

Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) Report Form

Service Area: Strategic School Improvement Programme(SSIP)
Directorate: Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning (ELLL)

(a) This EIA is being completed for a...

Service/ Function	Policy/ Procedure	Project	Strategy	Plan	Proposal X
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(b) The Council is proposing to discontinue Cymer Afan Comprehensive school and make arrangements for pupils who would have attended there to receive their secondary education at Ysgol Cwm Brombil.

(c) This proposal has been screened for relevance to Equality and Diversity. This EqIA is the most current version, updated, 31/08/2018

(d) It was found to be relevant to...

Age	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Race	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Disability	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Religion or belief.....	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gender reassignment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Sex	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Marriage & civil partnership	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sexual orientation.....	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pregnancy and maternity	<input type="checkbox"/>	Welsh language.....	<input type="checkbox"/>
Income deprivation.....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		

(e) Lead Officer

Name: Richard Gordon

Job title: SSIP Programme Manager

Date: 31/08/2018

(f) Approved by Head of Service

Name: Andrew Thomas

Job title: Head of Transformation

Date: 31/08/2018

Section 1 – Aims (See guidance):

The Public Sector Equality Duty

This Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken to identify impacts on stakeholders resulting from the closure of Cymer Afan Comprehensive school and the transfer of pupils to Ysgol Cwm Brombil. In particular, the assessment has been designed to discharge the Council's duties under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 by ensuring that decision makers have due regard to the three equality needs set out in section 149(1) and to identify the impact on protected groups.

Aims

To close Cymer Afan Comprehensive School with effect from 1st September 2019 and make arrangements for the pupils who would normally attend the school to transfer to Ysgol Cwm Brombil, which is due to open on the 1st September 2018.

Ysgol Cwm Brombil is a new build school with 21st Century facilities, a £30m investment by the Council. Generally pupils' attainment and achievement improve in new build schools and improvement in the quality of buildings can have a positive impact on the quality of teaching and staff morale, which in turn further impacts on pupil performance.

The proposal comes under the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013. Under this legislation, the process for change requires a full statutory consultation programme to receive comments on the proposal, followed by the publication of a statutory notice and a period of objections to be received before a determination is taken.

Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council (NPTCBC) Strategic School Improvement Programme (SSIP) involves reviewing the existing school provision across the County Borough and determining the number and type of schools needed to deliver education effectively and efficiently in the future.

Currently secondary education in the upper Afan Valley is provided at Cymer Afan Comprehensive School as part of a federation of five schools, four primary and one secondary. NPTCBC has reviewed this provision on the basis of:

- educational standards;
- the need for places and the accessibility of schools;
- the quality and suitability of school accommodation; and
- effective financial management.

Cymer Afan Comprehensive is a secondary school with 229 pupils as of January 2018. As it has fewer than 600 pupils, Cymer Afan Comprehensive School is classified as a 'small' secondary school. The school has capacity for 641 pupils, meaning it currently has 64% surplus capacity and pupil numbers are not forecasted to increase sufficiently to change its small secondary school status in the foreseeable future.

In the current financial year (2018/19), Cymer Afan Comprehensive School receives a budget share equivalent to £6,822 per pupil compared to the average for the Council's secondary sector schools of £4,418, a difference of £2,404 per pupil and approx. 54% above the average.

Cymer Afan Comprehensive School has backlog maintenance and accessibility costs amounting to c.£3m. The site has been assessed and many of the building and mechanical elements are nearing the end of their life span.

Responsibility: Director of Education Leisure and Lifelong Learning, Head of Transformation and Strategic School Improvement Programme.

Stakeholders

The impact assessment considers the impacts on:

- staff employed at Cymer Afan Comprehensive School (including governors); and
- pupils that would have received their secondary education at Cymer Afan Comprehensive School from September 2019 onwards.

There are two distinct groups of pupils who may be impacted by the proposal. These are:

- pupils who will be attending Cymer Afan Comprehensive who will see disruption to their education; and
- future pupils from the partner primary schools who will have a different set of choices about where to attend secondary school.

The purpose of the impact assessment is to provide information for the decision-making process. It is designed to help policy makers appraise the likely impacts of the proposal on people with characteristics protected under the Equality Act 2010.

The purpose of the impact assessment is to inform rather than determine policy. The objective is not to make the decision, but to assist decision makers through the provision of relevant information. The impact assessment also identifies ways to minimise, mitigate or otherwise manage adverse impacts and identify and optimise beneficial impacts.

Complementing this Equality Impact Assessment, NPTCBC has also assessed the impact that the closure of Cymer Afan Comprehensive school may have on the local community through the loss/displacement of community facilities and provision¹.

Section 2 - Information

(a) Service Users

Age	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Race	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Disability	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Religion or belief.....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Gender reassignment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Sex	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Marriage & civil partnership	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Sexual orientation.....	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pregnancy and maternity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Welsh language.....	<input type="checkbox"/>
Income deprivation.....	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		

¹ Neath Port Talbot County Borough Community Impact Assessment (Dec '17) – Cymer Comprehensive School

Service User Information.

The closure of Cymer Afan Comprehensive School has the potential to impact upon a number of groups with protected characteristics. This proposal relates to the pupils and staff of a maintained secondary school within the NPTCBC area.

NPTCBC have collected information and data on the pupils and staff who may be impacted by the proposal to close Cymer Afan Comprehensive School. This data includes:

- Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC) data (January 2018)
- NPTCBC HR records
- School pupil records
- Staff records

Where appropriate (and available), detailed demographic data has been added. This has been provided for the study area (classified as the catchment area for Cymer Afan Comprehensive School), Neath Port Talbot area, and compared to the Wales national average. The sources of this data include:

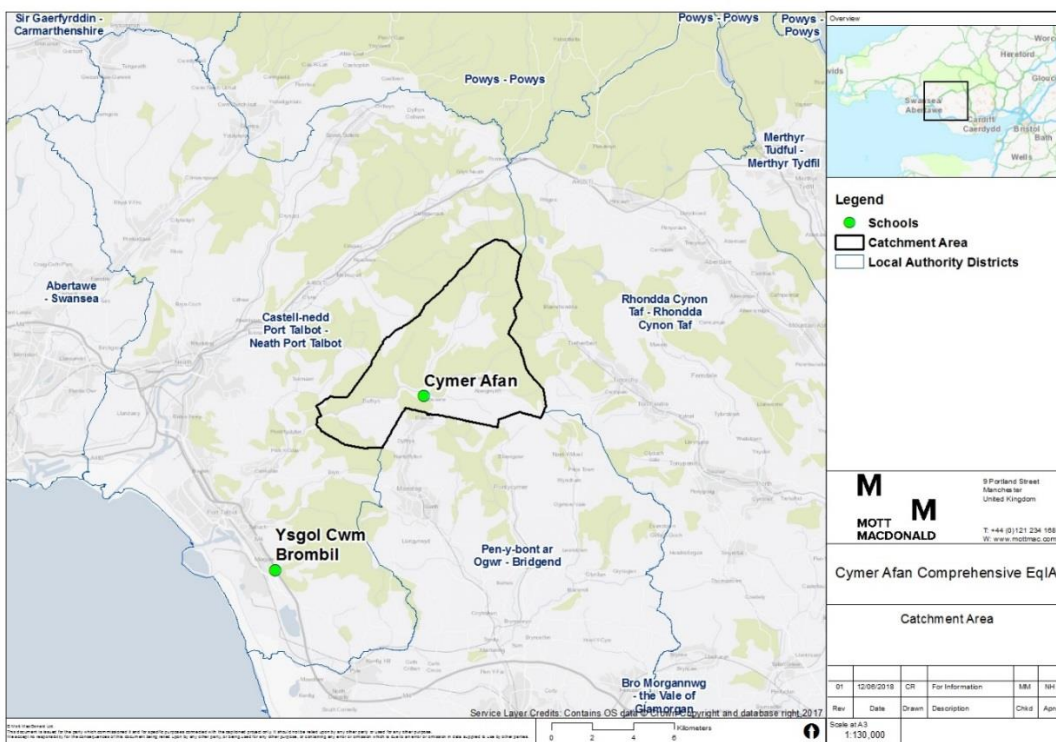
- Office for National Statistics (ONS) Annual Mid-Year Population Estimates (MYE) 2016
- ONS Census 2011

The spatial scope of the impact assessment is the catchment area for the Cymer Afan Comprehensive School, which includes the wards;

- Cymmer
- Gwynfi
- Glyncorrgw

The spatial scope is set out in figure 1 below.

