

Meeting of:	Start Well Scrutiny Committee
Date of Meeting:	Monday, 06 July 2026
Relevant Scrutiny Committee:	Start Well Scrutiny Committee
Urgent Decision Procedure Used (If yes, why)	N/A
Item Type	Part I
Report Title:	Update on St Athan Primary School
Portfolio Holder:	Cabinet Member for Education, Arts and the Welsh Language
Strategic Leadership Team:	Director of Learning and Skills
Lead Officer:	Lisa Lewis, Operational Manager Strategy & Resources

1.0 What is this report about?

- 1.1 To update Members on the school's recovery following fire damage to the site.

2.0 What are the Recommendations?

	Recommendations – What and How?	Reason for Recommendation – Why?
2.1	Members consider the actions taken in response to the incident at St Athan Primary School and acknowledge the efforts and commitment of all those involved, in ensuring that the difficult and challenging situation and aftermath was dealt with effectively and efficiently.	Members are aware of the actions taken by the school and the Local Authority to ensure continuity of learning and ongoing efforts to ensure a safe learning environment.

3.0 What is the background to this report?

- 3.1 On 12 February 2025, a fire broke out at St Athan Primary School during the school day on the roof above the ICT suite.

- 3.2 All Health & Safety procedures were in place and followed.
- 3.3 School based staff, under the leadership of the Acting Headteacher, were admirable in their response, evacuating all staff and pupils swiftly. There were no injuries.
- 3.4 South Wales Fire and Rescue Service (SWFRS) responded to the site immediately and contained the fire to a single block.
- 3.5 LA and Community response was swift to ensure the school was provided with immediate support in the aftermath and longer term. The impact of the fire and its aftermath on the school staff has been significant and is outlined in the content of this report.
- 3.6 Loss adjusters were involved from an early stage and agreement for replacement resources and temporary classrooms in the short term was given until a permanent building could be completed. The permanent building is on schedule for completion by end of September 2026.
- 3.7 The permanent replacement will provide a building of the same specification as the one destroyed by the fire, built to current building standards (funded by insurance) with an additional multi use area added for shared school and community use.
- 3.8 The community use element has been funded by Welsh Governments 2025/26 Community Focussed School Capital Grant. It includes a glazed link back to the existing building ([see appendix A](#)).
- 3.9 This report provides an update on the recovery and future planning activities that have been undertaken by School and Local Authority (LA) staff over the last 16 months

4.0 What issues are there to be considered?

Immediate Response and Strengths

- 4.1 Health & Safety Response
- All pupils and staff were safely evacuated following established procedures.
 - Regular drills ensured evacuation was completed efficiently and safely.
 - Emergency processes, including use of fire exits, were successfully implemented.
- 4.2 Multi-Agency Support
- Strong and effective response from Emergency Services.
 - Positive collaboration with LA, including:
 - Direct link to senior officer support (OM for Strategy & Resources)
 - Property Services
 - Educational Psychologists
 - School Improvement Officers
 - HR/ Occupational Health Services
 - Rapid organisation of a critical incident meeting.
 - LA facilitated swift access to services such as security, confidential waste handling, storage and communications.
- 4.3 Community Engagement
- Strong community response including donations and support.
 - Additional support for vulnerable families.

4.4 Continuity of Learning

- Swift transition to a hybrid learning model.
- Reopened to pupils quickly (after February half term 2025), following temporary online learning provision.
- Engagement opportunities maintained (e.g. contractor-led STEM activities on proposed new build).

Key Impacts

4.5 Educational and Operational Impact

- Loss of teaching space and need to recreate classrooms on two occasions to respond to organisational challenges.
- Temporary classrooms introduced with ongoing logistical challenges.
- Reduced learning environment quality due to disruption and construction activity.
- Continuous contractor presence impacting daily operations.

4.6 Staff and Pupil Wellbeing

- Professional services deployed due to trauma experienced by some pupils and staff.
- Loss of personal and school resources was experienced due to destruction of equipment and spaces.
- Additional time was required to support wellbeing and recovery.

