Vale of Glamorgan. A rural school would have more leeway in surplus places and be a more sustainable option. Mr. Barratt therefore considered it right that the Council should consider all other proposals.

There being no further points of clarification, Members were invited to discuss the reasons for the proposal, options considered and consultation process.

A Member of the Committee asked what the designated funding for a rural school would be and what impact this could have on the school. In response, the Head of Strategy, Community Learning and Resources stated that for the financial year 2018/19 this figure was £2.5m funding across the whole of Wales. In 2017 a rural cluster of schools from the Vale of Glamorgan had applied to access this funding, which had a couple of attached requirements. This year, the cluster had been awarded £56k, to be shared across the six schools. The Director of Learning and Skills clarified that this was a grant for small and rural schools, of which the Council was allocated a sum of money, then had to make applications to draw down this funding. As such, this pot of money did not require rural school status for applications, and was already available to Llancarfan Primary School. The Director confirmed that this funding could not be used to offset normal running costs, so previous bids by the Council were for the purpose of funding an educational psychologist.

With regards to the option to extend Rhws Primary School, the Chairman queried why the site had been listed as constrained, and too small to expand to meet Building Bulletin requirements. In response, the Head of Strategy, Community Learning and Resources stated that the building was Grade 2 listed, and he provided the statistics for the square metre floor space per pupil as compared to the Welsh Government Building Bulletin Regulations, which confirmed that the site was already

constrained and too small for expansion, so applications for funding would not meet the assessment criteria set within the Guidelines. The Officer also confirmed for the Chairman that the same site size difficulties applied for Llancafarn Primary School.

A Member then raised a point of clarification, that parts of Rhws Primary School were not listed, and queried why the unused space at Rhws was not sufficient for extension, noting that Romilly Primary School had recently undergone lots of development. The Officer responded that the developments at Romilly Primary School were like-for-like, and did not comprise a shrinkage or expansion of the school building.

A Member noted that there was no nursery provision available at Llancafarn Primary School and noted the desire to have continuous nursery to primary provision in the Western Vale, and hoped that the Governing Body of Llancafarn Primary School was in discussions with the Local Authority to explore this option. The Member queried why this could not be provided on site at Llancafarn Primary School. In response, the Head of Strategy, Community Learning and Resources stated that the existing site of Llancafarn Primary School was too small to accommodate nursery provision. As for discussions that took place in 2012, the Officer stated that he did not have the details of these discussions, so could not comment on the recommendations made at that time, however in the present day, he felt that there was not enough space at the site for nursery provision. It was confirmed for the Committee that Local Authority nursery provision was available in St. Athan and Rhoose, and there was private provision available elsewhere. The Committee discussed the availability of sites in the village of Llancafarn, which officers stated had been considered, with the Village Hall deemed unsuitable, however it was stressed that providing nursery and primary provision across multiple sites was problematic and not good for learner transition.

A Member stated that the proposals were based upon a number of predictions, and asked officers if these figures had been analysed for accuracy. In response, it was confirmed that predicted figures were analysed, to ensure that the methodology was evidence based, with the Officer noting that the Council's projections for pupil yield at Rhoose Point across nursery, primary and secondary sectors was within 3% accuracy and therefore accurate.

The Chairman stated that she had experience of schools that had gone through a federation process, which led to increases in travel for pupils and school standards had slipped. She then asked if, hypothetically, Llancafarn Primary School remained as is, at what point would it be considered "unsustainable". The Director of Learning and Skills responded that this would depend upon a number of factors, as there was no one set measure for school sustainability. It was a fact that Llancafarn Primary School would receive £96k less funding next year, which would require the Governing Body to come up with a recovery plan, and informed the Committee that the lower number of pupils that attended the school, the lower funding it would subsequently receive and requested Members to be mindful of that fact.

A Member of the Committee asked officers to elaborate on the importance of pupil costing, and of the differences and similarities between Llancafarn and other primary schools that offered less than 210 places with regards to their costs per pupil. The

Head of Strategy, Community Learning and Resources stated that the Council had a statutory duty of care in the context of school funding, as the decision to reconfigure primary provision in the Western Vale would have a knock on effect with mainstream school budgets. Individually, there were no other schools that offered less than 210 places which were financially at risk, however this depended heavily on the personal circumstances of each school, however there were similar issues of pressures on teaching, so the proposed reconfiguration of primary provision in the Western Vale sought to offer a model of primary provision that worked well elsewhere.

The same Member queried what strategic work the Council had undertaken with Llancarfan Primary School to offer support, and how long had the school had the fifth highest costs per pupil. The Head of Strategy, Community Learning and Resources stated he would check how long Llancarfan Primary School was the fifth highest in the Vale of Glamorgan for costs per pupil, and confirmed that high levels of support available and added that the Council had done everything it could to help the school. He reiterated that the Council did not want schools to fail without offers of support.

Finally, a Member of the Committee sought information on the costs of other rural schools in the Vale of Glamorgan and their capacities. Officers responded that other rural schools within the Vale of Glamorgan, including Wick and Marcross CiW Primary Schools, Peterston-Super-Ely CiW Primary School and St. Nicholas CiW Primary School were operating within budget, and Governors at those schools decided how to balance budgets, with the Council offering support. It was noted that Pendoylan CiW Primary School was also in the rural cluster, however had been working with the Council to develop a financial recovery plan for many years. At the request of the Member, officers indicated that they could circulate the information on budgets and unit costs per school across the rural cluster of primary schools.

(d) Community Impact Assessment

The Committee was informed that the School Organisation Code 2013 recommended that a Community Impact Assessment should be included as part of school organisation consultations, however this was not a mandatory requirement. In relation to the proposal, the Council nevertheless thought it would be prudent to produce a thorough Community Impact Assessment. The Assessment was developed over the lifespan of the consultation and developed within the context of education provision and resulted in a scoring matrix introduced against eight key measures which were detailed in the report. The School Organisation Code referred to community impact within the context of community use of the buildings. The Head of Strategy, Community Learning and Resources stated that the Community Impact Assessment did not identify the school buildings as being used to provide community services of as a base for community activities.

As a point of clarification, a Member queried if there was a cost for the use of the school buildings and if alternative buildings were available in the village for community use. The Officer noted that schools set their own charging policies for the use of school buildings, and it was only possible to successfully charge for the community use of buildings if there was demand in the first instance.

Following the Officer's presentation of this section of the report, the next public speaker was asked to make their representations.

Mr. Richard Barnes, Rhoose Community Representative, stated that the majority of the Llancarfan community were not in favour of the proposals, and neither were the proposals to the benefit of all of the village of Rhoose, only the families that would occupy the 300 new houses being built in the vicinity. Mr. Barnes asked why the Rhoose Section 106 funds were not being invested in the current primary school and this should have been consulted on fully as it must have been discussed previously. This alternative provision would benefit many and allow more choice than the proposed reconfiguration of primary provision in the Western Vale. In his opinion, the proposal had impacted upon the future funding for the existing schools, which was particularly difficult as they were underfunded, and the Parent Teacher Association funding which would also suffer as a consequence.

Mr. Barnes stated that the proposal would have a negative impact upon traffic in the Western Vale, as there was limited and inadequate access to all of the Wards affected by the proposal. The public speaker stated that there was limited mention of transport issues in the report, and requested that a further traffic study be undertaken as the traffic situation in these areas was dangerous enough already.

Finally, Mr. Barnes considered these proposals would divide the community, who were happy to work with the Council to support the many and not the few.

With regards to Mr. Barnes' comments on the dangerous traffic and possible effects of infrastructure resulting from the proposals, a Member of the Committee sought clarification on this point. The Member stated that 30% of pupils who studied in Llancarfan were living in the village, so building a new school in the Rhoose area would result in less infrastructure pressure in the village of Llancarfan. In response, Mr. Barnes clarified that he was talking about existing traffic pressures in the Rhoose area, and requested the Council to carry out another traffic assessment. The Chairman noted that the planning application for any new school buildings in the Western Vale would include another traffic assessment.

The next public speaker for this section, Mrs. Melinda Thomas, Llancarfan Community Council Representative, was invited to speak.

Mrs. Thomas stated that the Community Impact Assessment carried out as part of these proposals did not accurately capture the community in Llancarfan and Rhoose. The speaker stated that the Council had only used selected measures as part of the Community Impact Assessment that biased the result, for example putting too much emphasis on use of the school building, rather than the relationship between the school and community which, in her opinion, was more important and that evidence provided by the community had been discarded or marked low in the Assessment.