Figure 1 Catchment area



Age

Pupils

Cymer Afan Comprehensive School provides for pupils aged 11-16 years.

Table 1: Pupil age profile

Year group	Likely age ranges	Pupil count	Percentage
7	11-12	51	22%
8	12-13	58	25%
9	13-14	40	17%
10	14-15	32	14%
11	15-16	48	21%

Source: Pupil records (annual school census) 2018

Pupils in the primary schools that serve the Afan Valley will be affected by this proposal. Of these there are 48 Year 6 pupils and 56 Year 5 pupils

Staff

Cymer Afan Comprehensive School employs some 64 members of staff. The age profile of the current staff is detailed below:²

Table 2: Staff age profile

Age	Staff count	Percentage*
18-24	6	9%
25-34	10	15%
35-44	16	25%
45-54	16	25%
55-64	16	25%
65+	1	2%

Source: Staff records 2017

*Aggregated to nearest whole

Community

The age profile of the study area in comparison to Neath Port Talbot and Wales averages is:

- in line for ages 5-16 years: 13% (for all three);
- slightly higher for ages 9-11 years: 4% (vs 3% for both); and
- in line for ages 11-14 years: 4% (for all three).

Table 3: Study area and comparator populations aged 5-16 years

	Population		
	All ages	Ages 5 to 16 years	% ages 5 to 16 years
Study Area	5,142	679	13%
Neath Port Talbot	141,678	18,608	13%
Wales	3,113,150	418,616	13%

Source: MYE 2016

² This has been calculated using year of birth against age upon 01/01/2019

Table 4: Study area and comparator populations aged 9-11 years

	Population		
	All ages	Ages 9 to 11 years	% ages 9 to 11 years
Study Area	5,142	184	4%
Neath Port Talbot	141,678	4,712	3%
Wales	3,113,150	104,770	3%

Source: MYE 2016

Table 5: Study area and comparator populations aged 11 to 14 years

	Population		
	All ages	Ages 11 to 14 years	% ages 11 to 14 years
Study Area	5,142	212	4%
Neath Port Talbot	141,678	5,938	4%
Wales	3,113,150	131,937	4%

Source: MYE 2016

Disability

The Equality Act 2010 defines a disabled person as a person with a disability. A person has a disability for the purposes of the Act if he or she has a physical or mental impairment and the impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities (S6(1)).

A disability can arise from a wide range of impairments which can include

- sensory impairments, such as those affecting sight or hearing;
- impairments with fluctuating or recurring effects such as rheumatoid arthritis, myalgic encephalitis (ME), chronic fatigue syndrome (CFS), fibromyalgia, depression and epilepsy;
- progressive, such as motor neurone disease, muscular dystrophy, and forms of dementia;
- auto-immune conditions such as systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE);
- organ specific, including respiratory conditions, such as asthma, and cardiovascular diseases, including thrombosis, stroke and heart disease;
- developmental, such as autistic spectrum disorders (ASD), dyslexia and dyspraxia;
- learning disabilities;
- mental health conditions with symptoms such as anxiety, low mood, panic attacks, phobias, or unshared perceptions; eating disorders; bipolar affective disorders; obsessive compulsive disorders; personality disorders; post-traumatic stress disorder, and some self-harming behaviour;
- mental illnesses, such as depression and schizophrenia;
- produced by injury to the body, including to the brain

Pupils of Cymer Afan Comprehensive school who may be experiencing any of the above impairments will be recorded on the school Special Educational Needs (SEN) register and as such the data available from that has been used to inform this assessment.

Information on adults who may be experiencing any of the above impairments has been gathered through the data available on limiting long term illness, or in the case of staff on records held by the school.

Pupils

The school is a mainstream school, providing education for pupils with additional learning needs/special educational needs (ALN/SEN). Currently the school provides for:

- 5 pupils who have statements of special educational needs;

- 32 pupils on School Action Plus; and
- 41 pupils on School Action.³

All of these pupils have their learning needs catered for by the school within the mainstream setting.

The percentage of pupils attending Cymer Afan Comprehensive school with ALN/SEN is 34% which is higher than the Neath Port Talbot average percentage of 26.1% and higher than the all Wales percentage of 22.5%.

Statemented pupils will have undergone a statutory process involving agencies from outside of the school including educational psychologists and health professionals, while School Action (SA) and School Action Plus (SAP) will be pupils identified by the school as having a specific educational need. The percentage of pupils with a statement at Cymer Afan Comprehensive is lower than the local authority and all Wales percentages at 2.2%, however the percentage of pupils identified by the school as having SEN/ALN is significantly higher than the other comparators.

Table 6: SEN Comparative Data

	Pupil No's (All Pupils)	Statemented		School Action		SAP		All SEN	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
CAC	229	5	2.2%	41	17.9%	32	14.0%	78	34.1%
NPT	20929	862	4.1%	2929	14.0%	1547	7.4%	5338	25.5%
Wales	467112	12895	2.8%	57933	12.4%	34797	7.4%	105625	22.6%

Source: Pupil records (annual school census) 2018

Staff

Staff records show that there are no members of staff at Cymer Afan Comprehensive School who have declared that they have a disability.

Community

The proportion of people with a limiting long-term illness (LLTI) is higher in the school's catchment area than both the Neath Port Talbot and Wales averages: 35% compared to 28% and 22% respectively.

Figure 2 below shows that the highest densities of people living with an LLTI are largely clustered around Cymer Afan Comprehensive School (the area with the highest population density).

³ School Action are interventions for SEN pupils identified by teachers as requiring additional support and School Action Plus are interventions with advice/support from outside specialists; National Assembly for Wales (2004) Special Educational Needs Code of Practice for Wales

