

**CONSULTATION REPORT**

**Responses from formal consultation on the proposal to close Dyffryn School and Groes Primary School and open a new all-through (3-16) school**

**Introduction**

The Council has consulted with interested parties on its proposal to change the provision of education for children in the areas served by Dyffryn School and Groes Primary School. If implemented, this proposal will take effect on 1st September 2018.

The consultation period ran from 31<sup>st</sup> October 2016 until 11<sup>th</sup> December 2016. A list of consultees is included at Appendix 2. The consultation document was e-mailed to all consultees and was also available on the Council's website.

**Legislative Process**

The consultation document invited views and opinions to be submitted in respect of the proposal. Under the Welsh Government Statutory Code for School Organisation the Council is required to publish a consultation report summarising any issues raised by consultees, the Council's response to those issues and Estyn's view of the overall merit of the proposal.

If approved, the next stage of the process is to publish a statutory notice outlining the proposal. This would need to be published for a period of 28 days and formal written objections would be invited during this time.

If objections are received, an objection report will be published summarising the objections and the Council's response to those objections. The Council's Cabinet will need to consider the proposal in light of objections received when making its decision on whether the proposal is to be implemented.

**Consultation meetings**

During the consultation period, the following consultation meetings were held:

School Staff : 8<sup>th</sup> November 2016 , 3.45p.m. at Groes Primary School  
*Joint meeting for school staff of Dyffryn School and Groes Primary School.*

Governors: 8<sup>th</sup> November 2016 , 5.00p.m. at Groes Primary School

*Joint meeting for governors of Dyffryn School and Groes Primary School.*

Parents/carers: 15<sup>th</sup> November 2016, 6.00p.m. at Dyffryn Upper School  
*Meeting for the parents/carers of Dyffryn School and partner Primary schools.*

Parents/carers: 16<sup>th</sup> November 2016, 3.45p.m. at Groes Primary School  
*Meeting for the parents/carers of Groes Primary School*

Pupils (Dyffryn): 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2016

Pupils (Groes): 28<sup>th</sup> November 2016

## **Consultation Responses**

Only two written responses had been received on or before the closing date for returns for the formal consultation on this proposal, the responses came from Estyn and the pupils of Groes Primary school.

Consultation notes from the consultation meetings, including officer responses, are shown below.

For information purposes, the responses from the pre-planning application consultation are shown below under Appendix 1. Although this is a separate consultation process, some of the issues raised have an education relevance which, together with the officer responses, add to the information for consideration.

### **Estyn response to the proposal:**

#### **Summary/ Conclusion**

It is Estyn's opinion that the proposal is likely to at least maintain the current standards of education and provision in the area. The proposal is unlikely to have a negative impact on any other schools or education provider in the area.

#### **Description and benefits**

The proposer has provided a clear rationale for the proposal. It is to remove buildings that are in poor condition, amalgamate Groes primary school and Dyffryn school into a 3-16 school. Dyffryn upper school and Groes primary school are on the same site. It will also remove a split-site arrangement, bringing Dyffryn (upper) School and Dyffryn (lower) School on to one site. The proposer also makes suitable links of this proposal to Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council's Strategic School Improvement Programme (SSIP).

The proposer clearly outlines the expected benefits of the proposal. These appear to be reasonable and focus mainly on the opportunities provided by a new build school as well as the benefits of amalgamating two schools into one. In addition they include the benefits of sharing resources and improving transition between key stages.

The proposer has identified several risks associated with the proposal. These appear to be reasonable; however the planned actions to mitigate against these risks are not detailed enough.

The proposer has suitably considered the impact of the proposal on learner travel arrangements. As it is the same site for Dyffryn upper and Groes primary, the

proposer reasonably concludes that the travel distance remains within 2 miles for homes in the catchment area. In addition, pupils in Dyffryn lower school who currently transfer to the upper school in year 9 will have to do so earlier and the proposer explains that home to school travel will be made available in line with the council's 'Home to School Transport policy'.

The proposer has effectively shown how surplus places will be affected by providing tables of school capacities and projected increase. These show a reduction in surplus places.

### **Educational aspects of the proposal**

The proposer has appropriately considered the impact of the proposals on the quality of the outcomes, provision and leadership and management, in both of the schools. It would have been useful to include information about the categorisation of the schools by the regional school improvement consortium and its view on the quality of leadership and management at the school.

The proposer has suitably considered the outcomes of the most recent Estyn inspection reports and commented sufficiently on these areas. However, the provider does not mention that Groes primary school was placed in the Estyn follow-up category of local authority monitoring. The proposer has considered the outcomes up to 2015, but has not included outcomes for 2016 for any of the indicators across the two schools. These show that at Foundation Phase, Groes primary school is in the bottom quartile for all areas of learning for 2016. At key stage 2, there has been a decline in benchmarked performance in all key indicators. For Dyffryn school, benchmarked performance in 2016 at key stage 3 is poor, however at key stage 4 it is in the top quartile for all key indicators. The proposer reasonably states that a new build school would provide the opportunity to deliver a stimulating teaching and learning environment in state of the art, 21st Century facilities that will impact positively on the self-esteem and well-being of pupils and will aim to improve the learning outcomes for all children across the ability range. The proposer has listed many examples of benefits that a new 3-16 school would provide. These seem to be valid and include having adaptable ICT facilities, more efficient sharing of information and greater flexibility of curriculum design.

The proposer appropriately states that an all through school would ensure that key information about pupils is passed on to the relevant person at the appropriate time which is important for all pupils but particularly so for vulnerable groups. In addition, the proposer states that children with additional learning needs and other vulnerable groups of pupils could benefit from the extended care and support made possible through one whole school management team, and better provision

could be delivered for pupils. This seems reasonable. In addition, the proposer has undertaken a relevant equality impact assessment of the proposal.