Mrs. Thomas stated that there were strong community links at Llancarfan Primary School, and just because the school did not use community facilities, that there would be no detrimental impact as a result of the proposals. As far as the community and Governors were concerned, they saw the proposed reconfiguration of primary provision in the Western Vale leading to a closure of Llancarfan Primary

School and not a transfer. She informed the Committee that at least three businesses would suffer as a result of the proposals, including the Fox and Hounds Pub and the Community Hall. Mrs. Thomas also stated that the Community Impact Assessment made no mention of St. Cadocs Church, which in her opinion, was a serious omission. She therefore disputed the statement that there was no evidence of links to the community. The speaker noted that officers had been keen to undertake consultation, which was not a requirement, however she stated that there was a legal precedent that the community consultation should be carried out properly and with full consideration given, and she believed that the comments provided by the community at the meeting had undermined the previous Community Impact Assessment.

A Member sought clarification on the statement by Mrs. Thomas that the school transfer would have a direct impact on the public house in the village of Llancarfan, and requested more information at this point. In response, the Llancarfan Community Council representative stated that many parents of pupils at Llancarfan Primary School used the public house for tea and coffee, and the Fox and Hounds had organised several events for the school, including bike rides, funding events and barbeques, and was therefore embedded in the community environment at Llancarfan.

There being no further points of clarification with the public speaker, a Member asked officers to explain the reasoning that there was no evidence of strong links to the community. In response, the Head of Strategy, Community Learning and Resources stated that this was a difficult issue and he did not wish the community to think that the Council disregarded their opinion, as it was clear that the community placed great importance to supporting Llancarfan Primary School. The Officer confirmed that in the first instance, checks were made with the Headteacher of the school as to the community use of the facilities as per the Community Impact Assessment process as detailed in the School Organisation Code 2013, which was recognised as best practice. The Officer stated that the Community Impact Assessment evolved throughout the process, but ultimately had to consider the impact from an educational perspective. He confirmed that the Council did not wish to destroy the links between the community and the school, only transfer the school to a new site. With regards to a query from the same Member on the possible Section 106 contributions that would be used in proposals, the Head of Strategy, Community Learning and Resources confirmed that these contributions were negotiated separately, however had to be based on the location of the development that led to the Section 106 funding.

A Member queried that if Llancarfan Primary School offered wrap around care, what impact upon the community the removal of this provision could have, and in response the Head of Strategy, Community Learning and Resources noted that any new school facilities would offer the same provision.

In response to a question from another Member as to how to link the ethos of the school to a school transfer, the Officer stated that staff at Llancarfan Primary School would be the main driver behind the delivering of education and ethos at the site.

Finally, the Chairman noted that this was the Learning and Culture Scrutiny Committee, so was pleased that the Committee was considering the local culture as part of the proposals and stated that the Council had carried out work on “Sense of Place” and the Committee should be mindful of this work. She continued that historically, when the previously referred to Task and Finish work on a school places review, it was purely in consideration of school roll numbers, however when the recommendations from that report were considered in the round, as with Oakfield Primary School, it could be seen that the proposals could affect regeneration in the area. The Chairman stated that she would struggle to support proposals if they would lose the “Sense of Place” in the community, which could be difficult to transfer. In agreement, the Head of Strategy, Community Learning and Resources confirmed that the Council provided support to the community, for example Creative Rural Communities funding was available, and had been accessed by the village before.

(e) Educational Validity and Quality and Standards in Education

The Director of Learning and Skills introduced this section of the report, informing the Committee that the Council had to be mindful of Section 1.3 of the School Organisation Code 2013, detailing the Council’s duty with regard to quality and standards in education. The Director informed the Committee that relevant bodies should place the interests of learners above all others and should also consider the ability of the school or schools which were the subject of the proposals to deliver the full curriculum at the Foundation Phase and each Key Stage of education. This consideration should include the quality of curriculum delivery and the extent to which the structure or size of the school was impacting on this.

Where proposals involved the transfer of learners to alternative provision there should normally be evidence that the alternative would deliver outcomes and offer provision at least equivalent to that which was currently available to those learners (including learners with SEN). Proposers should ensure that the disruption to learners was minimised.

The Director of Learning and Skills drew the Committee’s attention to page 73 of the consultation report attached at Appendix B to the Cabinet report, which provided Estyn’s response to the proposal to reconfigure primary provision in the Western Vale. Estyn concluded that the proposals were likely to at least maintain the standard of education provision in the area. Whilst the Council was not required to make a case for better provision as part of the proposals, the Director set out the educational benefits which were in line with Sections 1.4 and 1.5 of the School Organisation Code 2013. These were:

- The admission number at Llancafarn Primary School was 18 pupils per year group. The school had only five classrooms available for teaching seven year groups, therefore mixed age group teaching was necessary;
- Over the last three years, an average of 4 children had been born in the Llancafarn Primary School catchment area;
- The existing site did not meet 21st Century School standards and did not meet the requirements of the school given the site’s restricted nature;

- The majority of pupils attending the school resided outside the catchment area, with over half of those living in Rhoose;
- Forecasted demand emanating from Rhoose given housing developments demonstrated a need to increase capacity to accommodate demand;
- The Local Authority was required to rationalise school places and was committed to meeting Welsh Government's surplus places targets;
- The opportunities afforded through Welsh Government's 21st Century Schools Programme would allow for a new purpose built school, reflective of an evolving and increasingly digital national curriculum to support and enhance learning provision.

The Committee was then asked to consider page 76 of the consultation report which detailed Estyn's response to the second consultation exercise, which stated that "It is likely that extending the provision to include nursery would support continuity and progression in pupils' learning experiences from pre-school age to statutory school age. The addition of outdoor facilities is likely to enhance pupils' wellbeing through providing better opportunities to develop their physical skills and health. In addition, access to high quality outdoor provision is a key principle of foundation phase pedagogy."

In conclusion, the Director stated that the proposals offered a sustainable solution to the issues facing primary provision in the Western Vale, which had been widely consulted upon. The proposals maintained efficiencies for the schools, dealt with a shortfall of places in Rhoose, was compliant with the Disability Discrimination Act, would offer nursery and outdoor provision, and would offer high quality education.

Morwen Hudson, Senior Challenge Advisor and Lead Officer for School Improvement in the Central South Consortium, was then invited to address the Committee as an expert witness.

Mrs. Hudson informed the Committee that she did not know of any other profession where staff were expected to work in a site that did not meet modern design requirements, whereas a new building with modern facilities would enhance the learning opportunities of the school. The Central South Consortium Officer was concerned that there had been little mention of the pupils at Llancarfan Primary School and the impact of the proposals on their education at the meeting this evening. She informed the Committee that the proposal had numerous benefits and a key consideration for the Committee was that the new site would provide nursery provision, which would provide continuity that had been shown to be very beneficial to educational outcomes. For example, Cadoxton Primary School which had amalgamated with Cadoxton Nursery School to provide continuity and a consistent curriculum, had been very successful with improved outcomes for children and receiving excellent judgements from Estyn who commented on the outstanding progress children made in developing their personal and social skills and their raised standards of achievement.

Mrs. Hudson informed the Committee that outdoor learning was key to the Foundation Phase, and while staff at Llancarfan Primary School used the outdoor space available as much as possible, there were limitations on the current site. As

such, the proposals would help enhance pupils' social, physical and creative development. For example, Ysgol Y Ddraig, which was a new school building, had well established outdoor provision, which was key to delivering the school's Foundation Phase.

The Central South Consortium Officer then noted that children in Llancafarn were taught in mixed age classes. The Committee was informed that there were pros and cons to providing education in this fashion, however in her opinion, the drawbacks were significant and provided a challenge for teachers. The Committee was informed that using data drawn from Welsh National tests, pupils in Llancafarn Primary School in Years 4 to 6 were performing at less than the Local Authority average, and these classes were the largest in the school, so it would therefore become a greater challenge to deliver this provision if numbers decreased further. The Senior Challenge Advisor for the Central South Consortium then detailed for the Committee that appropriate challenge for more able pupils in Key Stage 2 was identified as a recommendation in the Estyn inspection in 2014 and would therefore, she suggested, be a line of enquiry in the next inspection. Mrs. Hudson then explained how the Primary School fell within the Welsh Government model of school categorisation, detailing that most recently the school had been judged as having an improvement capacity of B and overall support category of Yellow. She then summarised for the Committee the differences between improvement capacities B and C in the national categorisation model, and noted that a school in the Yellow support category was an effective school which was already doing well and knew the areas it needed to improve, however still required additional support. It was again confirmed that in the Vale of Glamorgan over half of primary schools were categorised as Green with an improvement capacity judgement of A.

The Committee was informed that since the last inspection of Llancafarn Primary School, Estyn was now using a different inspection framework and therefore the definitions of good progress had changed. In her opinion, the Central South Consortium Officer stated that there were key aspects that were judged as good that could now be scrutinised differently if the school was inspected. For example, in their last inspection, Estyn noted that "nearly all pupils make good progress from their starting points". However, in 2018, 37.5% of pupils were making good progress, which was lower than the Local Authority average and she felt Estyn would say this was a minority. It was also noted that improving reading and writing in Welsh was an area that Estyn recommended progress, and whilst reading scores at the primary school had improved above the Local Authority average, the writing scores at level 5 were much lower. Estyn had also recommended that marking procedures be consistent across the school so that pupils knew how to improve their work, however the Committee was informed that the school had undertaken a great deal of work in relation to this recommendation, and this had been reviewed by the challenge adviser who confirmed this was now consistent across the school. The Central South Consortium Officer was also concerned that Llancafarn Primary School was only one of three primary schools in the Vale of Glamorgan with no nursery provision.