Figure 2 LLTI population density map

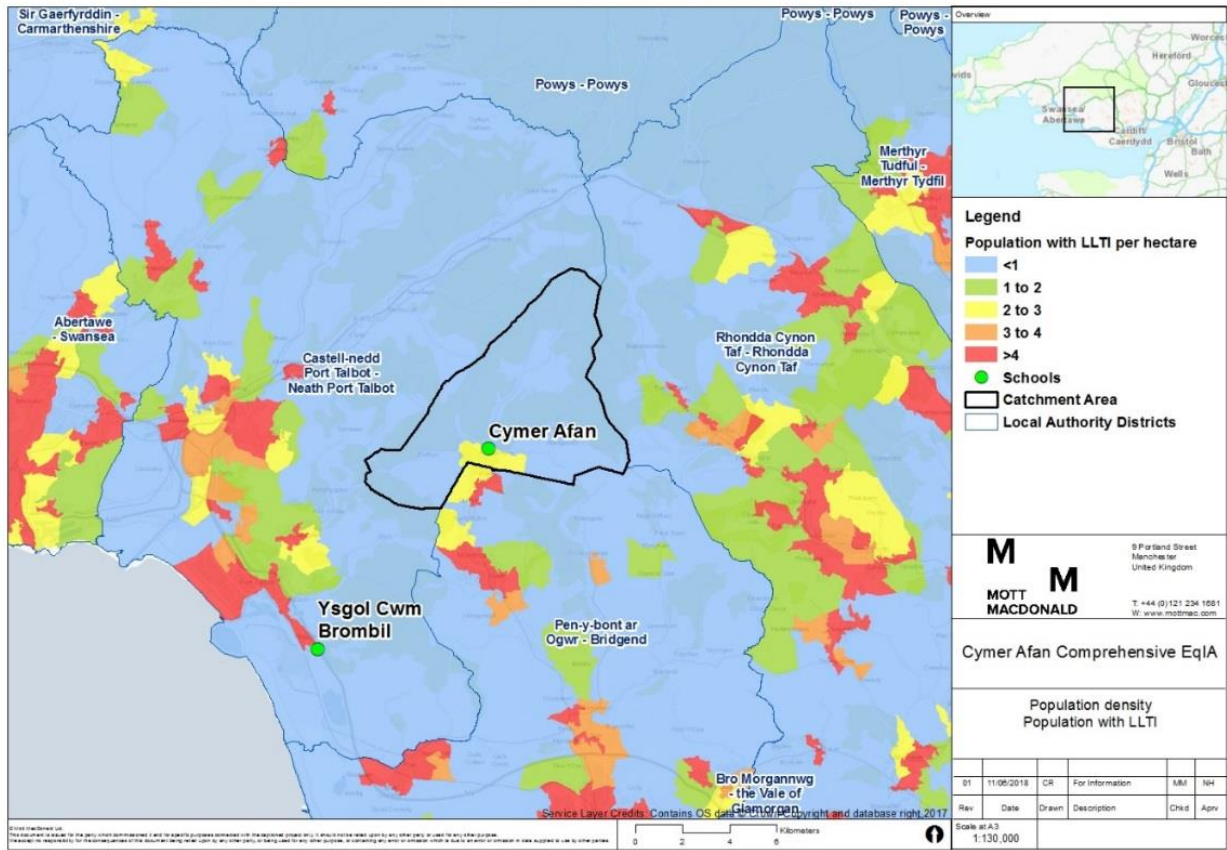


Table 7: Study area and comparator populations with LLTI

	Population		
	All ages	LLTI	% LLTI
Study Area	5,142	1,817	35%
Neath Port Talbot	141,678	39,112	28%
Wales	3,113,150	695,855	22%

Source: Census 2011/ MYE 2016

Table 8: Study area and comparator populations with LLTI aged 0-15 years

	Population		
	All ages	LLTI ages 0-15 years	% LLTI ages 0-15 years
Study Area	5,142	77	1.4%
Neath Port Talbot	141,678	1,234	0.8%
Wales	3,113,150	22,080	0.7%

Source: Census 2011/ MYE 2016

Race and ethnicity

Pupils

Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC) data shows that the school only has one BAME (black, Asian and minority ethnic) pupil, who has declared their ethnicity as ‘other Chinese’.

Staff

HR records show that staff at the school have declared their nationality as 16 British, 46

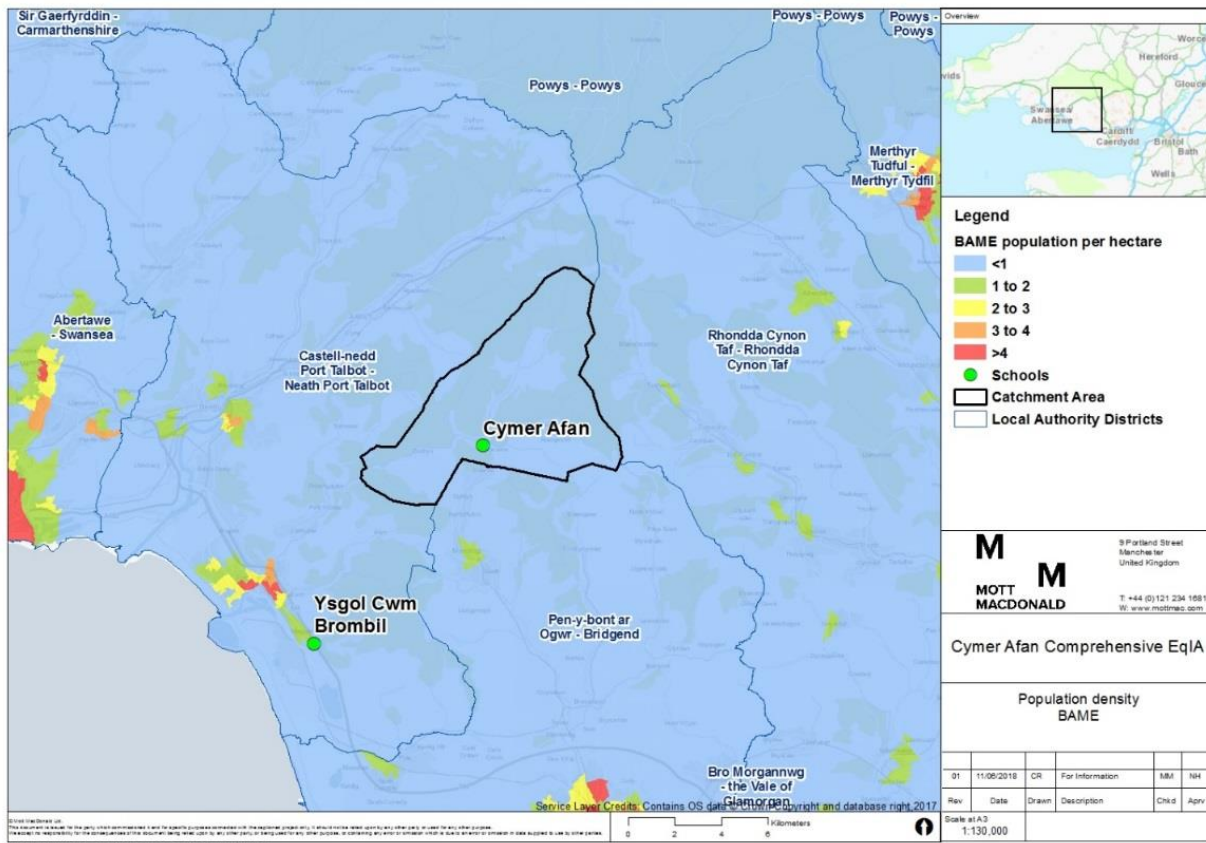
Welsh, and 2 prefer not to say.

HR records also indicate that 61 staff have declared their ethnic origin as white – British/English/Northern Irish/Scottish/Welsh, 1 as white –other and 2 prefer not to say.

Community

Figure 3 below demonstrates that the catchment area has a very low BAME population per hectare (less than one per hectare for all).

Figure 3 BAME populations density map



The study area has a low proportion of BAME children aged 0-15 years, slightly lower than the percentages for Neath Port Talbot and Wales.

Table 9: Study area and comparator BAME populations aged 0-15 years

	Population		
	All ages	BAME ages 0-15 years	% BAME ages 0-15 years
Study Area	5,142	22	0.4%
Neath Port Talbot	141,678	995	0.7%
Wales	3,113,150	47,710	1.5%

Source: Census 2011/ MYE 2016

Religion or belief

Pupils

Cymer Afan Comprehensive is a community school and religion or belief is not a criterion under NPTCBC’s admissions policy for community schools.

The religion and belief profile of the school is:

- 61 Christian
- 2 Church of Wales

All other pupils (approximately 166) left the religion option blank or declared no religion.

Staff

Staff data held on religion/belief is according to what individuals have chosen to disclose. No data is held for any of the staff.

Community

The religion and belief profile of the study area in comparison to Neath Port Talbot and Wales averages is lower.