The proposer has not provided any specific details as to how any disruption to learners could be minimised but intends to take specific actions as the needs of learners become clearer. It would have been useful if the proposer had anticipated some potential areas of disruption and listed how they would be addressed.

### **NPTCBC response to Estyn's comment:**

A full risk assessment has been completed and was included as Appendix B in the Cabinet report of 26<sup>th</sup> October 2016 and as an electronic link in the consultation document. The identified overall risks have been classed as mainly low or medium and actions have been identified to mitigate against them in every case. Most of these are shown in the list of disbenefits in not implementing the proposal. However there are a number of perceived risks that will not be fully understood until the proposal has further progressed, and some risks may not yet have been predicted. Detailed planning therefore at this stage is difficult and may prove to be unnecessary, and it is expected that more specific actions will be planned and actioned as other risks associated with the proposal become clearer.

At the time of writing the consultation document, categorisation information was being updated and as it was likely that the support categories of one or both of the schools was expected to change it was felt important not to cause confusion through presenting information that would be out of date during the consultation period. Both schools are now provisionally placed in the yellow support category, although this has yet to be quality assured and verified by ERW.

Details of the most recent Estyn inspections for both schools have been included in the document along with a link to the website to view the full report. Groes Primary is in the category of local authority monitoring and this was not included in the document. From September 2016 no providers will be placed in this category of local authority monitoring as this category will cease to exist.

At the time of writing the consultation document, the 2016 core data had not been released for both schools and as such it was felt to be more equitable to use data up to 2015.

Potential areas of disruption have been identified in the risk assessment and actions described to mitigate these. At this point in the process it is not clear what other disruption may be faced. However, this Council is intent on minimizing disruption and through regular communication with the schools involved will ensure that prompt action is taken in every instance, appropriate to the situation.

In addition, the issues identified as potential risk areas, including learner disruption, have been addressed in consultation meetings held with pupils, parents, staff and governors the outcome of which is set out in this report.

### **Summary of issues raised during the consultation meetings:**

#### **School Staff - Issues raised:**

- What are the time frames for the process?
- What will happen to TLR holders?

#### **NPTCBC's Response:**

- Prior to the proposed new school opening a temporary governing body will be put in place, and it will be for the temporary governing body to appoint a head teacher. It is Council Policy that the posts of head teacher and deputy head teacher will need to be advertised nationally. Once appointed the head teacher working with the temporary governing body will set a staffing structure for the school.  
Both Groes Primary and Dyffryn School will close on the 31st August 2018 and all school staff will cease to be employed by the two schools on that date. The new school will open on 1st September 2018 so for those staff who gain employment at the primary school there will be no break in service.
- Once the staffing structure is published staff will be able to see which posts apply to them, including posts with a TLR. If there is more than one person applying for a position then there could be selection interviews or skills audits applied. If staff as a result of the change lose out then there is the prospect of pay protection but this would be looked at on an individual basis. Pay protection is currently 3 years for teachers and 1 year for support staff. If the proposal goes ahead the staffing for the new school is likely to be completed by December 2018

#### **Governors - Issues raised:**

- When will the temporary Governing Body be formed?
- What is its composition?
- When will the Head teacher be appointed?

#### **NPTCBC's Response:**

- It is expected, if the proposal is approved, that the temporary Governing Body will be formed in the spring term 2017
- It will be composed of LA representatives, members of the community, staff (teaching and non-teaching) and parents, from across both schools. It is usually the case that Governors who sit on the current schools Governing Bodies have an interest in being on the temporary Governing Body to help shape and develop the proposal and the new school going forward.

- It is expected that the head teacher appointment will be made by the end of April 2017, and the person appointed will take up post in September, a year before the school opens.

### **Dyffryn Parents/Carers - Issues raised:**

- Car parking
- Location of school on site
- Other options
- Lunch time arrangements
- Sports facilities
- Uniform and school name

### **NPTCBC's Response:**

- The proposed site is constricted due to its size, the variations in ground levels and its location within a built up residential area. The current plans have been drawn up with all these factors in mind and aim to improve the situation for all users of the school and the neighbouring residents. The proposed layout provides staff car parking, parents drop off, bus bays and includes spaces for disabled users and visitors to the school, all within the boundaries of the school grounds, with the aim of reducing the need for parking around the neighbouring streets.
- The area on the site where the new build could be positioned is limited by the constraints noted above. The proposed location, in the middle of the site, is deemed to be the most suitable as it ensures that the current schools can continue to operate until the new school is finished, when demolition of the buildings will take place and the car parking areas and outdoor sports facilities will be finished. The orientation of the building is also intended to have minimum least impact on nearby households.
- Other locations were considered including sites in Groeswen and at the lower school at Talcennau Road but neither were suitable for siting the new school due to size of site and/or planning and access constraints.
- The proposed new build will contain suitable kitchen and dining areas to cater for both secondary and primary phase children, although not all children will be accessing the facilities at the same time. The arrangements for managing pupils at lunchtimes will be for the leadership team of the new school to decide when appointed.
- The proposed new school will have appropriate sports facilities as part of the build, including a 3G pitch, sports hall, grass pitch and multi-use games areas. Some of these facilities will need to be completed after the school has opened, when the current buildings have been demolished to free up space.

- It is very likely that the new school will need a new name and new uniform. Decisions on these will be made when the temporary Governing Body is in place and a head teacher has been appointed. It is expected that the views of all stakeholders, especially pupil views, will be sought before any decisions are made.

### **Groes Parents/Carers - Issues raised:**

- Where will primary children be situated in the new build?
- Where will pupils play? Eat lunch?
- Will staff from the existing schools transfer with the children?
- Will staff move between phases?
- Will pupils be involved in the build process?
- How will disruption to pupils be avoided, especially for those in years 6 and 11?
- What are the transition arrangements – moving from the old schools to the new school?
- Will children be supported – some may be anxious about moving to a bigger school, and from primary to secondary? Some children already anxious about the idea of Groes closing and having to move schools.
- What size will the classes be, pupil numbers? Classroom size? Will there be mixed age classes?
- Will start times be staggered through the school?
- Will the school retain its ‘family/community’ feel when it becomes much larger?