Mrs. Hudson then provided the Committee with factors that led to the success of 21st Century Schools, with new facilities and built-for-purpose designs offering greater integration with learning opportunities. The Central South Consortium Officer

also made reference to the Successful Futures report, an independent review of curriculum and assessment arrangements and stated that all schools should be in the process of planning and preparing for its introduction, but as a small school, she informed the Committee that Llancafarn Primary School would have difficulty in releasing staff to engage with other schools in this key area of development. The new facilities would also reflect positively in the aims of the National Curriculum and the Digital Competency Framework, which would be difficult to achieve with the school at its current location.

In conclusion, Mrs. Hudson asked the Committee to acknowledge Llancafarn Primary School's Mission Statement which was "the best that we can be", and stated that the proposals would help the school provide a 21st century curriculum that excited and inspired every pupil and provided the best possible opportunities, and would promote high achievement and help children reach their full potential.

With regards to the educational validity, quality and standards in education of the proposal, a Member sought clarification on the language used by Estyn to describe the school, which sounded like the site was in an urban environment, and asked if Estyn only focused on the grounds of the site in isolation, and could not consider the rural setting of Llancafarn Primary School. In response, the Central South Consortium Officer stated that Estyn did consider other facilities nearby, however they had identified significant limitations on the Llancafarn Primary School site, for example the limited sporting facilities. In comparison, Ysgol y Deri offered modern facilities that were fit for purpose.

In response to a query from a Member who sought more information on the delivery of the Digital Competency Framework at Llancafarn Primary School, the Central South Consortium Officer confirmed that the school had not engaged with their School Improvement Group, and struggled with staff cover. In her opinion, the school could work towards the Digital Competency Framework, however she did not believe the school was ready to achieve the aims of this Framework. The Head of Strategy, Community Learning and Resources also listed the restrictions facing Digital Competency due to the existing Llancafarn Primary School site, which resulted in technical and practical limitations which would lead to it being difficult for the school to achieve the Digital Competency Framework in full.

The next public speaker, Mr. Stephen Parry, who was a parent of previous Llancafarn pupils, was then invited to make representations to the Committee.

Mr. Parry stated that since the consultation for the proposal to reconfigure primary provision in the Western Vale had started, the numbers of pupils at the school had dropped. Mr. Parry stated that the information that was sent to parents with regards to educational validity and viability of the different proposals by different options was biased, and queried why, if the report was so critical of the quality and standards in education available at Llancafarn Primary School, were the staff who were delivering this education also being transferred. Mr. Parry stated that Estyn had been quoted to the Council's benefit, and stated that many changes that took place in education were unsuccessful if they were based on a lack of research and evidence. In his opinion, the member of the public stated that there was not enough evidence in the proposals to show that they would benefit the children of the future, and queried if

the solution to the future of primary provision in the Western Vale should rely on closing a rural primary school.

The report stated that a new 21st Century school would improve learning and quality and standards in education, and Mr. Parry queried how this would be achieved. With regards to the mixed class sizes in Llancarfan Primary School, Mr. Parry stated that Estyn did not find evidence of the teaching quality suffering as a result of this. He also stated that a digital curriculum could be delivered successfully in Llancarfan Primary School. The report gave consideration to the quality of teaching on offer at Llancarfan Primary School, and Mr. Parry stated that he, and many other parents, agreed that play, socialisation and interaction with the environment were more important than children using digital devices such as mobile phones. Mr. Parry believed that the Council may want schools to instead teach socialisation, and Llancarfan Primary School was a good environment for this.

The public speaker stated that the report was concerned about pupil outcomes, however he told the Committee that Estyn said the learning environment at Llancarfan Primary School was varied and stimulated, providing a good learning environment and the pupils at the school performed well academically. Finally, he stated that Welsh Government were considering rural schools as a priority, as they provided quality and standards in education that would not otherwise be picked up in data, and this had not been covered in the consultation report. Instead, the Council was making an economic argument, and not an educational argument.

Following representations from the member of the public, the Director of Learning and Skills clarified that the expert witness, Morwen Hudson, worked for the Central South Consortium which had provided categorisation data inside the consultation report, that expanded upon the qualitative data as detailed in the document.

There being no further points of clarification, a Member of the Committee stated that he had various concerns with the report. Firstly, the report stated that the current building of Llancarfan Primary School was not fit for purpose, with the Member stating that something being unfit for purpose would not happen overnight, and queried why this had not been resolved earlier. He then noted that the report discussed educational outcomes which placed the interest of learners above all else, however it had been discussed at the Committee that standards would only be at least maintained, and it did not appear the proposals would guarantee improved results, instead transferring the issues at one school to another so might not be addressed as part of the new building. The Member was not comfortable with the characterisation of Llancarfan Primary School as an unsatisfactory school when it had been deemed “good” by Estyn; if the Council could confidently predict the proposals would provide “excellent” judgements by Estyn this would be another matter, however this was not guaranteed.

In response, the Director of Learning and Skills stated that the Council had to consider raising standards in education as part of the School Organisation Code, and was committed to supporting learner journey and providing schools that were judged excellent. She noted, however, that Llancarfan Primary School when last inspected four years ago was not Excellent, and using the updated figures from Central South Consortium, officers were of the opinion that the school building was a

limiting factor. All things being equal, the Director believed that excellence could be achieved at Llancafarn Primary School but could never be guaranteed, as excellent leadership and teaching was essential, and a new building alone could not deliver excellence. With regards to Estyn's response to the proposals, concerning standards of education provision, she urged the Committee to read their response to the consultation exercise which stated that the Vale of Glamorgan Council had presented a sound rationale for the proposals.

The Chairman noted that there were many new schools being developed in the Vale of Glamorgan, and after site visits she had noticed that the venue as well as the teaching had a new vitality. She asked officers if this vitality could be borne out in this case, and if it could be qualified. In response, the Central South Consortium Officer stated that St. Cyres Comprehensive School had moved into a new building as part of the Penarth Learning Community and had fantastic results and standards of education, and she believed that the new environment had had a positive impact on outcomes. She also stated that Ysgol y Ddraig, which had resulted from an amalgamation of schools into a new building, had not been inspected by Estyn but was achieving standards higher than previously.

Finally, the Central South Consortium Officer stated as a point of clarification that she had never referred to Llancafarn Primary School as an underperforming school. In agreement, the Director of Learning and Skills provided examples of schools in the Vale that had seen improved results since moving into new buildings, with Cadoxton Primary School providing a clear example of a 21st Century school that received an excellent inspection from Estyn, having received three excellent judgements out of the five categories at its most recent inspection. Ysgol y Deri, which was an amalgamation of three Special Schools, one of which had transferred from Barry to Penarth, had also received an excellent judgement from Estyn for its leadership and partnership work.

With regards to investment in schools, the Head of Strategy, Community Learning and Resources confirmed that the Council had to take advantage of Welsh Government applications for funding, which at present was focused on 21st Century schools.

A Member of the Committee noted that excellent judgements had been received from Estyn for other schools in the Vale of Glamorgan that were in Victorian buildings, and the speakers at the Committee were satisfied with the educational provision received at Llancafarn Primary School. She then queried where extracurricular activities took place at Llancafarn Primary School. Officers responded that while Cadoxton Primary School was located in an old building, inside this was not the case, as it offered facilities that were the most modern in the Vale of Glamorgan with the exception of a new build and was therefore fit for purpose. With regards to a question on the precise rationale for considering proposals on Llancafarn Primary School, the Head of Strategy, Community Learning and Resources stated the provision of education could not be looked at in isolation as the Council had responsibility for over 50 schools and over 20,000 pupils, therefore discussions on proposals to reconfigure primary provision in the Western Vale would also have to consider mainstream funding at places across the whole Local Authority. He confirmed for the Committee that the school had to pay for the use of

community facilities in the village of Llancarfan, which while being a small figure, was still a claim on resources and had to be considered as part of any obstacles to curriculum delivery.

Finally, the Director of Learning and Skills stated that with regards to the Section 106 funding for new developments in Rhoose, it was important for the Committee to consider that if this funding was spent on an education site that did not meet the Welsh Government's Building Bulletin Regulations, then the Council would not be able to access match funding.

The Chairman sought more information on Llancarfan Primary School's placing in the standards and improvement categories, querying if the results suggested if progress was being made to bring about improvements, or if a plateau had been reached. In response, the Central South Consortium Officer stated that the categorisation of Llancarfan Primary School as Yellow was not a cause for concern as it identified that capacity for improvement was available, however Estyn would consider as a line of enquiry why the more able children at Llancarfan Primary School were not meeting higher standards.