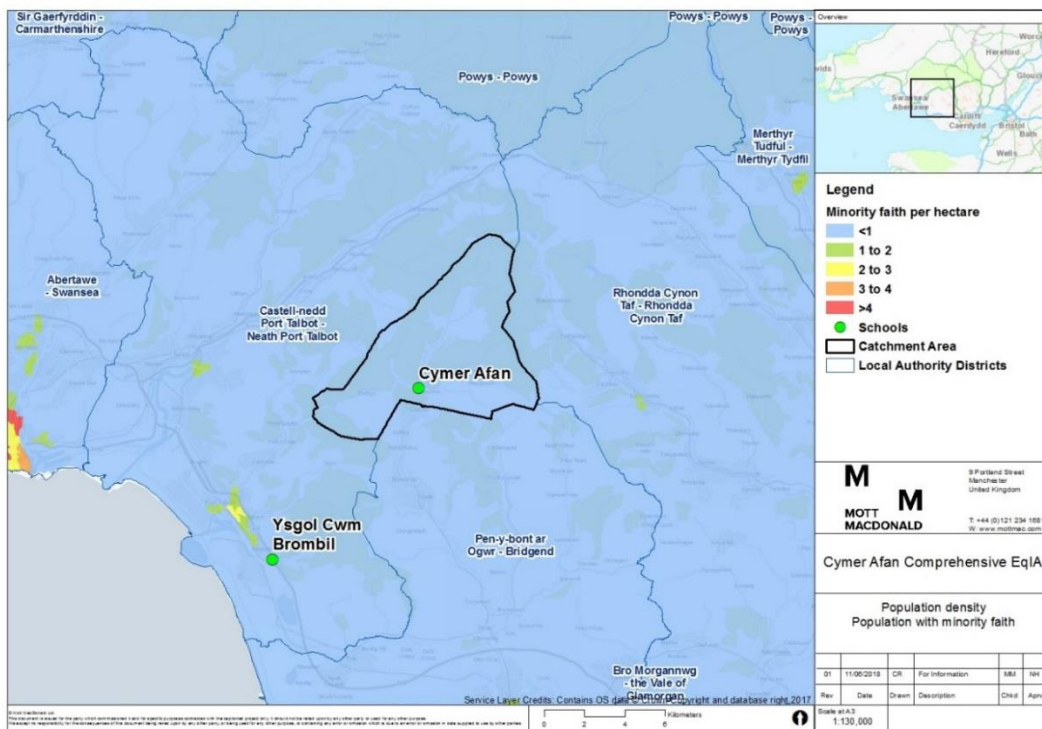
Table 10: Study area and comparator minority faith populations aged 0-15 years

	Population		
	All ages	Minority faith ages 0-15 years	% Minority faith ages 0-15 years
Study Area	5,142	16	0.3%
Neath Port Talbot	141,678	2,120	1.4%
Wales	3,113,150	109,380	3.5%

Source: Census 2011/ MYE 2016

Figure 4 below demonstrates that the catchment area had a very low minority faith population (minority faith groups include Muslim, Hindu, Sikh, Jewish, Buddhist and Other religion) per hectare (less than one percent across all minority faith groups)

Figure 4 Minority faith populations density map



Sex

Pupils

Cymer Afan Comprehensive School admits both boys and girls. The sex profile of the school is detailed below in table 11.

Table 11: Pupil sex profile

	Pupil count	Percentage
Female	118	52%
Male	111	48%

Source: Pupil records 2018

Staff

The school employs both male and female staff members. The sex profile of the current staff is detailed below.

Table 12: Staff sex profile

	Staff count	Percentage
Female	46	72%
Male	18	28%

Source: Staff records 2017

Community

Table 13 indicates that there is no significant difference between the study area and the other comparators.

Table 13: Study area and comparator sex profile aged 0-15 years

	Population					
	All ages		Sex profile ages 0-15 years		% Sex profile ages 0-15 years in relation to all ages	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
Study Area	2,579	2,563	516	465	20%	18%
Neath Port Talbot	72,078	69,600	12,136	12,637	17%	18%
Wales	1,579,112	1,534,038	271,410	285,669	17%	19%

Source: Census 2011/ MYE 2016

Table 13a :Pupil profile compared to study area and comparator

	% Sex profile – Children ages 0-15 years			
	% Sex profile ages 0-15 years		% Sex profile Cymer Afan Comp. Pupils	
	Female	Male	Female	Male
Study Area	53%	47%	52%	48%
Neath Port Talbot	49%	51%		
Wales	49%	51%		

The sex profile of pupils at Cymer Afan Comprehensive school reflects that of the study area and is not dissimilar to the profile of Neath Port Talbot or Wales.

Table 13B: Staff profile compared to study area and comparator

	% Sex profile – All ages			
	% Sex profile All ages		% Sex profile Cymer Afan Comp. Staff	
	Female	Male	Female	Male
Study Area	50%	50%	72%	28%
Neath Port Talbot	51%	49%		
Wales	51%	49%		

The sex profile of staff at Cymer Afan Comprehensive school shows a significantly higher percentage of females compared to males. This difference is not reflected in the sex profiles of the study area, Neath Port Talbot and Wales.

Pregnancy and maternity

Pupils and staff

At the time of this assessment, NPTCBC is not aware of any pupil being pregnant at the school.

No data is available for staff. NPTCBC has policies in place to cover those members of staff who are pregnant or on maternity leave/paternity leave.

Gender reassignment

Pupils and staff

Data on gender reassignment is held according to what individual pupils and staff have chosen to disclose. No data is held for any of the pupils or school staff on their gender status.

However an objection has been received which indicates that a future pupil of Cymer Afan Comprehensive School is undergoing counselling for possible future gender reassignment.

Marriage and civil partnership

Pupils

This protected characteristic is not applicable to pupils due to their age.

Staff

The current marriage and civil partnership profile of the current staff is detailed below.

Table 14: Staff marriage/civil partnership profile

	Staff count	Percentage*
Married	35	55%
Single	19	30%
Divorced	4	6%
Partnered	3	5%
Widowed	3	5%

Source: Staff records 2017

*aggregated to nearest whole

Sexual orientation

Pupils and staff

Data held is according to what individuals have chosen to disclose. Neither pupils nor staff

have chosen to declare their sexual orientation. As such, no data is available for any of the pupils or school staff.

Income deprivation

Pupils

Although income deprivation is not a protected characteristic as defined by the Equalities Act 2010, children from an economically deprived background can have a different experience of transferring schools.

Children may be entitled to receive free school meals if their parents/carers are in receipt of certain benefit/support payments, including Income Support and Universal Credit. The Institute of Fiscal Studies suggests the following advantages to using eligibility for free school meals as criteria to measure income deprivation:

- It defines income deprivation at the pupil level rather than LSOA level.
- It better reflects the relative income deprivation of the school and local area.⁴

Table 15: Study area and comparator free school meal eligibility

	%
Cymer Afan Comprehensive School	31%
Local Authority	22%
Wales	17%

Source: NPTCBC 2018 school census

Community

The study area is in an area of acute deprivation; 100% of the study area is either in the most or second most deprived quintile, this is in comparison to 59% of Neath Port Talbot and 39% of Wales.