### **NPTCBC’s Response:**

Parents were shown latest designs for the school and discussions took place on how it is envisaged the school will operate.

Many positive comments were made regarding the proposal and the plans including:

- Plans for parents drop off should ease congestion on Bertha Road
- Primary phase layout looks appropriate, good design; plans for play areas look suitable and good to know pupils can access other outdoor areas as needed
- Toilet facilities and layout is an improvement on current facilities for younger children –pupils able to access from outdoors should make it easier
- Reassuring to have separate facilities for primary/secondary but also good to know children can access secondary areas if appropriate
- Should improve Y6-Y7 transition, especially as secondary phase staff will be known to younger children from early stages; all through will help anxious children feel more confident about the move to KS3
- Good opportunity for Groes pupils to benefit by having a new school



Additionally officers gave the following information –

- Dining facilities are flexible – It is not envisaged that older and younger children will eat at the same time or in the same place, the planned facilities are sufficient to allow for separate dining areas. Primary children are able to have lunch in the primary hall, however depending on school timetabling there could be the opportunity for children to use the secondary dining area while older pupils are still in lessons. It may be deemed appropriate to use a combination of both areas, for example upper key stage 2 pupils using secondary facilities and younger pupils using primary hall, while still maintaining primary/secondary segregation. Final decisions on dining arrangements will be made by the new school's leadership team nearer the time of opening.
- Playground facilities are also separate with primary phase areas designed to meet the needs of younger pupils. However there are areas of the school which can be used comfortably by all ages of pupils at various different times, such as the multi-use games areas (MUGAs), or the various pitches. Primary pupils will also have access to the sports hall and other indoor facilities when appropriate, as decided by the school leadership team.
- Class sizes are set by the leadership team of the school following statutory and recommended guidelines set out by the Welsh Government. These stipulate that classes should not be set above 30. Staffing ratios are also recommended by Welsh Government, with greater numbers of adults needed in the younger classes. The budget the school receives will ensure that the school is adequately staffed but the ultimate decision on staffing lies with the temporary Governing Body and senior staff, including which staff will be working across each phase.
- The proposed admission number of the school would allow for classes of maximum 30 pupils in each year group; however it depends on the numbers of children who actually attend on whether classes are set up as mixed or single age. This will be determined by the temporary Governors and leadership team of the school nearer the time of opening when pupil numbers can be more accurately predicted.
- Classroom sizes are in line with building bulletin requirements and are as large as or larger than those currently in use at Groes Primary.
- The contractors engaged to build the new school at Margam have previously been employed for other new school builds in Neath Port Talbot and have a very good reputation for involving pupils in the construction process. Additionally Groes Primary pupils will be able to see the build as it progresses on a daily basis due to its location, and should benefit from the unique opportunity to experience the whole process from start to finish.
- Transition will be well planned before the new school opens in an effort to ensure children are not unduly anxious or upset about the move to an

unfamiliar building. Pupils will be encouraged to be involved in the decision making processes associated with setting up the new school and through visits, photographs and videos will become familiar with the design and layout well before they actually attend.

- The Council are very mindful of avoiding any disruption to pupils, at all stages of their education. Work on site will be properly managed to ensure the day to day running of both schools will not be adversely affected, and the actual moving of resources, furniture etc. from old to new school will take place at the end of the summer term 2018. This will ensure that pupils are able to attend in September with no interruption to their learning.
- Currently start and finish times are different at Groes and Dyffryn School and it is likely that a similar system will operate when they become one school to help manage the large numbers of pupils and parents accessing the school at the same time. This is a decision that ultimately will rest with the leadership team of the new school.
- Creating a larger school community does not necessarily mean that the 'family' feel of the two schools will no longer exist, although it may need to be planned for more carefully. It is possible to create 'little schools' or communities within the larger school structure, either through year/phase groups, where activities and events are planned for children and parents of those particular classes, or through systems such as House Groups, where children and classes are sub divided into separate sections within every class for events usually of a competitive nature such as sports day or eisteddfods. Another example which has been used successfully elsewhere are 'Buddy' systems where specific groups are set up, such as a Year 7 class pairing with a Y3 class for an agreed purpose, for example shared/paired reading experiences or joint art or music activities.
- Good relationships that have been formed between the school, parents and the community should not be lost if the majority of staff from both schools transfer to the new school as anticipated, as this would mean the wealth of experience and local knowledge which currently exists will be retained and developed for the future.

### **Pupils - Dyffryn School pupil representatives from Years 7, 8 and 9**

Points raised and responses given:

- **What sports/games provision will be available? Are the changing rooms big enough? Will the 3G pitch be ready in September 2018? Will there be windows for people to look into the gym?**

*Pupils were shown the site plans outlining the grass pitch, multi-use games area x3, full size 3G pitch, sports hall, Gymnasium and Fitness Suite. Not all outdoor facilities, including the 3G pitch, will be finished as some are planned*

*to be completed after the demolition of the current buildings, however other arrangements will be made for outdoor games.*

*The changing rooms are sufficient for four teams to use at the same time; there are two sets of changing rooms for boys and for girls, with access directly outdoors and with appropriate facilities.*

*The sports hall and gymnasium are the full height of the building and may have some windows in them at the higher levels. However this detail isn't clear on the plans and may not have been decided at this stage.*

- **What will the environment outside the school be like – will there be trees planted? Is there enough space for the buses? Where will parents park?**

*It is planned to plant trees around the site and to ensure that pupils have a mixture of play areas including grass, tarmac/hard standing, shrubs and other plants.*