(f) Next Steps / Summary

For the final section of the report presentation, the Head of Strategy, Community Learning and Resources informed the Committee of the timeline of the proposal.

To progress the proposal a statutory notice had to be published providing 28 days for objections. The notice must be published on a school day and with 15 school days included within the notice period. Following the publication of a statutory notice and objection period, a further report to Cabinet would be issued on the outcome of the statutory notice period.

The Officer noted that the Council was still early on in the decision-making process, which was reflective of the statutory guidance and offered the Western Vale with a 21st Century primary school that provided an opportunity that met the needs of future pupils. Finally, the Head of Strategy, Community Learning and Resources stated that it was important to consider the community input which had not been invalidated by the proposals that met the needs of statutory guidelines.

At this point in proceedings, the final public speaker, Dr. Rebecca Farquharson, was invited to make her representations to the Committee.

Dr. Farquharson stated that since the proposals had been put forward by the Council, Llancarfan Primary School had been designated by Welsh Government as the Vale of Glamorgan's only rural school. As such, the school now had fantastic opportunities to take advantage of the 21st Century funding available, which could be used in existing buildings. Dr. Farquharson stated that the business case for the proposed reconfiguration of primary provision in the Western Vale was yet to be approved and the Cabinet Secretary for Education had stated that Local Authorities should be minded of the direction of policy travel in this area and the public speaker therefore considered that the Council was treading a fine line with regards to the

Welsh Government vision for rural schools and as such the Council's business case could be challenged by Welsh Government.

Dr. Farquharson therefore urged the Committee to consider alternative proposals for primary provision in the Western Vale as Llancafarn Primary School could now access £10m rural funding. This would directly resolve all of the issues raised by the Council, and enhance existing buildings and facilities. The public speaker stated that a local architect had deemed it possible to convert existing space within the school hall to provide two new classrooms in the roof space, which would allow the removal of at least three of the temporary classrooms which could then be removed to allow various play areas and she asked why the Council had not considered this option.

In her opinion, Dr. Farquharson stated that the expanding of the existing Rhws Primary site had not been considered in full, as there was space available at the rear of the building and safe access available from Station Road, which could allow a Foundation Phase at Rhws School. She also informed the Committee that the Welsh Government Cabinet Secretary for Education had stated that 210 place schools were not necessary, and there were no requirements for schools with lower numbers of pupils on the roll. The combined approach she had outlined above, she felt, would meet the needs of both communities in Llancafarn and Rhose.

In summary, Dr. Farquharson stated that there was an overwhelming dismissal of the proposed reconfiguration of primary provision in the Western Vale, which had not been properly evidenced. Dr. Farquharson stated that workable alternatives were available that were more fitting for rural schooling and strengthened local communities. She did not want a divided community, and it was clear that the community of Llancafarn did support the proposals as 92% of those consulted were in opposition. Dr. Farquharson asked the Committee who they thought would benefit from the funding available, or did they really believe that all options had been fully considered.

In conclusion, she stated that the uncertainty was damaging the future of Llancafarn Primary School, and alternative proposals could provide the opportunity to deliver the best standards in education for all.

The Chairman gave thanks to all of the public speakers for their contributions to the meeting and noted that Cabinet had sent the report to the Committee for its consideration and following the meeting, the recommendations of the Learning and Culture Scrutiny Committee would be referred back to Cabinet for Executive decision. She asked if any Members had any final questions for officers that had not been raised at the meeting, before recommendations were moved by the Committee.

A Member stated that it was tremendous to hear from a united community supporting their school. The Member stated that he had two Victorian schools in his Ward that had changed with the times, one by making a move to another location, and another able to expand within its own boundary. He summarised the options presented to Committee, which was that the school site was not fit for purpose and had a low intake which was blamed in part on the uncertain fate of the school. The Member considered that this was a very difficult decision as the Council had to support the school's community but also consider the bigger picture. He wondered if there were

other options available, which could include opening other schools, and if Llancarfan Primary School was viable as it currently stood. The Member stated that rural schools were not just for one village, and pupils could attend from other locations so the transportation to the existing and possible new school had to be considered as any proposals could lead to increased congestion. The Member felt that the debate must continue, however the final result on any proposals would not make the people happy. He urged the Committee to make children and their future the priority, considered alongside the presentations that had been made at the Committee meeting. This was a very difficult decision and the Member asked if there might be another way to consider the reconfiguration of primary provision in the Western Vale.

Another Member stated that he had issues with the impetus for the proposals and the timescales the Council was pursuing. He noted that there were pressures due to the projection of pupil numbers in future, and also funding deadlines. He praised the debate and level of engagement at the meeting, as the Scrutiny Committee had the opportunity to speak to the public directly. He also noted that the nature of the rural structures had not led to other considerations being considered. The Member felt that there were more questions to be asked and options to consider, which could lead to more opportunities.

A Committee Member noted that on 1st November 2018, Llancarfan Primary School would be classified as a rural school and the Committee was being asked to make a decision before this date, where extra funding could be made available. For this reason, she felt it would be remiss of the Committee to recommend anything to Cabinet before other ideas could be put forward. The Chairman sought more information from officers on this point and the Head of Strategy, Community Learning and Resources stated that the Council as the proposer commenced its consultation before 1st November 2018 thus the proposal must be published and determined in accordance with the first addition of the code. The Council had published its consultation document as required by the code before the 1st November 2018, accordingly, any proposal must be published and determined in accordance with the first edition code.

The Director of Learning and Skills also confirmed that the consultation report had been published under the existing guidelines, and stated that future guidelines would include a presumption against closure for rural schools, however confirmed that the Council's proposal was for a regulated alteration and not a closure.

A Member of the Committee stated that he was not happy with the way the consultation process had been conducted. The report made reference to the School Organisation Code and the Council may have met its legal obligations, however he considered it in the Council's best interests not to proceed hastily. He noted that the Welsh Local Government Association Consultation Guide gave local people a voice, and he did not feel that had happened in the consultation for the proposed reconfiguration of primary provision in the Western Vale. He stated that there was a difference between listening and hearing, and wanted a constructive dialogue and in his opinion, this had not happened. As Elected Members, he pointed out that the Committee must avoid predetermining an argument and he felt that officers were doing this. He felt that a decision had been made, but he had not heard what problems were trying to be solved in the business case. For example, he raised

concerns regarding the calculations for the 90 surplus places in the Rhose area, stating this was a prediction and the Council could not be certain what the population would be like in 2020-23. The Member stated he also had concerns about the business case timing and felt he was being pushed into make a premature decision as the funding and need for places originated from Rhose developments. These were split into two halves, and the second development had not commenced with no planning permission confirmed. He would understand the compulsion if this was so, and thought that the development was likely to happen, however informed the Committee that Brexit might have an impact on housing and the economy that meant the Council should not rush into this decision. The Member clarified with officers the surplus places comprised from the 787 new dwellings in Rhose and whether they were on the north or south of the railway line dwellings. He concluded that these would be completed too far away in the future for his liking, and it was too early to make such a huge decision. The Member then summarised his position stating that he felt the predicted school places were not guaranteed, he did not like the consultation process, and if the Scrutiny Committee accepted the proposals for reconfiguration of primary provision in the Western Vale, the Council would risk losing trust. He had questions over the funding and the business plan which sought to improve educational outcomes, however was not guaranteed. He stated that the Committee had heard of Victorian schools that had achieved excellent outcomes, and felt that Llancarfan Primary School could achieve these levels with support. As such, he could not support the proposal in its current format and wished for more time to consider all the options and create an environment where all the facts could be considered.

The Chairman sought more information on the business case timings for the Band B 21st Century School funding. In response, the Director of Learning and Skills stated that there were two timing restrictions for the funding. Firstly, Section 106 funding was provided to the Council in tranches and had expiry dates, and secondly, the 21st Century School Funding Programme timing had been agreed with regards to match funding. She considered this a lesser issue due to the ability to slip funding, however the timescales for the Section 106 funding were tight and had to be matched with the Welsh Government grant. In response to a question from a Member as to whether the Section 106 deadlines could be extended, the Director stated that this has sometimes been possible, but could not be guaranteed so was still a significant risk.

At this point in the proceedings, a Member was asked if, as he was Chair of the Governing Body of Rhws Primary School who had submitted representations against the proposal as part of the consultation report, if he should declare an interest in this item. In response, the Member indicated that he would not answer this question.

There being no further questions or comments on the proposed reconfiguration of primary provision in the Western Vale, the Chairman asked if Members would like to move any recommendations.

A Member requested that the proposal be deferred to adequately consider the other points raised at the meeting, bearing in mind the timescales of the Section 106 payments, so Cabinet could consider the proposal in further detail. Another

Member clarified that the deferral should allow a genuine consultation exercise to be undertaken to allow the community to work with the Council for alternative solutions.