4.7 Resource and Infrastructure Loss

- Major loss of equipment and facilities (e.g. classrooms, ICT equipment, stage, sound system, projector, community-use furniture).
- Ongoing need to replace furniture, learning materials, and essential equipment.
- Lack of access to utilities immediately following the incident (electricity, heating, internet).

4.8 Administrative Burden

- Significant time required to develop and maintain a detailed inventory of losses.
- Ongoing demands from loss adjusters, including:
 - Submission of invoices
 - Detailed room-by-room asset tracking
- Increased workload on Headteacher and Business Manager.

4.9 Staffing Pressures

- Staff required to:
 - Order and manage replacement resources
 - Adapt to new teaching environments
- Additional cover required to release staff for administrative and recovery tasks.

- Caretaker required to work additional hours (including weekends).

4.10 Site and Infrastructure Issues

- Live construction site on school grounds during introduction of temporary classrooms and more recently during construction of new permanent building.
- Ongoing issues with temporary and adapted buildings (e.g. flooring, fire doors).
- Storage limitations and space constraints.
- Parking challenges, exacerbated by community use and reduced capacity

5.0 **How evidence has been used to inform the report, including the views of others?**

5.1 The Headteacher and governing body have been consulted on the content of this report. LA officers from a number of teams have also provided relevant information.

6.0 **Next Steps**

6.1 New Build Programme

- Development of a replacement building is underway, scheduled for completion in September 2026. There is a requirement to:
 - Resource and equip new classrooms
 - Integrate into school operations
 - Opportunities for curriculum engagement (e.g. STEM learning linked to build).

6.1 Policy and Process Development

- Continued review and development of:
 - Health & safety procedures
 - Fire evacuation protocols
 - Site management practices

6.2 Operational Priorities

- Secure financial reimbursement from loss adjustors and stabilise budget.
- Support staff and pupils continued emotional recovery.
- Ensure continuity and quality of teaching and learning.
- Manage transition from temporary to permanent facilities.

7.0 **How does this report support the Vale 2030 and Reshaping?**

7.1 This report contributes to the delivery of the Council's Corporate Plan, Vale 2030, and its vision of *Strong Communities with a Bright Future*, by supporting the following well-being objectives:

7.2 Giving everyone a good start in life

The actions taken to maintain continuity of learning following the fire, including the use of temporary accommodation and blended learning approaches, have ensured that pupils continue to access education and are supported to achieve their full potential.

7.3 Supporting and protecting those who need us

The effective emergency response and ongoing support for pupils and staff, including access to wellbeing and professional services, demonstrates the Council's commitment to safeguarding and supporting those affected by the incident.

7.4 Creating great places to live, work and visit

The development of a replacement school building, including community-use facilities, contributes to improving local infrastructure and providing high-quality learning and community spaces.

7.5 Respecting and celebrating the environment

The construction of a new building to modern standards provides opportunities to enhance the sustainability and efficiency of the school estate.

7.6 Being the best Council we can be

The coordinated response across Council services, alongside strong partnership working with the school, emergency services and the community, demonstrates effective and responsive service delivery.

7.7 This report also supports the Council's Reshaping Services Programme by demonstrating a resilient and adaptable approach to service delivery, including:

- Maintaining continuity of education during significant disruption
- Making effective use of resources, including insurance and external funding
- Implementing flexible and innovative delivery models
- Supporting workforce resilience and wellbeing
- Investing in sustainable, fit-for-purpose assets

8.0 How does this support the Five Ways of Working?

8.1 The Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 ("the 2015 Act") requires the Council to think about the long-term impact of their decisions, to work better with people, communities, and each other and to prevent persistent problems such as poverty, health inequalities and climate change.

8.2 The school and Council worked swiftly to ensure the site was brought back into full use as soon as possible.

8.3 The school has remained committed to prioritising the needs of its learners and their wellbeing throughout this challenging period, and has the full support of the Local Authority, and its available resources.