*Plans showing the proposed parking and bus bays were shown to pupils. The bus bays and parents drop off spaces have been planned in detail after speaking to people who know the area and the school well and we think it is an improvement on what is currently provided. The buses will have enough space to drive in safely, park and then drive out again without having to reverse and are away from the cars.*

- **Will the music rooms have storage space for pupils to leave instruments during the day to save carrying them around the school?**

*The music rooms are large and storage has been built in to them, as well as having ensemble and practice rooms and other storage areas close by. There should be adequate space available for storing instruments.*

- **Is the dining area large enough for all the pupils? How will pupils be served? Have you thought about queues? Where will the younger children eat?**

*Pupils were shown the ground floor plan and the position of the canteen and kitchen facilities. Many people have been consulted including kitchen staff at both schools and the local authority catering manager, and it is agreed that the large space is fit for purpose. The area has been designed to minimise queues as much as possible through having a number of serving points for pupils, as well as using a cashless system similar to the one currently operating in Dyffryn which aims to speed up the lunchtime process and make it easier. The younger children are able to have lunch in the designated primary phase hall, although there is opportunity for them to use a part of the larger dining area if appropriate, probably before the older children use it later in the day.*

- **Will the primary and secondary pupils be taught together? Will the younger children be allowed in the secondary part of the school?**

*Younger pupils will be taught together in the primary phase part of the building, usually by one teacher in the same classroom, as they do now in Groes Primary. Older children will probably have a variety of teachers and will use different classrooms for each subject area around the school, as they already do in Dyffryn School. Younger and older children will not usually be together, however there is the opportunity for younger children to use the specialist rooms available and for older children to spend time in the primary phase, giving them the opportunity to develop skills through activities such as sports coaching or assisting with younger children.*

- **Does the idea of making the move from Y6 to Y7 easier for pupils mean that standards will drop – will Y6 and Y7 be doing the same work, making it easier for Y7?**

*It is not expected that the curriculum or the lessons taught will change for Y7 pupils and the work should not be any easier or be the same as lessons taught in Year 6. But it should be easier for pupils moving into Year 7 because they will be part of one big school – they will know teachers from the secondary part of the school, they will know the school building and they will understand school rules making it much easier for them to settle into their learning more quickly.*

- **Will the older pupils still have timetables? Will primary pupils have a timetable?**

*It's not expected that there will be any change to the way lessons are organised across the two phases but ultimately it will be the decision of the head teacher and Governing Body of the new school to manage the way the school operates.*

- **Will the school have wifi? What will the IT resources be like – will we have surface pros or ipads?**

*When the school is being built it will be a priority to make sure aspects of IT such as wifi are thought about carefully and included from the start. It is also important to make sure that all the classrooms have flexibility so that lessons can be taught using a range of IT resources appropriate to the requirements of the pupils in that room. A number of specialist computer rooms have also been included in the plans. The type of device used throughout the school will be determined by the head teacher and Governing Body, but is expected that there will be a range of different types of resources available.*

- **Will the school need more staff if there are going to be more children attending? Will teachers teach in both parts of the school?**

*It is very likely that the school will need to appoint more staff if the expected numbers of pupils wish to attend the school when it opens in 2018. Teachers*

*can be asked to teach in a different phase to the one they are used to but it is likely that in the early days teachers will stay in the phase where they are most experienced while they get used to the new school. A change of teachers across Year 6 and 7 might help children settle into a new curriculum more easily and might not be so difficult for teachers, and it is very likely that teachers will take some lessons in both parts of the schools sometimes, such as secondary PE teachers teaching PE to older primary children. Senior teacher may take assemblies in both parts of the school so that children can get to know them better.*

- **As the school is on three floors will there lifts? How will pupils get in and out of the building?**

*There will be lifts to ensure that pupils with disabilities can access all floors of the building. The plan shows where the lifts are on each floor, as well as the location of stairs. Most of the ground floor classrooms have access to the playground. The main entrance is at the front of the school and there are a number of other entrances for pupils to enter and exit the school during the day.*

- **Will there be a new name for the school? Will there be a new uniform? Who decides what these will be?**

*The proposal is to create a new school, so it would seem the best idea to have a new name and uniform. The decision on what these should be however will not be made until the new head teacher is appointed and has had chance to speak to pupils from both schools, their parents, staff and Governors about what they think would be the best idea. When this has been done the Governors will ask the Council to approve the new school name.*

- **How can we contact you if we have more questions or comments?**

*Pupils were asked to note the contact details in the consultation document or to contact the SSIP team directly by email [ssip@npt.gov.uk](mailto:ssip@npt.gov.uk)*

### **Pupils – Groes Primary School (School Council Years 2-6)**

Points raised and responses given:

- **What is the playground going to be like? Will older and younger children play together?**

*Pupils were shown the site plans showing the planned layout of the play areas and outdoor sports facilities. It was explained that not all outdoor facilities, including the 3G pitch, will be finished as some are planned to be completed after the demolition of the current buildings, but that the outdoor provision for the younger pupils will be ready when the school opens.*

*It is not expected that younger and older children will share the same outdoor space or play together, but there will be opportunities for younger children to use the sports facilities under supervision, and there may also be times when years 5 and 6 may share break times with younger secondary children in Y7 or 8 if this is felt to be appropriate. There is enough space however for all age groups/key stages to have their own designated areas at playtimes.*

- **What will the environment outside the school be like – will there be trees planted? Will the new build take space from Bertha Road? Will pupils be able to walk or cycle to school?**

*It is planned to plant trees, shrubs and other plants around the site and to ensure that pupils have a mixture of play areas including grass and tarmac/hard standing.*

*Plans showing the proposed parking and bus bays were shown to pupils. The bus bays and parents drop off spaces have been planned in detail after speaking to people who know the area and the school well and should improve what is currently provided. The build area does not take any space from Bertha Road, and in fact the plans show that the road will be widened slightly to allow drop off spaces outside the school as well as having parking and drop off spaces inside the school grounds.*