Following a vote, it was subsequently

RECOMMENDED – T H A T Cabinet further engage with the community to explore other options that consider the future of primary provision in Llancarfan and the rest of the Western Vale.

Reason for recommendation

To explore other options that consider the future of primary provision in Llancarfan and the rest of the Western Vale.”

PRIMARY RECONFIGURATION OF THE WESTERN VALE

(a) School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and School Organisation Code 2013

- The Council has a number of general duties under Part 1 of the Education Act 1996, in particular those duties under Section 13 and 14 of the 1996 Act. However, in respect of the proposal, the Council must exercise its functions in accordance with Part 3 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 which is concerned with school organisation. The Council must also have regard to relevant guidelines contained in the School Organisation Code published on the 1st October 2013. Chapter 2 of Part 3 of the 2013 Act deals with school organisation proposals. An alteration which is a “regulated alteration” in relation to the type of school in question may be made to a maintained school only in accordance with Part 3 of the 2013 Act. The term “regulated alteration” is defined in Schedule 2 to the 2013 Act.
- The following changes are “regulated alterations”:
 - The transfer of a school to a new site is a regulated alteration (unless a main entrance of the school on its new site would be within one mile of a main entrance of the school on its current site) (paragraph 2 of Schedule 2 to the 2013 Act).
 - The alteration by a year or more of the lowest age of pupils for whom education is normally provided at the school is also a regulated alteration (paragraph 5 of Schedule 2 to the 2013 Act); and
 - The enlargement of the premises of the school which would increase the capacity of the school by at least 25% or 200 pupils as compared with the school’s capacity on the appropriate date is also a regulated alteration (paragraph 10 of Schedule 2 to the 2013 Act)
- Under section 42(1)(a) of the 2013 Act, a local authority has the power to make proposals to make a regulated alteration to a community school.
- Section 48(2) of the 2013 Act provides that before publishing such proposals, a proposer must consult on its proposals in accordance with the requirements of the Code.
- If a local authority decides to proceed with a proposal to make regulated alterations to a maintained school, it must publish proposals to that effect in accordance with the Code. Any person wishing to object to the proposals published under section 48 must do so within the objection period of 28 days. The Council must then publish a summary of all objections made to the proposal and its response to those objections before the end of 7 days beginning with the day of the Council’s determination. The local authority proposer must then determine whether the proposals should be implemented. Where a local authority’s proposals have received objections, and require determination, those objections will be carefully considered before a final determination is made. Any determination must take place before the end of 16 weeks beginning with the end of the objection period.

(a) School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and School Organisation Code 2013

- The Code contains a number of requirements which local authorities in Wales must act in accordance with.
- Paragraph 1.1 of the Code sets out the key background principles and policies, which should be taken into account by the Council in developing school organisation proposals and in addition when developing school organisation proposals, the local plans to which Council should have regard include the following:
 - Local plans for economic or housing development;
 - Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (made under part 4 of the 2013 Act);
 - Children and Young People's Plans (or successor plans)
 - 21st Century Schools – Capital Investment Programme and the relevant wave of investment.
 - The Council should also have regard to Welsh Government Guidance on related matters such as:
 - Learner Travel Operational Guidance.
 - Measuring the capacity of schools in Wales, Circular 09/2006.
- Local authorities must also consider whether proposals will improve access for disabled pupils in accordance with requirements under the Equality Act 2010.
- In considering the Public Sector Equality Duty, the Council is required, in carrying out their functions, to have due regard to the equality needs set out under s149 of the Equality Act 2010, as set out in the Cabinet Report.

(b) The Public Sector Equality Duty

- In respect of the Public Sector Equality Duty, the equality duty arises where the Council is deciding how to exercise its statutory powers and duties under the 1996 Act and the 2013 Act. The Council's duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act is to have 'due regard' to the matters set out in relation to equalities when considering and making decisions in relation to its statutory duties under those Acts. Accordingly due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality, and foster good relations must form an integral part of the decision making process. The Council must have an adequate evidence base for its decision making.
- The duty is not to achieve the objectives or take the steps set out in s.149. Rather, the duty on public authorities is to bring these important objectives relating to discrimination into consideration when carrying out its public functions (which includes the functions relating to school reorganisations). "Due regard" means the regard that is appropriate in all the particular circumstances in which the authority is carrying out its functions. There must be a proper regard for the goals set out in s.149. At the same time, the Council must also pay regard to any countervailing factors, which it is proper and reasonable for them to consider. The weight of these countervailing factors in the decision making process is a matter for the Council's Executive in the first instance.
- The duty covers the nine protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. However, section 149, so far as relating to age, does not apply to the exercise of a function relating to the provision of education to pupils in schools (paragraph 1 of Schedule 18 to the 2010 Act).
- The Council must also comply with the specific equality duties imposed by the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties)(Wales) Regulations 2011, particularly regulation 8 (imposing specific duties to make arrangements for assessing the impact of its policies/practices and monitoring of the same).

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

School Organisation Code (2013) – Highlights relevant to this proposal

Section 1.3: Quality and standards in education

- Relevant bodies should place the interests of learners above all others.
- Relevant bodies should also consider the ability of the school or schools which are the subject of the proposals to deliver the full curriculum at the foundation phase and each key stage of education. This consideration should include the quality of curriculum delivery and the extent to which the structure or size of the school is impacting on this
- Where proposals involve the transfer of learners to alternative provision there should normally be evidence that the alternative would deliver outcomes and offer provision at least equivalent to that which is currently available to those learners (including learners with SEN). Proposers should ensure that the disruption to learners is minimised.

Section 1.4: Need for places and the impact on accessibility of schools

- Local authorities must ensure that there are sufficient schools providing primary and secondary education for their area. Schools are regarded as sufficient if they are sufficient in number, character and equipment to provide for all pupils the opportunity of appropriate education

Section 1.5: Resourcing of education and other financial implications

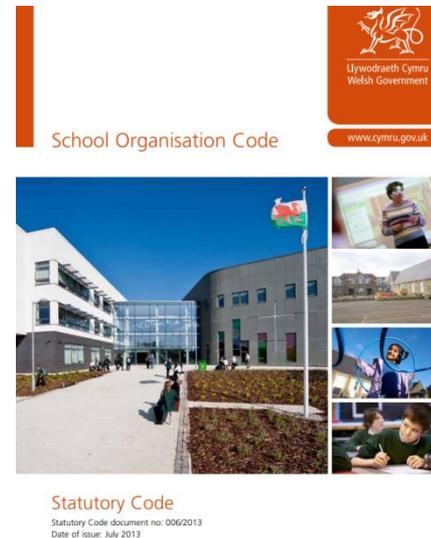
- It is important that funding for education is cost effective. Relevant bodies should take into account the following factors in relation to the resourcing of education:
 - Whether proposals will ensure a fairer and more equitable distribution of funding between mainstream schools within the local authority's area.
 - what effect proposals will have on surplus provision in the area;
 - whether proposals form part of the local authority's 21st Century Schools Investment Programme and contributes to the delivery of sustainable schools for the 21st Century and to the better strategic management of the school estate through the removal of maintenance backlogs and school buildings which are in efficient or in poor condition.

Section 1.8: Specific factors to be taken into account for proposals to add/remove nursery class

- the standard of nursery education and the sufficiency of accommodation and facilities offered, both in the classroom and outdoors, and the viability of any school that wishes to add nursery places;

Section 2.2: Regulated Alterations

- The transfer of a school to a new site is a regulated alteration (unless a main entrance of the school on its new site would be within one mile of a main entrance of the school on its current site) (see paragraph 2 of Schedule 2 to the Act).
- The alteration by a year or more of the lowest age of pupils for whom education is normally provided at the school is also a regulated alteration (see paragraph 5 of Schedule 2 to the Act); and
- The enlargement of the premises of the school which would increase the capacity of the school by at least 25% or 200 pupils as compared with the school's capacity on the appropriate date is also a regulated alteration (see paragraph 10 of Schedule 2 to the Act)



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

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

Section 1.3: Quality and standards in education

Section 1.4: Need for places and the impact on accessibility of schools

Section 1.5: Resourcing of education and other financial implications

Section 1.6: Other general factors

- Not enough places in Rhose to meet demand. Statutory duty to meet need
- Llancarfan Primary has a catchment area population of 55 primary age children set against a capacity of 126 places
- Only 29 of the 55 primary aged children living in the catchment area attend the school
- Half of those living outside the Llancarfan Primary School catchment area reside in the Rhws Primary School catchment area
- Trend of declining pupil numbers and revenue implications
- Projected surplus places in 2023 at 22%, over double the target agreed by Welsh Government
- No nursery provision available at Llancarfan Primary
- Site constraints at both Rhws Primary and Llancarfan Primary limit investment opportunities to expand

Facts & Figures - Llancarfan

Llancarfan Primary School – Standards and Improvement Categories			
Publication Date	Standards Grade	Improvement Capacity	Overall Category
January 2018	N/A	B	Yellow
January 2017	2	C	Amber
January 2016	3	B	Yellow
January 2015	3	B	Amber

Table 10 - Standards and improvement categories - January 2015 – January 2018

Estyn

- Key Question 1: How good are the outcomes? Good
- Key Question 2: How good is provision? Good
- Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management? Good
- 50% of primary schools in the Vale are categorised as Green
- 5th highest primary school in terms of revenue cost per pupil

Llancarfan Primary School	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Reception Intake	17	12	10	17	3
No In Catchment	9	1	3	2	0
Percentage in Catchment	53%	8%	30%	12%	0%

Facts & Figures - Rhoose

Pupil Projections and available school places at Rhws Primary School						
	School capacity	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Rhws Primary School pupil projections	375	376	373	405	451	465
Rhws Primary School Surplus capacity/ available school places		-1	2	-30	-76	-90

Population: ~7,000

Methodology validation:

The Council's projections for pupil yield at Rhoose Point across nursery, primary and secondary sectors was 398.