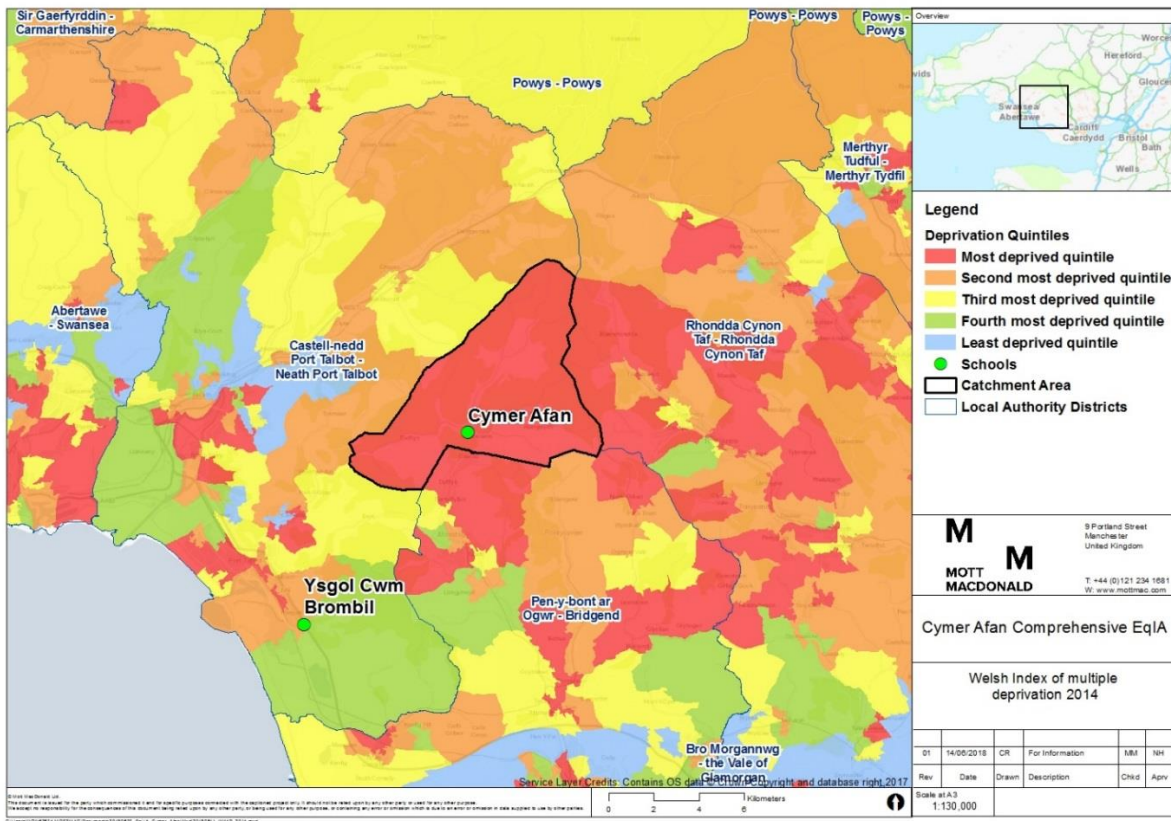
Table 16: Study area and comparator populations with deprivation

	Population	Population living in the most or second most deprived quintile	Population living in the most or second most deprived quintile%
Study Area	5,142	5,142	100%
Neath Port Talbot	141,678	84,065	59%
Wales	3,113,150	1,226,953	39%

Source: WIMD 2014

⁴ IFS (2013) A comparison of commonly used socio-economic indicators: their relationship to educational disadvantage and relevance to Teach First, available at: <https://www.ifs.org.uk/comms/r79.pdf>

Figure 5 Deprivation map



Actions Required

Data on protected characteristics will continue to be monitored and checked to ascertain what impact, if any, the proposal has on protected groups.

(b) General

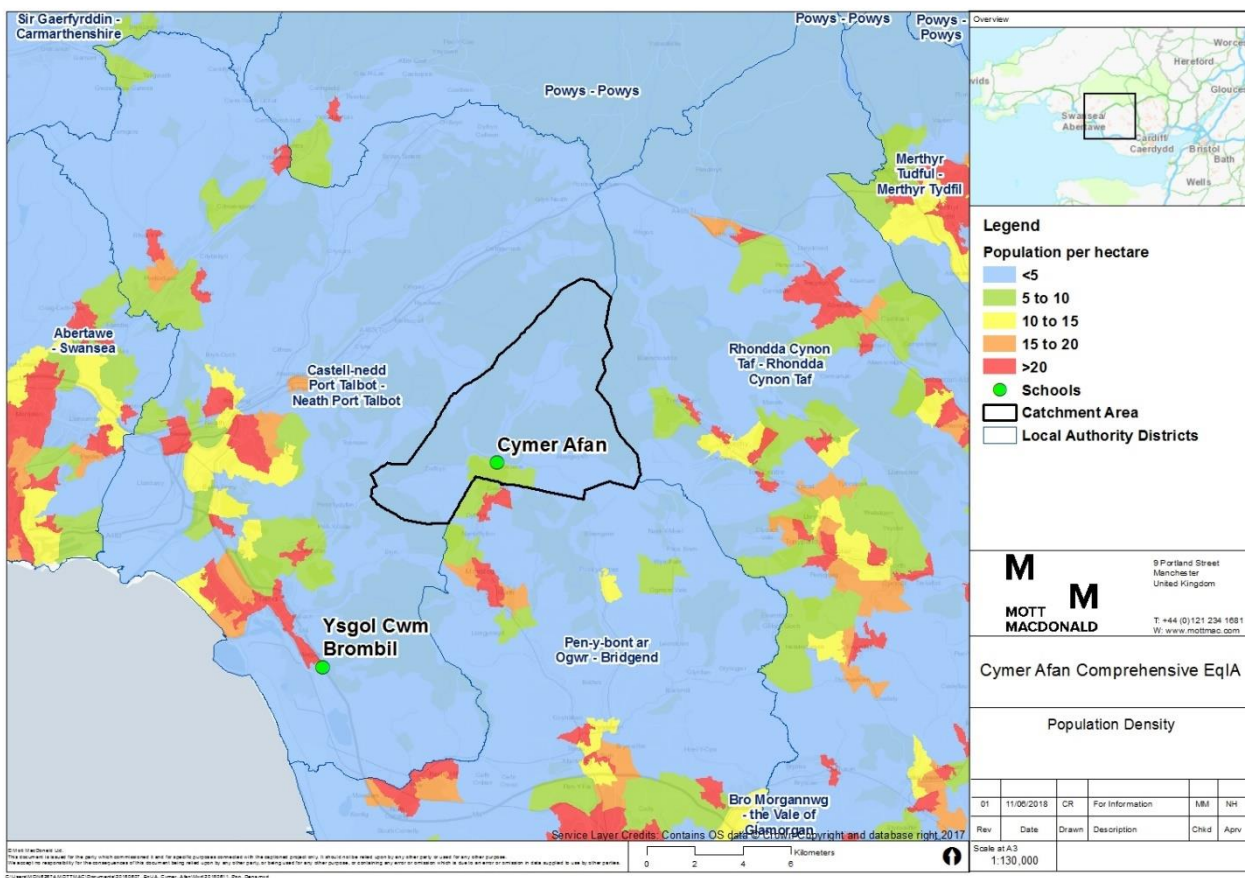
What information do you know and how is this information collected?

The spatial scope of the impact assessment is the catchment area for the Cymer Afan Comprehensive School which includes the wards:

- Cymmer
- Gwynfi
- Glynccorwg

The figure below illustrates the overall population density for the study area. It shows that the overall population density is low but that the highest densities of people live predominantly in the south of the area, around Cymer Afan Comprehensive School.

Figure 6 Population density map



Actions Required

Data on protected characteristics will continue to be monitored and checked to ascertain what impact, if any, the proposal has on protected groups.

Section 3 – Impact

(a) Impact on Protected Characteristics

	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Needs further investigation
Age	→ <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Disability	→ <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gender reassignment	→ <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Marriage & civil partnership	→ <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pregnancy and maternity	→ <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Race	→ <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Religion or belief	→ <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sex	→ <input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sexual orientation	→ <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Welsh language	→ <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Income deprivation	→ <input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Overall impact on staff

Overall there will be impacts on all staff who are made redundant following the closure of Cymer Afan Comprehensive School.⁵

These impacts include:

- **Financial** (immediate loss of ongoing income, financial uncertainty, potential debt, concerns around home ownership and mortgage repayments).
- **Health** (stress, anxiety and depression).