*Children who live near enough to the school will be encouraged to walk whenever possible and covered bicycle racks will be positioned in the school grounds for those who wish to cycle.*

- **Where will pupils be taught when Groes Primary is demolished?**

*The new school is planned to open in September 2018 and all the pupils from Dyffryn and Groes will move out of their previous school buildings and into the new building. Only then will the old buildings be demolished so pupils in both schools will not miss out on any lessons. It is expected that furniture and resources from the old schools will be moved after the schools finish in July 2018 so that everything is ready for pupils to start in September.*

- **What classrooms will younger children be able to use in the new school, besides the ones in the primary area? Will we be able to use the MUGA? Will we be able to use all floors?**

*The younger children will be able to use the MUGA under supervision, and many of the more specialist rooms could also be used by younger children if appropriate – such as art, music and science rooms. They could also use the sports hall and access other areas of the school, including rooms on the top floor, as necessary.*

- **How big will the classrooms be?**

*The classrooms will be standard size, and may be slightly larger than some of the classrooms in this school at the moment. Specialist classrooms for art or DT will be larger.*

- **Will pupils still be in smaller groups – such as form groups or year groups? Will primary aged pupils have a timetable like older children? Will we learn about more subjects?**

*It is very important that the school is organised into smaller groups otherwise it will seem very large and may cause some pupils to feel anxious. It is also easier for children to make friends if there are smaller groups such as form or class groups within the larger school community. Younger pupils will be taught together in the primary phase part of the building, usually by one teacher in the same classroom, as they are now in Groes Primary. Older children will probably have a variety of teachers and will use different classrooms for each subject area across the school, as they already do in Dyffryn School. It's not expected that there will be any change to the way lessons are organised across the two phases but ultimately it will be the decision of the head teacher and Governing Body of the new school to manage the way the school operates. There is also unlikely to be any change to the curriculum or the number of subjects pupils will learn about, although older primary phase pupils may have the opportunity to experience aspects of the older children's curriculum because they are in the same school and could have lessons with certain specialist subject teachers.*

- **Will we have the same teachers and head teacher?**

*It is likely that most of the teachers and staff who work in Groes Primary now will also want to work in the new school when it opens and so many of the teachers should be the same. The position of head teacher and deputy head teacher may be different as these positions will need to be advertised so other people from outside the school could apply for the post.*

- **Will there be a new name for the school? Will there be a new uniform?**

*As it is being proposed to close Groes and Dyffryn schools and create a new school, it would probably be a good idea to also have a new name and uniform. This decision however will be taken by the head teacher and Governing Body of the new school, and should be made after speaking to pupils, parent and school staff about what they think would be the best idea. When this has been done and if a new school name has been agreed, then the Governors will ask the Council to approve the new school name.*

- **Will there be a school council and which year groups will be included?**

*This will be the decision of the head teacher and Governing Body of the new school but it is very unlikely that there would not be a school council. As the*

*role of a school council is to make sure that pupils have a ‘voice’ and that the opinions and views of all pupils are represented it is probable that the council would be made up of pupils from most year groups in the school – primary and secondary.*

**Additional response from Groes Primary School pupils:**

	Yes	No
Do you think we should keep the schools as they are?		/
Should we build a school just for Groes pupils?		/
Should we build a school just for Dyffryn pupils?		/
Do you think we should open a new 3 -16 school for Groes and Dyffryn pupils?	/	

9/12/16 - All pupils from year 2 to 6 took part in a discussion about the proposals. They agreed to option 3 because they felt that it wouldn't be fair for one school to have a new building and the other school didn't. They agreed that Dyffryn needs a new school because the lower school is too far away. It was a unanimous decision!

Throughout reading the consultation there were many questions:-

- can we still have breakfast club? – yes
- will there be a new headteacher? – yes
- will we have the same teachers? – all the teachers that are in the school now will be offered to teach in the new school
- will the people in the kitchen be the same? – not sure but we believe so yes
- what will the classrooms look like? – they will be designed when the plans are agreed and you will have a say in how they look.
- Can we have bright colours? – I'm sure we can arrange that for you.
- Can we have areas in class to put sofas and bean bags? – yes if that is right for the learning in the class
- What happens in a fire? – you will practice getting out of the building quickly many times when it first opens. The fire department is checking to make sure the design has enough exits.
- Can we have lockers? – hopefully yes
- What happens if we don't have lockers? – not sure, you will probably have to carry your bags at all times or there will be cloakrooms
- Will the school start at the same time it does now? – not sure yet. That will be decided by the new headteacher
- will we be eating with the older children? – the plans were shown to the children about eating arrangements. They were keen on the idea that the older children could use the same area as the secondary pupils and they could access the grab and go food.



- What sort of technology will we have? – we are certain that the most up to date technology will be provided
- What rooms will we be using in the new school? – we can use as many rooms as we want. There will be timetables and the teachers will share rooms sometimes. Plans have already been made to ensure the younger children can use the cookery rooms, art room, PE facilities, and science labs.
- Can we have more clubs? – there are more teachers so yes there will be more opportunities for clubs out of school hours
- Will there be a new uniform? – yes, you will help to decide
- Will there be a new logo? – yes, you will be asked to think of designs
- What will the school be called? – we don't know yet, you will have a say in this
- What will the toilets be like? – the toilets are designed to be safe places. They will be very much based on the design of our KS2 toilets here.
- Can we have a swimming pool? – unfortunately there isn't enough money or enough room for this facility.
- Can we have a choice of menu? – not sure. Maybe you can ask the head teacher
- Are other schools coming there too, like central and cwmafan? – no this will be just for Groes but as we are all schools that are linked with Dyffryn I'm sure these schools will be using the facilities and spending time there too, just like they do now.
- Do we go in through the same door as the older children? – no you will all have your class entrances but there is a visitor entrance for all the parents and visitors. The children were then shown this on the plans.
- I'm afraid of getting lost in the school because its so big. Can you put arrows on the floor so we can find our way around? - That's a very good idea and we must make sure there are plenty of signs so we don't get lost. Well done
- Maybe we could have a map of the school when its built? – yes that's a good idea too
- Will the older children be using our toilets? – no they will have their own

**Comments received during Planning Application Consultation (PAC)**

1. I believe that the present one way road system in Bertha Road is in the wrong direction, at the moment the traffic flow is one way driving into the low winter sun in an easterly direction, this for a start should be reversed. The junction leading into Afan College and school from the A48 is inadequate and thought should be given in making an alternative route on the mountain side.