Compared against the actual pupil yield to date of 410, this represents a difference of only **3%**.

Options Considered

Extending Llancarfan Primary

- The site is a constrained site and too small to expand to meet Building Bulletin requirements
- Business case for 21st Century Funding would not meet criteria for satisfying Building Bulletin regulations
- Site is sloped which limits development
- The school is not in the right place to serve the additional increase in numbers emanating from Rhoose
- Transportation issues would arise given the narrow country lanes providing the only access to the school
- There is insufficient space to do any construction on site while the school is occupied

Extending Rhws Primary

- The site is a constrained site and too small to expand to meet Building Bulletin requirements
- Business case for 21st Century Funding would not meet criteria for satisfying Building Bulletin regulations
- Any additional structures onsite would need to be built on existing playing fields
- School is one of only two Grade 2 listed buildings in the Vale, limiting the scope for change
- There is no opportunity to address half form entry challenges at Llancarfan
- No investment for pupils at Llancarfan Primary School
- The extended school would be too large causing a situation of surplus capacity in 2021 of 19%.

Options Considered

New 210 School in Rhoose Retain Llanccarfan Primary in situ

- A 210 place school would introduce significant surplus places, against an agreed target of only 10% per Welsh Government
- There is no opportunity to address half form entry challenges at Llanccarfan Primary School
- No opportunity for investment in pupils at Llanccarfan Primary School
- Federation could be considered with Rhws Primary however this requires excellent leadership and experience. New headteacher for Rhws Primary starting in January 2018.
- Additional annual revenue funding required from Mainstream School Funding Formula of approximately £725k

New 210 School in Rhoose Reduce Rhws Primary to 255 Retain Llanccarfan Primary in situ

- A reduction to 255 pupils at Rhws Primary can only be achieved through a phased reduction from the reception intake which would not be realised until 2026. Additional capacity needed by 2023.
- The current admission number of Rhws Primary is 53. A reduction to 255 places would yield a new admission number of 36. Educationally this is difficult to manage class organisation, school structure, curriculum planning, and would necessitate mixed age teaching when considering statutory class size limits of 30 children.
- Additional annual revenue funding required from Mainstream School Funding Formula of approximately £500k
- Additional funding would be required for the Band B programme to offset the loss of any capital receipt from the current Llanccarfan Primary School site
- New catchment areas would need to be drawn to divide the existing Rhws Primary pupil population to correlate with the new capacities in both schools, or both schools share the catchment area, with prioritisation given to the new school for newcomers to the catchment area.

Options Considered

Do Nothing

- Based on current projections, by 2023 there is an anticipated shortfall of 90 primary school places in the Rhoose area
- The trend of falling numbers at Llancafarn continue to challenge the efficiency and sustainability of Llancafarn Primary
- Under the law, the Council is required to ensure adequate provision for school places within its borders to meet demand



Consultation Process

- **Consultation** is generally considered a **process** of helping to understand problems as part of larger systems, and to seek views. It is not a referendum or a method for obtaining permission.

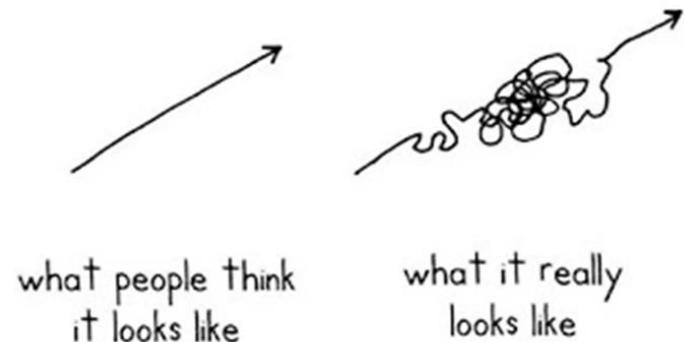


Consultation Process

- Section 48 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 requires that before school organisation proposals are published they must first be subject to consultation.
- Consultation processes must follow Welsh Government guidelines, in compliance with the Schools Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and School Organisation Code 2013.
- Consultation is on a specific proposal
- This consultation exceeded the statutory duty
- Developed based on feedback
- Technical challenges
- Issues and themes outlined in Consultation Report

Consultation Process

- 2 Consultation exercises: 5 March 2018 & 21 May 2018
- 2 meetings with Governing Body & Staff
- 2 sessions with pupils at Llancarfan Primary School
- 4 Public drop-in sessions
- 1,136 pieces of correspondence
 - 1046 opposed
 - 82 in support
 - 8 no opinion
- All correspondence available to Members



(d) Community Impact Assessment

- The School Organisation Code (2013) recommends that a Community Impact Assessment should be included as part of school organisation consultations, however, this is not a mandatory requirement. In relation to this proposal the Council nevertheless thought it would be prudent to produce a thorough Community Impact Assessment.
- Developed over the lifespan of the consultation
- Developed within the context of education provision
- Scoring matrix introduced against 8 key measures
- School Organisation Code refers to community impact within the context of community use of the buildings.
- CIA did not identify the school buildings as being used to provide community services or as a base for community activities

Ref.	Local Community	Wider Community
CI1	2	3
CI2	0	2
CI3	-1	1
CI4	0	2
CI5	-1	1
CI6	-1	2
CI7	2	-1
CI8	-0.5	2
Average Score	+0.0625	+1.5

(e) Educational Validity and Quality and Standards in Education

Section 1.3: Quality and standards in education

- Relevant bodies should place the interests of learners above all others.
- Relevant bodies should also consider the ability of the school or schools which are the subject of the proposals to deliver the full curriculum at the foundation phase and each key stage of education. This consideration should include the quality of curriculum delivery and the extent to which the structure or size of the school is impacting on this
- Where proposals involve the transfer of learners to alternative provision there should normally be evidence that the alternative would deliver outcomes and offer provision at least equivalent to that which is currently available to those learners (including learners with SEN). Proposers should ensure that the disruption to learners is minimised.

- The admission number at Llancafarn Primary School is 18 pupils per year group. The school has only 5 classroom available for teaching seven year groups, therefore mixed age group teaching is necessary.
- Over the last three years, an average of 4 children have been born in the Llancafarn Primary School catchment area.
- The existing site does not meet 21st Century School standards, and does not meet the requirements of the school given the site's restricted nature.
- The majority of pupils attending the school reside outside the catchment area, with over half of those living in Rhose.
- Forecasted demand emanating from Rhose given housing developments demonstrate a need to increase capacity to accommodate demand.
- The Local Authority is required to rationalise school places and is committed to meeting Welsh Governments surplus places targets.
- The opportunities afforded through Welsh Government's 21st Century Schools Programme would allow for a new purpose built school, reflective of an evolving and increasingly digital national curriculum to support and enhance learning provision.

(f) Next Steps



Jane Hutt
Aelod Cynulliad dros
Fro Morgannwg
Assembly Member for
Vale of Glamorgan



1/10/18

Cynulliad National
Cenedlaethol Assembly for
Cymru Wales

Cllr Lis Burnett
Chair, Scrutiny Committee
Learning and Culture

Our Ref: JH/CW/LIS

21st September 2018

Dear Lis

Re: Llancarfan School

I have been contacted by the Save Llancarfan School Committee who have raised concerns that the date of the Scrutiny Committee has been brought forward by two weeks. I understand that there are concerns that this decision has been taken in order that Cabinet can discuss the proposal to close the school on the 16th October, ahead of the implementation of the School Organisation changes on the 1st November. I understand that originally the discussion was due to take place on the 5th December.

I understand that there is also concern that in bringing the meeting forward the time the action group has to collate their information and submit it to be considered. They told me that the Action Committee are working in partnership with Llancarfan Community Council to collate a document highlighting the failures of the consultation report and compile key correspondence and information which has not been included in the report.