Resources

9.0 Finance

9.1 It is anticipated that the majority of replacement resources and building costs will be covered via insurance. To ensure the school is not financially adversely affected, all expenditure will be initially met centrally and reimbursed via insurance claims.

9.2 The community use element of the new permanent building has been funded by the 2025/26 Community Focussed School Welsh Government Capital Grant.

- 9.3 The School is awaiting final settlement of residual costs from the loss adjuster.
- 9.4 Overall figures on the costs associated with the damage are not yet available and will be subject to the loss adjusters final report.

10.0 Workforce

- 10.1 Wellbeing support from our Occupational Health Service and Educational Psychology team have been available since the incident occurred.
- 10.2 There are no other employment implications associated with this update report.

11.0 Legal and Equalities

- 11.1 **Does an Equalities Impact Assessment need to be completed? If not, why?** An Equalities Impact Assessment has not been completed as the response to the serious incident was developed and reviewed with full consideration of the needs of all pupils, irrespective of their protected characteristics. The actions taken were proportionate, inclusive, and applied consistently, ensuring that no individual or group was disadvantaged or treated less favourably.
- 11.2 The Council continues to liaise with the Authority's insurers to progress with the loss adjustment process. This is a lengthy process and has presented some challenges for the schools budget and senior staff workload.

12.0 Key Contacts

- 12.1 **Who are the primary officers to contact with any comments and/or queries on the report?**

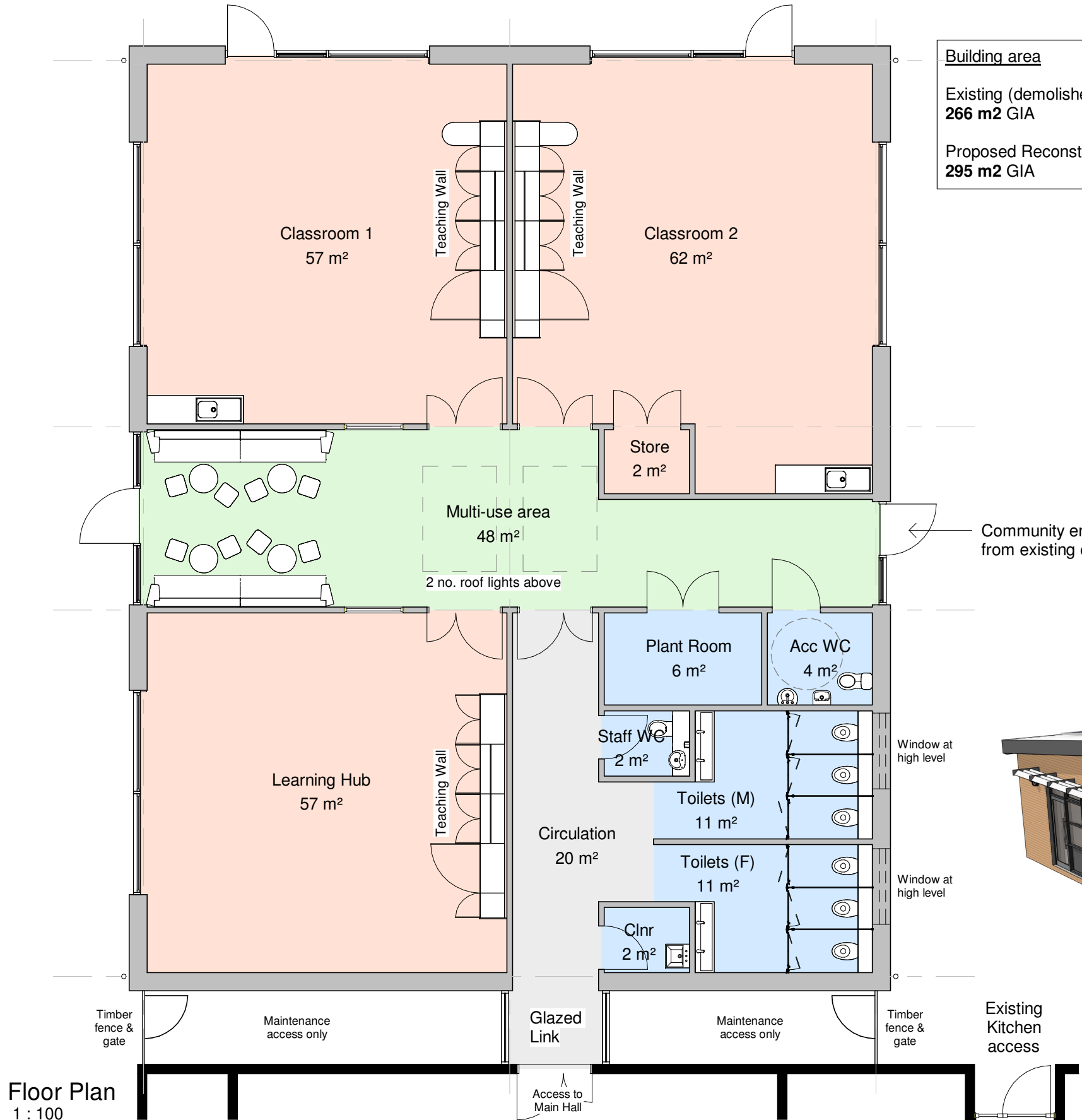
Lead Officer: Lisa Lewis Operational manager, Strategy & Resources. Llewis@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk	Democratic Services Officer
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Appendix