*SSIP Officer Response:*

Comment noted. *Suggest that this needs a technical response from Environment colleagues/architect/contractor's design team.*

2. I feel we need to look at the traffic management as there is already A MASSIVE PROBLEM as I have raised many times many times of the day we would not be able to get emergency services into the area .

*SSIP Officer Response:*

Comment noted. *Suggest that this needs a technical response from Environment colleagues/architect/contractor's design team.*

3. I am concerned about the recent cancer findings from the rubber particles in Astra turf. What is the Astra turf going to be made of here? The flood lights at the sports facility area are very bright already, and I would like to know how this will be managed?

*SSIP Officer Response:*

Comment noted. *Suggest that this needs a technical response from Environment colleagues/architect/contractor's design team.*

4. With my daughter that's in nursery now. Can you tell me where my daughter will be going to school whilst this is being done?

*SSIP Officer Response:*

Groes Primary School will remain operational until the new school opens in September 2018. At that point children on roll at Groes Primary will automatically transfer to the new school, subject to the wishes of parents. Prospective pupils (including nursery pupils

transferring to full-time education) will need to apply for a place at the 3-16 school, in line with the Council's admission policy.

The construction arrangements for the new school provide for the continued and uninterrupted operation of both Groes Primary and Dyffryn (upper) School. Once the new school build is complete and occupied, the existing buildings will be demolished. Pupils at both schools will be engaged in the new build process, maximising the teaching and learning opportunities that this presents.

5. During the construction period how will the current Groes School function?

*SSIP Officer Response:*

Groes Primary School will remain operational until the new school opens in September 2018. The construction arrangements for the new school provide for the continued and uninterrupted operation of both Groes Primary and Dyffryn (upper) School. Once the new school build is complete and occupied, the existing buildings will be demolished. Pupils at both schools will be engaged in the new build process, maximising the teaching and learning opportunities that this presents.

6. Although it would be more than welcome to be rid of the current eyesore and have a nice shiny new school, may I ask why is the school is built by a French firm? Is any British steel being used? I mean it's right there, practically next door, delivery would be like a fiver.

*SSIP Officer Response:*

Comment noted. *Suggest that this needs a technical response from Environment colleagues/architect/contractor's design team.*

7. In all fairness, it is a brilliant idea for them to have an updated school, but as a student that left Dyffryn in 2015 I understand that there are kids that have problems with big crowds like my younger brother (in which has autism), I hate the fact that they are combining all these schools, but they are not thinking of the children's sake and their mental state when they walk in and they would see literally hundreds of children, their stress levels would go through the roof, and in addition would cause them to panic a lot, because 2 years ago when my brother (earlier said) was in year 7 he thought that if he was naughty enough he would be able to go back to primary

school because it was all too much for him. That's my opinion if you enjoyed reading it it's okay, I just wanted to cover the whole children's needs and disability spectrum that I and others have experienced in the past.

*SSIP Officer Response:*

Matters relating to pupils with Additional Learning Needs (ALN) will be fully explored and planned for in the establishment of the new, 3-16 school. Pupils with additional learning needs, including children with statements of special educational needs, will be fully supported in the classroom setting with appropriate funding allocated for this purpose. An 'all-through' school presents opportunities for more effective identification and tracking of children with learning difficulties resulting in support and intervention being provided on a more targeted basis.

8. I love the fact that our council tax and the education section of the welsh assembly governments money is being spent bettering the provision being offered to the children and young people of Neath port Talbot not only through this new venture but the recently opened baglan super school but am extremely annoyed and disappointed that yet again the afanvalley has been overlooked!!!! It seems to everyone that lives in the valley that we are worthless as everything we have in place is in threat of closure or we have to come together as a community to in order to keep it open! We even have to fundraise in order to have a park for our kids! If we are not in the town centre we are not thought about! And it is infuriating! Defiantly a case of out of sight out mind yet again! Cymer afan comprehensive school is in need of maintenance work with new paint and repairs but there's 'no money available for it' yet 2 new superschool can be considered in a very short space of time down the road!? I think it's a joke!

*SSIP Officer Response:*

School re-organisation across the County Borough is managed under the Council's Strategic School Improvement Programme. New school builds are dependent on a combination of external funding initiatives and the Council's own financial resources. With limited resources available, school reorganisation schemes require prioritisation based on greatest need, with school building condition and the rationalisation of the school building estate being key determining factors in the prioritisation of new build schemes. All

school reorganisation proposals are the subject of scrutiny and approval by the Council's Cabinet Committee.

9. Where can I find the detail of access and agrees to the site. The only detail I can find is that it is published separately to the main report.

*SSIP Officer Response:*

The pre-application consultation has now closed. The information submitted in response is being considered and will inform the formal planning submission. That will be available on the Council's website and will provide the details of access and egress to the site. It will also provide a further opportunity for comment.

10. It's about time this facility was brought into the 21st century. Our children and grandchildren deserve no less. As one of those who were in the first intake to Dyffryn upper in Margam in 1993 and witness to the gradual decline, despite the efforts of the headmasters and teachers I feel it is long overdue. There comes a time when patching up and making do can no longer cut muster.