I would be grateful for clarification regarding the decision to bring the meeting forward and for any other information regarding the situation.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Best wishes
Yours sincerely



Jane Hutt AM
Vale of Glamorgan

Willmott, Michael

From: Burnett, Lis (Cllr)
Sent: 28 September 2018 5:13 PM
To: Hutt, Jane (Assembly Member) (Jane.Hutt@assembly.wales) <Jane.Hutt@assembly.wales>
Subject: RE: Llancarfan School

Dear Jane,

Thank you for your letter. There appears to be some confusion over the selection of the date for the Learning and Culture Scrutiny committee to discuss the Cabinet reference in relation to Llancarfan School.

The reference from Cabinet on 17th September would have been considered for inclusion on the committee agenda of the 16th October. However, mindful of the level of interest in the proposals I took the decision to hold a special scrutiny meeting on the 1st October in which the report would be the sole agenda item. This would allow more time for discussion and also a degree of flexibility to increase opportunities for input from members of the public. I was also aware of earlier comments in relation to the length of time the process is taking and so sought to avoid any unnecessary delay.

I informed the committee at our meeting on 18th September of my intention to hold the meeting during w/c 1st October and alerted the Save Llancarfan School group later that same evening.

I look forward to a full and in depth discussion of the report at the meeting on Monday

Kind Regards

Lis

Lis Burnett
Chair, Learning and Culture Scrutiny Committee
Councillor for Stanwell Ward
Vale of Glamorgan Council / Cyngor Bro Morgannwg
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Andrew RT Davies AM/AC



Assembly Member for South Wales Central

National Assembly for Wales
Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru

Cllr Lis Burnett
Chair, Learning and Culture Scrutiny Committee
Vale of Glamorgan Council
Civic Offices
Barry
CF63 4RU

Our ref: ARTD/JM

19th September 2018

Dear Cllr Burnett

Re: Proposed changes to Llancarfan Primary School

I am writing to you in your capacity as Chair of the Learning and Culture Scrutiny Committee of the Vale of Glamorgan Council, following the decision to refer the above plans to your committee for consideration.

As you will be aware, the case for the proposed closure of the school has centred around funding under the Welsh Government's Twenty First Century Schools Programme, on the basis that it will allow for a new school to be built on a site in Rhoose. In response to a question in the National Assembly for Wales, the Cabinet Secretary for Education recently confirmed that it is not necessarily a requirement for schools funded under the programme to be new builds, and indeed there are many examples of money being provided to upgrade existing schools.

The Cabinet Secretary has also confirmed that local authorities have been made aware of upcoming changes to the School Organisation Code 2013, and that they are expected to be mindful of this when taking decisions regarding affected schools. The revised Code includes a presumption against the closure of rural schools, and Llancarfan has been classified as such.

For your convenience, I have enclosed a copy of the transcript of the relevant sections of the Assembly's record of proceedings. I hope that this is helpful, and if I can be of further assistance, please do let me know.

Kind regards,

Andrew RT Davies AM
South Wales Central Regional AM

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DRAFT RECORD – NATIONAL ASSEMBLY FOR WALES

Wednesday 19th September 2018

Andrew RT Davies AM

13:38:11

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

Kirsty Williams AM

13:39:32

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

David Melding AM

13:40:21

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

Kirsty Williams AM

13:41:08

First of all, can I say that it is not a requirement of the twenty-first century schools programme to access that money to have a completely new build? In fact, I have been to refurbishment projects the length and breadth of this country, where twenty-first century schools programme money has been used to refurbish part of a school—in fact, in the new Conservative leader's constituency not so long ago. So, this idea that you could only access that money if you build a brand new school from scratch is a fallacy—that is not correct.¹⁹

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

Willmott, Michael

From: Burnett, Lis (Cllr)
Sent: 28 September 2018 5:29 PM
To: 'AndrewRT.Davies@assembly.wales' <AndrewRT.Davies@assembly.wales>
Subject: Re: Proposed changes to Llancafán Primary School

Your Ref: ARTD/JM

Dear Mr Davies,

Thank you for your letter of the 19th September, received by me on the 25th.

I have asked for a copy of your letter and attached transcript to be forwarded to the Scrutiny Committee for information. We look forward to a full and in-depth discussion of the Cabinet report before making our recommendations.

I should perhaps clarify that under the Council's constitution the Scrutiny Committee does not have executive power and any decision in relation to this proposal is for the Cabinet alone. It might therefore be of benefit to forward a copy of your letter to them

Kind Regards

Councillor Lis Burnett
Chair, Learning and Culture Scrutiny Committee
Labour Councillor for Stanwell Ward
Vale of Glamorgan Council / Cyngor Bro Morgannwg
mob / sym: 07701372561
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Correspondence is welcomed in Welsh or English / Croesewir Gohebiaeth yn y Gymraeg neu yn Saesneg.

Western Vale Primary Provision

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

28 September 2018

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1 Introduction

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

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

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

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

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

2.1 The Choice for Rural Schooling

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

2.2 Reduction in numbers at Llancarfan School

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

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

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

(Consultation Report, Annex E, p66)

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

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

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



3 (B) The Public Sector Equality Duty

3.1 Consultation Responses

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

4.2 The Proposal is based on a number of false premises

False premise 1: transferring Llanccarfan is a simple relocation

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

4.3 The public consultation was beset by problems

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

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

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

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

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



5.1 Impact upon Rhws Primary School

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

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

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

5.2 Impact upon Llancarfan

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

5.2.1 Community Facilities Used Regularly by the School

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

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

5.2.2 Impact on local businesses

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

5.2.3 The Relationship between the School and the Community

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

5.2.5 Impact upon community demographic

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



6.1 Education Rationale

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

6.2 Rural School Designation

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

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

6.4 Educational Consequences

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

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



7.1 Business Case for Funding

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

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

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

7.2 Use of 21st Century Funds

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

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

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

7.3 Alternative Approaches to Securing 21st Century Funding

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

i. Develop Llancafarn as a rural school

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

8.1 Welsh Assembly Plenary Transcript – 19th September 2018

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

8.2 Freedom of Information Requests

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



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref: KW/0060/18

To: Directors of Local Authorities
Diocesan Authorities

10 May 2018

Dear Colleague

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

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

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

Designation of rural schools

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

QUESTION

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Name and designation of person completing:

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

Annex 1 Presumption against the closure of rural schools

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

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

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

Prior to decision to consult on closure proposal

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

During and after consultation

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

8.2.2 RFI 18 6472 - Strategic Outline Programme timeline

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

Dear

RFI 18 6472

Thank you for your Freedom of Information requests.

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

Response to email dated 25.06.18

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

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

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

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

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

Response to email dated 26.06.18

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

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

N/A

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

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

Kind regards

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

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

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

Visit our Website at www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk
Ewch i'n gwefan yn www.bromorgannwg.gov.uk

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

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

From:

Sent: 26 June 2018 08:46

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

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

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

Thanks and kind regards,

Begin forwarded message:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Programme. Please also supply the date they were consulted.

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

I look forward to hearing your responses.

Thanks and kind regards,

8.2.3 RFI 18 6574 – Rural school designation

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

JB

Dear Cllr Thomas

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

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

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

Two points are worth noting about this submission:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

It says:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Your sincerely

Jim Barratt

8.3 Statements

8.3.1 Keith Thomas - Llancafarn School Alumni

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

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

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

Keith Thomas

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

8.3.2 Jane Hutt AM - Vale of Glamorgan (Labour)

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

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

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

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

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

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

The proposed “transfer” of the school

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

The School Organisation Code 2013

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

Llancaiach’s classification as a “rural school”

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

Access to 21st Century Schools funding

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

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

The Council's consultation on the proposals.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sincerely

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

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

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

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

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

Victoria Dixon

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



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

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

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

Yours sincerely

Harry Lewis
Owner

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

8.3.8 *Llancarfan District Community Association (LDCA)*

The LDCA runs the village hall in Llancarfan.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

8.3.9 *The Llancarfan Society*



LLANCARFAN SOCIETY

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

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

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

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

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

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

8.3.10 *Llancarfan Tennis Club*

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

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

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

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

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

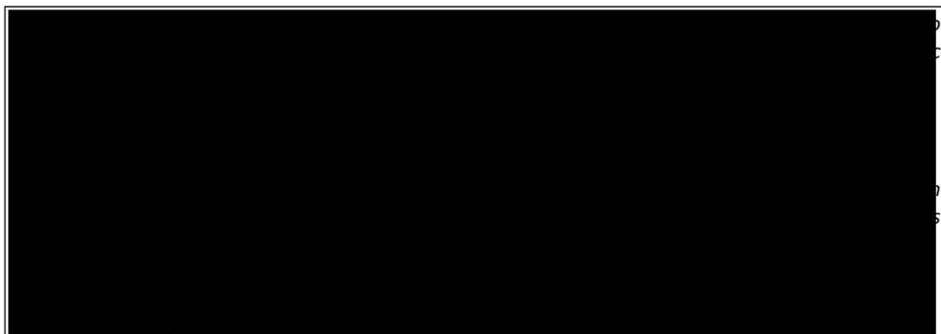
On behalf of the committee of Llancarfan Tennis Club, we urge the Vale of Glamorgan Council to reconsider its proposal. Please help us to keep our rural communities thriving so that everyone who wishes to benefit from the fantastic educational opportunities of rural schooling, and the local recreational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

Sincerely,

Dr Sarah Voisey-Smith – Chairman of Llancarfan Tennis Club

8.3.11 Llancafarn Community Cinema

Llancafarn Community Cinema and Llancafarn Primary School



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

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

The Community Cinema and Primary School are mutually supportive

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

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

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

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

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

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

About Llancarfan Community Cinema

www.llancarfancommunitycinema.co.uk

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

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



8.3.12 Helen Wilson - Prospective Llancarfan Primary parent

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Thank you for your time.