Overall impact on pupils

Overall there may be impacts on all pupils who currently attend Cymer Afan Comprehensive School and make the transfer and to those pupils who would otherwise attend there were it not for this proposal. Pupils may experience anxiety and stress relating to the change in school, such as adapting to new routines, staff, facilities and peers.

There is also likely to be an increase in travel time for pupils transferring to the new school site. This may in turn result in personal impacts, as well as impacts on educational attainment as additional travel time potentially could lead to increased tiredness, and result in a reduction in the time available for school work at home.

Positive impacts are likely to occur through the opportunities afforded to pupils receiving their education in a 21st Century new build school with improved teaching and learning facilities. The larger number of pupils will provide better opportunities for greater social interaction and breadth of experiences, resulting in a positive impact on pupils.

Age Pupils

This group will be disproportionately impacted by the closure of Cymer Afan Comprehensive School. Those who are already attending Cymer Afan Comprehensive School are likely to have different experiences to those who will start at Ysgol Cwm Brombil in Year 7 as they will be transferring from their present secondary school setting to a new secondary school provision in a different location with accompanying change in education delivery.

There could be a greater impact on pupils who will be making the transfer in Key stage 4 as the change will occur at a key point in their secondary education.

Thorough planning for transition at both key stage 3 and key stage 4 should result in positive experiences for pupils during the period of change.

Staff

For older staff members who are made redundant from the school closure, there are potential disproportionate negative impacts. Research suggests that those who are older when they are made redundant experience barriers in returning to employment, potentially facing challenges in securing interviews for new positions.⁶ According to Age UK research, once unemployed, only 23% of people aged 50 years or above secured a new job in three months (compared to 35% of 35-49-year olds).⁷

⁵ Leeds University Business School (2004): 'The Economic and Social Impact of Redundancies from Corus and Allied Steel and Wire in Wales'

⁶ Leeds University Business School (2004): 'The Economic and Social Impact of Redundancies from Corus and Allied Steel and Wire in Wales'

⁷ Age UK (2013): Older Workers at High Redundancy Risk available at: <https://www.ageuk.org.uk/latest-press/archive/older-workers-at-high-redundancy-risk/>

Disability

Pupils

There are potential negative impacts associated with transferring schools for some pupils who are disabled. For example, pupils with autistic spectrum conditions may experience difficulties in the transfer process that can negatively affect educational attainment and general well-being. These pupils may find adapting to the routines, expectations and social relationships of a new school environment more challenging than others.⁸

Local authorities are required to assess the travel needs of learners who are aged under 19 in their area. This includes those who they are legally required to provide transport for and those for whom they may wish to provide discretionary transport when assessing travel needs. An authority is also required to have regard for the needs of disabled learners and learners with learning difficulties.

There are potential positive impacts for some pupils with disabilities due to the new build school meeting all accessibility regulations and complying fully with the Equality Act 2010 requirements. Support for SEN/ALN in the new school is likely to be at least as good as current provision and in some aspects provision will be improved, for example larger pupil population and larger staff population can enable greater access to specialist staff and services. Local authority learning support service staff can provide additional support for pupils with SEN during transition and through the early stages of attending the new school.

Staff

The evidence review does not currently indicate any disproportionate or differential impacts for this protected characteristic group.

Gender Reassignment

Pupils and staff

The evidence review does not indicate any disproportionate or differential need for this protected characteristic group.

However for the pupil who is currently undergoing counselling for possible future gender reassignment the impact of this proposal could be negative as the transition to a new school may cause stress and anxiety.

There are possible positive impacts due to the larger peer group which will occur in the new school meaning that there may be other pupils who are undergoing similar experiences and can provide peer support, as well as helping to lessen the chance that individuals may be easily identifiable and therefore at risk of victimisation. Additionally greater numbers of staff could mean access to more specialised support for the pupil if required.

The new build will facilitate easier management of the practicalities of gender reassignment, for example the new build will have unisex toilet facilities and opportunities for private changing rooms for pupils.

Marriage and civil partnership

Pupils and staff

Due to their age, pupils have been scoped out.

The proposal does not directly discriminate against this protected characteristic group.

⁸University of Manchester (undated), The impact of primary-secondary school transition for children with autism spectrum conditions: a longitudinal, mixed-methods study, available at: <http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=20008%20>

Pregnancy and maternity

Pupils and staff

The evidence review does not currently indicate any disproportionate or differential impacts for this protected characteristic group.

Race

Pupils

There are potential positive impacts associated with transferring schools for pupils regarding views on race and ethnicity. Dyffryn School (the proxy school for Ysgol Cwm Brombil) data reveals that the school has a higher percentage of BAME pupils at 9% than Cymer Afan Comprehensive 0.4% and Neath Port Talbot secondary aged pupils 6%. Research suggests that mixed schools (defined as schools with intergroup contact) result in more social mixing between ethnic groups, and that pupils generally have more positive attitudes towards those from different ethnic groups.⁹ The current demographic makeup of Cymer Afan Comprehensive School (as described in section 2) would likely mean that pupils at this school would not report having close outgroup friends.

Staff

The evidence review does not currently indicate any disproportionate or differential impacts for this protected characteristic group.

Religion or belief

Pupils and staff

The evidence review does not currently indicate any disproportionate or differential impacts for this protected characteristic group.

Sex

Pupils

There are potential negative impacts associated with transferring schools for pupils of different sex:

- Due to the disruptive nature of transition, which requires students to adapt previously-learned behaviour patterns to new demands and more challenging environments. This may have a strong negative impact on peer relations and the students' academic achievement. Research indicates that boys can find adapting to a new school routine more challenging than girls, as boys self-report increases in school problems during transition periods.
- Girls can find forming new friendship groups more challenging than boys, with research suggesting that girls perceived that close friend support and school support declined during transition.¹⁰

Data for Dyffryn School (PLASC 2018) indicates that the pupil population consists of 51% girls and 49% boys, this is comparable to Cymer Afan Comprehensive's 52% girls and 48% boys, suggesting that Ysgol Cwm Brombil would have a similar gender balance to that experienced by pupils currently in Cymer Afan Comprehensive. This is comparable to figures held for Neath Port Talbot and all Wales where the gender balance is approx. 50% boys and girls, and 49% girls and 51% boys respectively for school years 7-11. There is no risk of pupils of either gender suffering a particular disadvantage as a result of this proposal. It does not therefore give

⁹ Department for Education (2017), Diversity and Social Cohesion in Mixed and Segregated Secondary Schools in Oldham, available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/634118/Diversity_and_Social_Cohesion_in_Oldham_schools.pdf

¹⁰ R. Hanewald (2013): Transition Between Primary and Secondary School: Why it is Important and How it can be Supported available at: <http://ro.ecu.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1952&context=ajte>

rise to a risk of discrimination on grounds of sex.

Positive impacts could occur through the proposal as pupils of both genders will have the opportunity to make new friends and become part of a wider friendship group. Transition events should include sessions for new pupils to meet their peers and organised social activities across a range of interests including sport, drama and music will encourage and develop friendships with other pupils who share the same interests.

Staff

There is a risk that female staff members will be placed at a particular disadvantage, as they make up 72% of the staff body. However, there is no risk of indirect discrimination, as the proposal is pursuing a legitimate aim (namely, that of improving the quality and efficiency of education in the Council's area) and is proportionate to that aim.