*SSIP Officer Response:*

Comment noted

11. Ysgol Bae Baglan should be the aspiration of all other schools in the borough. It offers children the best possible start in an environment conducive to learning and development. Let's just hope the government does not muck things up with poor curriculum decisions in the meantime.

*SSIP Officer Response:*

Comment noted

12. After reading the design and access statement I have the following questions regarding what I feel are important factors.

- 1) Parking for parents. I am concerned that the drop of lay by for parents will cause more problems than it solves especially given the problems with parking and access that have occurred at the Bae Baglan site. Have the issues that the parents of Bae Baglan children experienced been taken into consideration while planning this site?

*SSIP Officer Response:*

Comment noted. Traffic management at this site has been the subject of extensive consideration involved Council elected members, Council officers, the architect and the contractor's design team. The responses to the pre-application consultation will inform the formal planning submission which will also provide a further opportunity for comment. Comments received will be invaluable in further developing and implementing a highway led engineering solution to such practical matters.

- 2) Dining Hall. Will the dining hall be fit for purpose? How many children is the dining hall meant to house? I am concerned that it won't be big enough for all the children to eat lunch at the same time. This is an issue that has been brought to the forefront by parents and children of Bae Baglan school. Children have reported not being able to eat lunch as the hall at Bae Baglan was not fit for purpose, which has been a major concern for parents at Bae Baglan. Given this issue I am concerned that this has not been taken into consideration when planning the new school at Margam.

*SSIP Officer Response:*

The dining facilities have been fully considered and will be built to ensure that they are fit for purpose. It is not envisaged that all children will access the facilities at the same time and service may take the form of a number of sittings over any lunch period

- 3) Pollution. Dyffryn and Groes currently sit between the M4 and the Steel works, both produce large amounts of pollution. The most concerning are the Particle Matter 2.5 (PM 2.5) which the steel works and traffic on the M4 emit, along with the carbon monoxide and sulphur dioxide. I am aware that you have taken into consideration pollution that the building of the site may cause and how to combat the noise pollution caused by the M4, however there is no mention of how the new site will combat the current pollution problem which can and does severely affect those with long term illnesses such as asthma, other respiratory complaints and heart problems. According to research when the pollution count reaches a certain level children in surrounding schools should be kept inside due to the effect on their health. As a parent with a child who suffers from asthma who currently attends Dyffryn I would like the new site to incorporate measures to combat the pollution which the children are currently exposed too.

*SSIP Officer Response:*

Comment noted. *Suggest that this needs a technical response from Environment colleagues/architect/contractor's design team.* Action to manage and improve air quality is largely driven by European (EU) legislation. The 2008 ambient air quality directive (2008/50/EC) applies. Also possible reference to Building Regulations Part F – Indoor air quality and possibly

13. Schools don't have time for their children now as it is, and it's being made a lot tougher with it being a lot bigger, with a lot of children struggle with, an schools can't control bullying now as it is.

*SSIP Officer Response:*

There is no evidence to suggest that smaller schools are better for children or that they are able to provide a better education. In fact, ESTYN, the school inspectorate for Wales, report that larger schools can be more effective, especially when conditions (including the indoor and outdoor environments) are improved. A new build school with 21<sup>st</sup> century learning facilities will give the pupils the best opportunities possible to make good progress in all aspects of the curriculum. A larger school does not mean proportionately fewer teachers and there is no evidence to suggest pupil wellbeing suffers in a larger school.

14. I wish to comment two aspects:

Firstly, the name of the school 'Ysgol Newydd Margam'. I am not sure if this a proposed name or whether this has been decided. If this has been decided, by whom was this done? Involving current Dyffyn and Groes pupils in deciding upon a new name might have been an idea as I'm sure that they could have come up with something more creative and it would have given them ownership over the new school - I'm sure that many will be sad to see the existing schools go.

*SSIP Officer Response:*

The name 'Ysgol Newydd Margam' is a working title based on a standardised format. It is used whilst the scheme is under development to distinguish it from other schools and other schemes. This is particularly important where a proposal impacts on nearby schools. The official school name will be determined by the new school's governing body, the temporary governing body in the first instance, and then ratified by the Council. However, it is good practice to involve others in the choice of name, particularly staff, parents and the pupils who will attend the school when it opens.

Secondly, despite not being a resident in the immediate area, I would like to raise a concern on behalf of those living immediately across from the proposed car park. At present, the Dyffryn school car park is set back from the main road. However, it is proposed that the new car park will be adjacent to several houses. I ask how could the design be modified to avoid this eye-sore for local residents? Alternatively, how could the design be improved in order to minimise the eye-sore to residents? e.g., planting trees, bushes etc at the front of the car park.

*SSIP Officer Response:*

*Comment noted. Suggest that this needs a technical response from Environment colleagues/architect/contractor's design team.*

15. After looking at the proposed plan it appears to show the entrance to the infant/junior school directly opposite our house.

*SSIP Officer Response:*

*Comment noted. (nothing to say as it is not clear whether this response is accurate and, if so, whether the respondent sees this as positive or negative!)*

16. I am happy with the plans for the new school however I would like to know more about the eating arrangements. I have a 3 year old and 7 year old daughters and would not want them eating, queuing in the same hall as older ones. It would concern me that older teenagers could easily have access to younger children at an unsupervised times.

*SSIP Officer Response:*

The primary and secondary phase are in separate parts of the new building and cross phase working between primary and secondary pupils will be carefully planned and supervised by the school's management. Issues, such a lunchtime management will be more fully addressed during the consultation to establish the 3 -16 school which is currently taking place, details of which can be found on the Council website.