Helen (and Oscar)

8.3.13 [REDACTED] - *Prospective Llanccarfan Primary parent*

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

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

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

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

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

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

8.3.14 Laura Field - Prospective Llancarfan Primary parent

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

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

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

Best regards,

Mrs Laura E. David

8.3.15 Rachel Edwards - Prospective Llancarfan Primary parent

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

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

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

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

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

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

Rachel

8.3.16 Sara & Gareth Tickner - Prospective Llancafarn Primary parents

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

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

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

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

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

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

8.3.17 Frances & Matthew Valencia – Current Llanccarfaf Primary parents

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

8.4 Other Documents

8.4.1 Alternative pupil yield modelling

Alternative pupil yield modelling

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

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

Table 1: Dwellings under construction North West of railway line

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

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

Table 2: Alternative pupil yield models

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

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

8.4.2 Strategic Outline Programme

7.4 Project engagement

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

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

Governors and School Staff

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

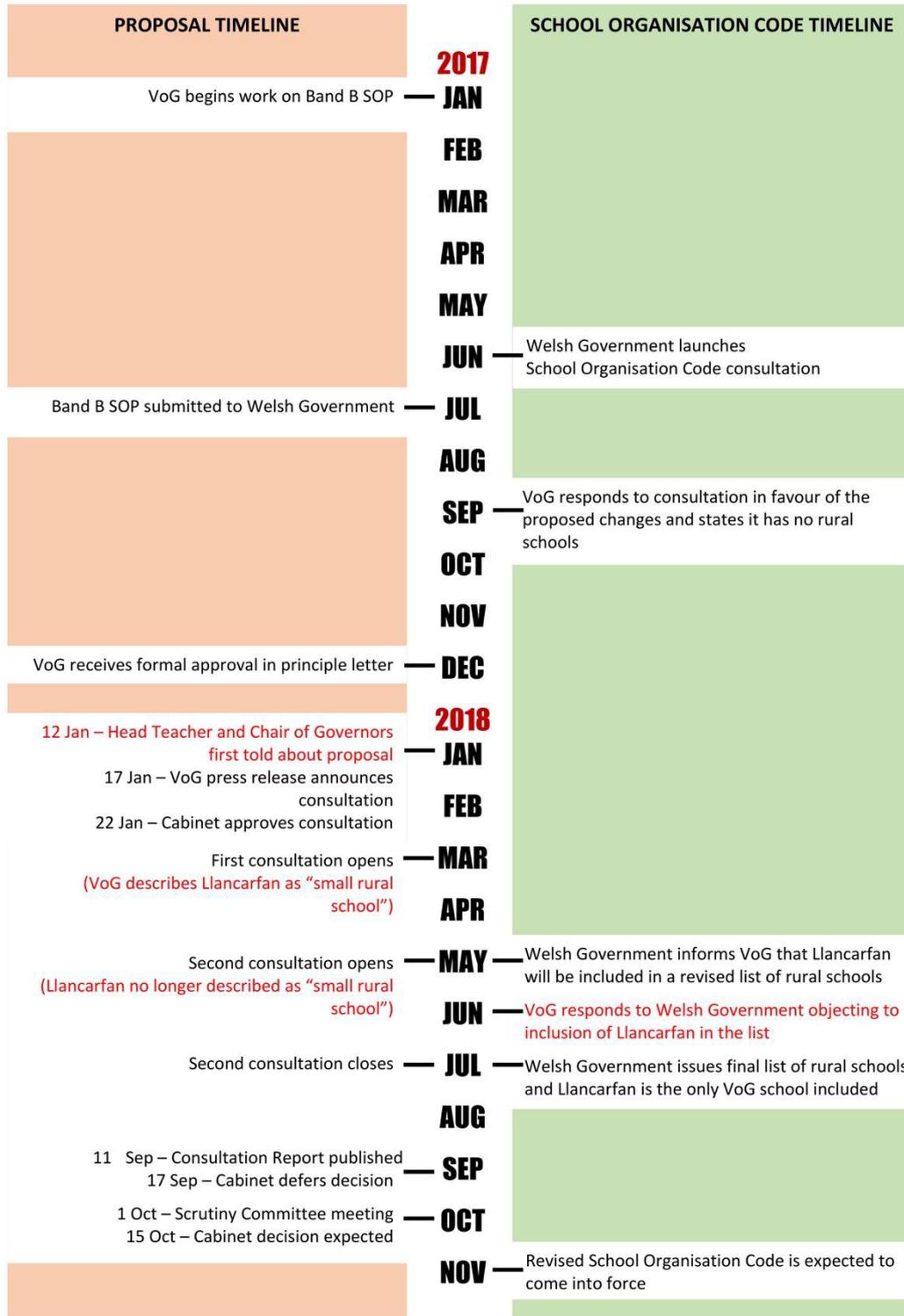
Pupil Consultation

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

Other Stakeholders

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

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



8.4.4 Extension plans for Llancaf Primary School

NICK RENWICK ARCHITECT

RIBA 
CHARTERED
ARCHITECT

26 Sept 2018

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

Dear Sirs,

CLOSURE OF EXISTING SCHOOL BUILDINGS

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

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

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

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

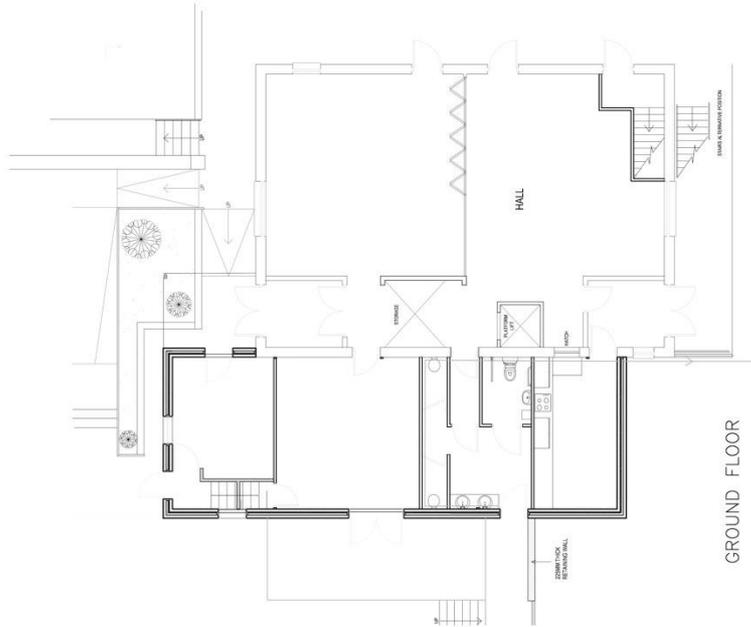
Yours sincerely



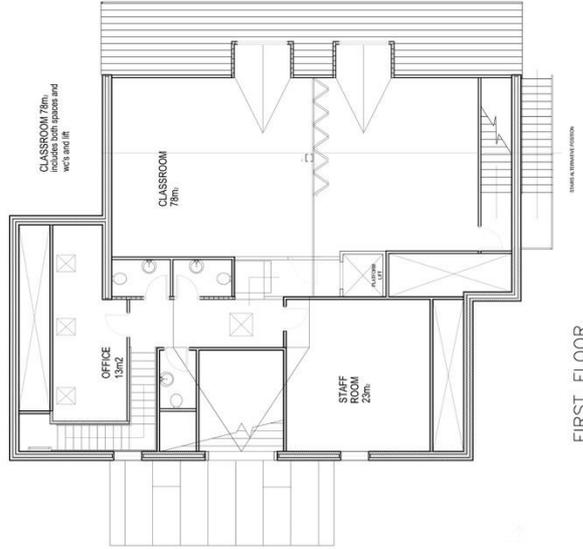
A N Renwick.

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GROUND FLOOR



FIRST FLOOR

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

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

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

8.4.5 Forest School Wales Practitioners Map

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