Stress and anxiety associated with redundancy may disproportionately impact upon women. 72% of staff at Cymer Afan Comprehensive are female and a greater number of females than males are employed in support roles. Research indicates that women are nearly twice as likely to experience anxiety as men, and that women are more likely than men to have a common mental health problem.¹¹

Experiences of stress repeatedly over a prolonged period, can impact sleep, memory, eating habits. Research has also linked long-term stress to gastrointestinal conditions like Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS), or stomach ulcers as well as conditions like cardiovascular disease.¹²

Positive impacts could occur through support given to obtain employment elsewhere in the local authority, including in new build schools which can improve teaching and learning experiences for staff and pupils, or in a larger school where greater numbers of staff can help to reduce workload and provide enhanced career opportunities.

The proposal will have a disproportionate impact on female members of staff. However, this impact is justified because the Council is pursuing a legitimate aim.

Sexual orientation

Pupils and staff

The evidence review does not currently indicate any disproportionate or differential impacts for this protected characteristic group.

Welsh language

Pupils and staff

Both Cymer Afan Comprehensive and Ysgol Cwm Brombil are English-medium schools where Welsh is taught as a second language. A Welsh language impact assessment found that Welsh language provision at Ysgol Cwm Brombil should be at least comparable with the offer at Cymer Afan Comprehensive school. In fact, there are potential positive impacts for pupils associated with transfer of schools as, with a larger cohort, there will be more opportunities to develop Welsh language skills.

Income deprivation

Pupils

Although income deprivation is not a protected characteristic as defined by the Equalities Act

¹¹ Mental health foundation (undated) mental health statistics: anxiety

¹² Mental health foundation (undated) Stress

2010, children from an economically deprived background can have a different experience of transferring schools. Research conducted by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation indicates that children from all backgrounds see the advantages of school, but deprived children are more likely to feel anxious and unconfident about school.¹³ Positive impacts could result however due to the increased level of pupil support available in Ysgol Cwm Brombil.

There may be a disproportionate impact on women as there are 2.8m lone parent families in the UK and approx. 90% of single parents are women. Children in single parent families are twice at risk of living in relative poverty than those in couple families (poverty rates are 47 per cent and 24 per cent respectively).¹⁴

The requirement to purchase a new school uniform may disproportionately impact upon lower income families. Often, where possible, uniforms are 'handed down' within lower income families – this would no longer be possible as children would now attend a different school with a different uniform requirement. The Children's Society estimates that the average yearly spend on secondary school uniforms totals £316, and that a quarter of a million UK children attend a school based on the cost of the uniform.¹⁵

As local authorities have a legal duty to provide free home to school transport for learners of compulsory school age (for those attending secondary school the distance is 3 miles or further from the nearest suitable school) pupils from families with low incomes are likely not to be impacted by any increased travel costs.¹⁶

The costs of extra transport for pupils to access extracurricular provision is not provided by the local authority in any of the secondary schools in Neath Port Talbot, and this could impact negatively upon Cymer Afan Comprehensive pupils from low income families. All schools make provision to meet the needs of their pupils and Ysgol Cwm Brombil Governing Body have indicated that this will be a matter for their consideration should the proposal proceed.

Other negative impacts on families on low incomes may be caused through the difficulties in travelling to Ysgol Cwm Brombil to attend parents' evenings, school events or to collect pupils who may become ill during the school day. These are not uncommon situations across the local authority where pupils attend schools some distance away from their place of residence, however this can be managed by the school senior leadership team and Governing Body with the support of the Local Authority if required, to ensure measures are put in place to plan for these eventualities.

In June 2018 the Cabinet Secretary for Education announced increased funding for provision of uniform grants and greater financial assistance for disadvantaged learners through the introduction of the Pupil Development Grant-Access, including support to enable learners to engage in extracurricular, enrichment and after school activities. This could mitigate against the negative impacts of the proposal on disadvantaged pupils.

Staff

Teaching and support staff are at risk of redundancy. There are a greater number of females than males employed in in Cymer Afan Comprehensive. Support staff are generally lower paid

¹³ JRF (2007): Experiences of poverty and educational disadvantage, available at: <https://www.jrf.org.uk/sites/default/files/jrf/migrated/files/2123.pdf>

¹⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/households-below-average-income-199495-to-201516>

¹⁵ The Children's Society (2015): Cost of School for Children in Poverty, available at: <https://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/sites/default/files/Queen%27s%20Speech%20-%20Cost%20of%20School%20for%20Children%20in%20Poverty.pdf>

¹⁶ National Welsh Assembly (2016) Home to school transport - a guide for constituents

and staff within this category who reside within the Afan Valley may have greater difficulty with redeployment, as they may experience greater challenges with travel costs.

This proposal could disproportionately impact on females however, the Council is pursuing a legitimate aim through improving the quality and efficiency of education in the Council's area and the decision to publish the proposals to discontinue Cymer Afan Comprehensive school is a proportionate means of achieving that aim.

Enhancements and mitigations

All pupils:

Possible enhancement or mitigation measures may include:

- Informing pupils of transition arrangements; for vulnerable students a range of support services are available from Cymer Afan Comprehensive and Ysgol Cwm Brombil, and the local authority
- Regular correspondence with pupils, and with parents/carers to ensure that they are aware of changes and able to support their children
- Home to school transport provided at no cost for eligible pupils
- 21st century school environment enhancing pupil well-being, improving motivation and pupil involvement
- Special taster sessions for new pupils at the new school so that pupils are aware of the layout of the school and can meet their peers.
- A larger pupil cohort and teacher base increasing the opportunity for wider peer social interaction/friendship groups and greater positive role model experiences

All staff:

Possible enhancement or mitigation measures may include:

- All school based staff will be supported by the relevant school policies and procedures which will include full consultation.
- The Council has secured an 'employer's pledge' with schools whereby school governing bodies have agreed to consider employing staff facing redundancy at any Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council school.
- Employees identified at risk of redundancy will be given access to the Council's prior consideration register.

Disability:

Currently any pupil with a disability is assessed on an individual basis and relevant modifications, adaptation or reasonable adjustments made where applicable. This is the case for all types of disabilities, to ensure that any impacts caused by the transfer process are minimised it is recommended that a transition plan is put in place for each pupil. This could include:

- Planned communication between the schools to ensure pupil needs are understood to support work to ensure each pupil's statement or individual education plan has been reviewed, and appropriate provisions have been made.
- Regular correspondence with parents/carers to ensure that they are aware of changes.
- Special taster sessions for new pupils at the new school so that pupils are aware of the layout of the school.
- Transport provided free to eligible pupils, with individual pupil needs assessed and adjustments made as identified
- Local authority learning support service staff can provide additional support for pupils with SEN during transition and through the early stages of attending the new school.
- Larger staff population enabling greater access to specialist staff

- New build school meeting all accessibility regulations and an area of the building has already been designated as a student services hub, where all pupils can access support services.
- Ysgol Cwm Brombil has appointed a Special Education Needs Coordinator (SENCO) and an Additional Learning Needs Coordinator (ALNCO) to oversee the range of needs that will be present in the new school.

Race:

To enhance the possible positive impacts, actions may include:

- Encouraging socialising/mixing between pupils who transfer from Cymer Afan Comprehensive School to establish new peer/friendship groups. This could include:
- Special taster sessions for new pupils at the new school so that pupils can meet their peers.
- Organised social activities across a range of interests including sport, drama and music.

Sex:

To help minimise the possible negative impacts actions may include:

- Awareness raising with parents and educational professionals of the potential difficulties that could be experienced by pupils of different sexes during times of transition and communicating the potential need to be more sensitive and responsive to students, so that they feel nurtured and supported during the transition period.¹⁷
- Special taster sessions for new pupils at the new school so that pupils are aware of the layout of the school, the timetable and the teachers and are aware of the new school routine in advance
- Encourage pupils who transfer from Cymer Afan Comprehensive School to establish new peer/friendship groups. This could include
 - Special taster sessions for new pupils at the new school so that pupils can meet their peers
 - Organised social activities across a range of interests including sport, drama and music.