17. Having read the information provided I am encouraged that this new school is the way forward for the education of our young population within the Margam/Port Talbot area. However I am very disappointed to note that there was no mention of the consequence



this will have on the residents of Beechwood Road. Importantly the traffic and parking issues within Bertha Road was acknowledged but no consideration has been given to Beechwood Road where residents already suffer with speeding cars (particularly down the narrow lane between numbers 63 and 65) and parking, sometimes blocking drives and on occasions even using drives. This lane poses many dangers with the 2 way traffic, people wanting to take short cuts, parking blocking off garages and entering Beechwood Road at speed. As residents we have witnessed many a near miss along with actual collisions. I have no doubt that this project will go ahead but would like strongly suggest that consideration is given towards the dangers of this lane and would welcome the closure of this lane with access rights for garage users only in order to alleviate the dangers this lane already has. Consideration should also be given to making Beechwood Road one way.

*SSIP Officer Response:*

Comment noted. Traffic management in the area has been the subject of extensive consideration involving Council elected members, Council officers, the architect and the contractor's design team. The responses to the pre-application consultation will inform the formal planning submission which will also provide a further opportunity for comment. Comments received will be invaluable in further developing and implementing a highway led engineering solution to such practical matters. *Suggest also that this needs additional technical response from Environment colleagues/architect/contractor's design team.*

18. The proposed site of the school would in reality cause the domination of the surrounding area as it is the highest part of the total. If you are trying to 'minimise the effect on residents' I would suggest that this will achieve the opposite.

As you have acknowledged in 3.2.8 the parking problem existing in Bertha Road and the effort to negate it, this will only prove successful if the only access both for transport and pedestrians remain at each end of Bertha Road. Any suggestion of a central gate for access would increase parking problems and child safety as more parents would opt for the easier route of dropping them off in the road in preference to using designated transport methods.

Again the choice of the middle ( highest by several metres) field and the close proximity of the proposed building to the residences of

Bertha Road will provide an unwelcome and overwhelming blockage of the pleasant mountain view, which in some way has balanced the many inconveniences associated with living near a school.

As this school has a proposed capacity of 1455 pupils I feel that our area could become a no-go area for residents during the hours 8-9.15a.m. and 2.45-3.45p.m. if more careful planning of the transport difficulties is not carried out.

*SSIP Officer Response:*

Comment noted. Suggest that this needs a technical response from Environment colleagues/architect/contractor's design team.

19. The proposed siting of the school on the middle field is in my opinion not the best, for the following reasons:-

(1). It contradicts point 2.3.1 in that it will not be subject to severe weather conditions, since it is to be built at more or less the same level as the existing comprehensive.

(2). It contradicts point 3.2.4 since the proposed siting and its elevation will have a huge impact on those who face the site.

(3). It does not achieve point 3.3.4 to make it respond to the scale of the properties in Bertha Road since the proposed site is almost 2 metres above road level and almost 2.5 metres above my property.

I therefore suggest that the proposed siting should be reconsidered, and suggest that the building of the school should be on the lower and much larger lower field in order to meet with the points quoted in your proposal.

If the proposed siting of the school is not changed to meet with the above points, I strongly urge that you consider lowering the level of the middle field by at least 1 metre to achieve to some extent the above points.

As regards the traffic problems and the proposed plans to minimise the effect of additional vehicles using Bertha Road, points 3.2.8 and 3.3.2 . I would like to make the point that this will only be achieved if there is no other pedestrian access other than at the top and bottom of Bertha Road, otherwise it will encourage parents to use Bertha Road as drop off and pick up points which the local councillor has

worked hard to discourage. As some parents park on the pavement this prevents wheelchair and pram use. This is obviously a safety issue.

*SSIP Officer Response:*

Comment noted. Suggest that this needs a technical response from Environment colleagues/architect/contractor's design team.

20. The parking issues in the street need to be sorted out. So does any disruption to people's lives while the construction work is in swing.

*SSIP Officer Response:*

Comment noted. Suggest that this needs a technical response from Environment colleagues/architect/contractor's design team.

21. Re: FIG 19, Early Concept Model, the model on your site shows the car park exiting at numbers 18/19 Bertha Road and not where we have been led to believe which is opposite numbers 3/4. Please can you confirm where the car park is exiting to, the other photos show it exiting at numbers 3/4. Also can you inform me if the school will be built on top of the middle field or will it be at the level of the lower field, due to excavation of the middle field.

*SSIP Officer Response:*

Comment noted. Suggest that this needs a technical response from Environment colleagues/architect/contractor's design team.

## APPENDIX 2

### List of Consultees:

Groes Primary and Dyffryn School      Pupils  
Parents/Carers/Guardians  
Prospective nursery/secondary transfer  
School Staff  
Governing Body  
Wider School Community

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All other NPT schools

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Bordering Authority - Swansea / Bridgend / Carmarthenshire / Powys / RCT

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Diocese -            Diocese of Menevia, Swansea  
CIW -                Diocesan of Llandaff, Vale of Glamorgan

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Trade Unions -    Regional Organisers for:      3 x Non-teaching & 6 x Teaching

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NAASH (Secondary Schools Forum)  
LLAN (Primary Schools Forum)

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MP (for Aberafan) – Stephen Kinnock  
MP (for Neath) – Christina Rees

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AM (for Aberafan) – David Rees  
AM (for Neath) - Jeremy Miles

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Regional AMs (South Wales West) -  
Suzy Davies/Bethan Jenkins/Caroline Jones/Dai Lloyd

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NPT Elected Members

---

Pelenna Community Council

---

WG Schools Management Division

---

Estyn

---

Regional Education Consortium (ERW)

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NPTC Group

---

NPTCBC Integrated Transport Unit

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Police & Crime Commissioner

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Children & Young Person Partnership  
(including Early Years Development and Childcare)

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Flying Start and Early Years providers

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Communities First Partnership

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*NPTCBC as the maintaining authority -*

NPT Senior Management (Education)

NPT Admissions Officer

NPT ERW Officer

NPT Education Psychologists

NPT ALNST

NPT Governor Support

NPT Human Resources

NPT Legal Services

NPT Planning

NPT Property Management

NPT Gypsy/Traveller Officer (Education)

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Rh/rvg:19.12.16