[Appendix A](#) – Floor plan for replacement permanent building.

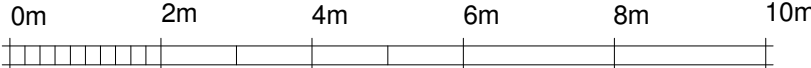
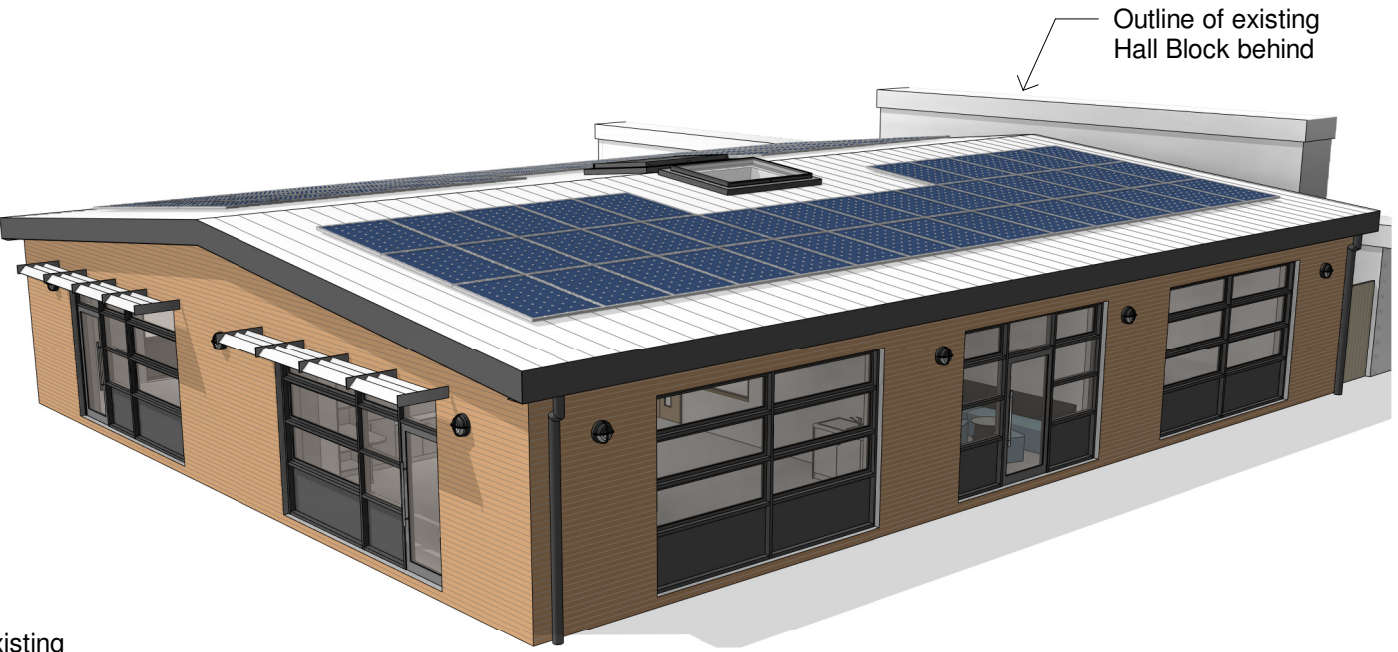
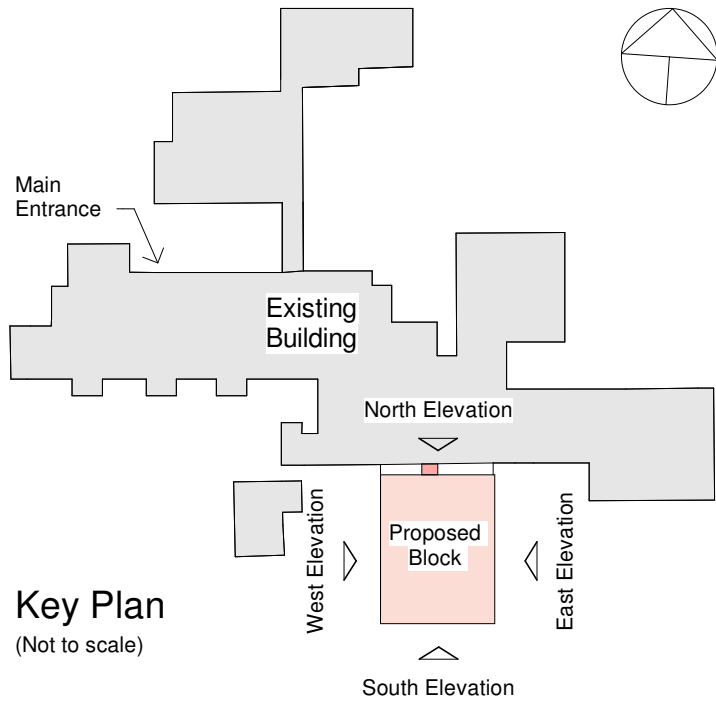
Background Documents

[Scrutiny report – Update on St Athan Primary School 3 March 2025](#)



Building area
Existing (demolished):
266 m2 GIA

Proposed Reconstruction:
295 m2 GIA



Floor Plan
1 : 100

Do not scale this drawing except for Planning Application purposes only/ Peidiwch â graddfa llun hwn ac eithrio ar gyfer dibenion Cais Cynllunio yn unig.

Any inaccuracies must be reported to the Contract Administrator/ Rhaid i unrhyw anghywirdeb rhoi gwybod i'r Gweinyddwr y Contract..

Rev	Date	Issued by	Revision
A	12.11.25	HD	High level window positions serving the Toilets indicted on plan



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Cyngor Bro Morgannwg,
Yr Adran Eiddo,
Swyddfeydd Dinesig,
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Property name/ Enw'r eiddo
St Athan Classroom Block Reconstruction

Drawing/ Dyluniad
Proposed Plan

Drawn Llyniwyd	Checked Gwiriwyd	Date Dyddiad Sept 25
Scale Graddfa As indicated	Sheet/ Taflen A3	Status/ Statws For Planning
Drawing number/ Rhif y lluniad PCW Job No. Origin Volume Level Type Discip Number 25030 - VOG - XX - 00 -DR - A - PL07		
Rev A		