(b) Impact on the Welsh Language

The school is an English-medium school, therefore pupils are taught through the medium of English, although Welsh is taught as a second language in line with the National Curriculum. It is proposed that pupils will transfer to Ysgol Cwm Brombil, which is also an English-medium school.

A separate Welsh Language Impact Assessment has been undertaken to assess potential impacts the closure may have on the Welsh Language. This Impact Assessment concluded that *‘Welsh language standards are good at Dyffryn School (the proxy school for Ysgol Cwm Brombil) and combined with the advantages of a larger pupil cohort where there will be more opportunities to develop Welsh language skills, transfer to Ysgol Cwm Brombil should result in a positive impact on Welsh language development for Cymer Afan Comprehensive school pupils. As such, the Council is satisfied that provision for Welsh language will be at least comparable with the provision currently offered at Cymer Afan Comprehensive school.’*

NPTCBC has developed a Welsh in Education Strategic Plan and action plans produced as part of this strategy will be applied to Welsh-medium education and Welsh as a second language across all schools in the local authority.

¹⁷ R. Hanewald (2013): Transition Between Primary and Secondary School: Why it is Important and How it can be Supported available at: <http://ro.ecu.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1952&context=ajte>

Actions (to increase positive/mitigate adverse impact).
Action any points raised as part of the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan

Section 4 - Other Impacts:

(a) Equalities

Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED)

- to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- to advance equality of opportunity between different groups; and
- to foster good relations between different groups

Possible impact on meeting the Public Sector Equality Duty

This EqIA has been undertaken to fulfil the Council's statutory duties under s149 of the Equality Act 2010 and reg.8 of the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011. The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) is set out at section 149 of the Equality Act and is provided in full in Figure 7 below. The PSED requires that public authorities – such as government departments, local authorities and others delivering public functions have due regard to the three equality needs in the exercise of their functions.

The PSED requires public bodies to consider the likely impact of the policy under consideration before deciding whether to take a decision. In this way the PSED plays a role in in shaping policy, in delivering services and in relation to their own employees.

Figure 7: Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010: The Public Sector Equality Duty

- (1) A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to—
 - (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
 - (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- (2) A person who is not a public authority but who exercises public functions must, in the exercise of those functions, have due regard to the matters mentioned in subsection (1).
- (3) Having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to—
 - (a) remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
 - (b) take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
 - (c) encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

Source: Equality Act 2010

Public authorities must demonstrate that they have shown due regard to the three equality needs set out in section 149 throughout the policy development process. The PSED is intended to support good decision-making – it encourages public bodies to understand how different people will be affected by their activities. This means policies and services are appropriate and accessible to all and meet different people's needs.

The Council is proposing to discontinue Cymer Afan Comprehensive school and make arrangements for pupils who would have attended there to receive their secondary education at Ysgol Cwm Brombil.

Under this proposal pupils would be transferring to a new build school which will be a state of the art 21st Century building and therefore will be fully compliant in terms of the requirements for disabled pupils. It will also enhance teaching and learning experiences for pupils, create opportunities to improve social interaction due to a larger peer group made up of a more diverse pupil population, and provide pupils with greater access to support for a wide range of additional learning needs.

Cymer Afan Comprehensive school and Ysgol Cwm Brombil are approximately 10 miles apart, requiring pupils to travel an alternative route to school. The Council has assessed relevant routes for their suitability, and will make arrangements for eligible pupils to receive free school transport. School journey and the travel times will be appropriate for pupils aged 11 to 16 years. Ysgol Cwm Brombil temporary Governing Body have indicated their willingness to consider how to best support pupils to facilitate the opportunity for all pupils to access extra curriculum activities.

Pupils who choose not to attend Ysgol Cwm Brombil may be able to attend a school elsewhere subject to parental choice and availability of places in the identified school. Pupils may also be eligible for free transport to a school other than Ysgol Cwm Brombil in line with the home to school transport policy criteria.

It is recognised that the proposal will have a negative impact on the staff due to loss of employment. Staff may have the opportunity to apply for positions at schools elsewhere, as will governors, although the arrangements for federation in the upper Afan Valley will continue.

Additionally, the Council has secured an 'employer's pledge' with schools whereby school governing bodies have agreed to consider employing staff facing redundancy at any Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council school. Employees identified at risk of redundancy will be given access to the Council's prior consideration register. For those staff members who are employees of centrally delivered catering and cleaning services due to the flexibility of this service there may be opportunities within the service area for staff to transfer to other schools or venues. Other school support staff will be supported by the relevant school policies and procedures which will include full consultation.

Previous experience has shown that some staff wish to secure employment in an alternative school but others take the opportunity to take on new challenges elsewhere. The Council is proud of its track record for supporting staff in such situations.

NPTCBC aspires to deliver an inclusive education service. All schools have policies in place to prevent discrimination, harassment and victimisation both for the benefit of pupils and school staff.

Work already done to improve the above

Details of the actions taken to mitigate or enhance possible impacts are detailed in section 3.

Actions (to mitigate adverse impact or to address identified gaps in knowledge).

Pupils:

- 21st century school environment enhancing pupil well-being, improving motivation and pupil involvement made available in Ysgol Cwm Brombil for pupils of the upper Afan Valley
- Home to school transport provided at no cost for eligible pupils
- Individual pupil needs assessed and supported accordingly
- Ensuring pupils are supported through well planned transition events
- Regular correspondence with pupils, and with parents/carers to ensure that they are aware of changes and able to support their children

Staff

- All school based staff will be supported by the relevant school policies and procedures which will include full consultation.
- Employees identified at risk of redundancy will be given access to the Council's prior consideration register.

Actions to advance equality of opportunity

- 21st century school environment benefits made available in Ysgol Cwm Brombil for pupils of the upper Afan Valley to include
 - Improved teaching and learning provision
 - Greater access to specialised staff and resources
 - Modern building standards ensuring accessibility and DDA requirements are met
 - Broader curriculum provision, particularly for key stage 4 pupils
 - Opportunities for wider peer social interaction

Actions to foster good relations

- Encourage and develop relationships between the different groups of pupils in Ysgol Cwm Brombil through
 - Organised social activities across a range of interests including sport, drama and music.
 - Taster days for Cymer Afan pupils to meet Cwm Brombil pupils and establish friendships
- Encourage community interaction through
 - Pupil attendance at events at or around Ysgol Cwm Brombil to encourage a sense of belonging to the larger school community
 - Pupil presence at events and activities in the upper Afan Valley community to maintain the links with the communities where pupils live

(b) Reduce Social Exclusion and Poverty**Possible impact**

As detailed in section 2, Cymer Afan Comprehensive school currently has a higher than average proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals (eFSM) at 31%; the average for the Local Authority is 22% and 17% for Wales.

The school has an above average population of pupils who are deemed to have additional learning needs, (34%) . The school also has a minority population of pupils who are looked after children (1.9%).

Work already done to improve the above

Cymer Afan Comprehensive school receives a Pupil Development Grant (PDG), as is the case for all schools in Neath Port Talbot who have pupils on roll who are eligible for free school meals (e FSM). The school chooses to use the grant to fund teaching assistants to provide intervention programmes to improve pupil outcomes and well-being. It is also used to resource of an intervention facility managed by two members of staff who work one to one with pupils from vulnerable groups in an effort to improve literacy and numeracy skills.

Additionally local authority services provide support for vulnerable pupils, which includes Social, Emotional and Behavioural difficulties support workers, the Education Welfare officer, the Looked After Children support officer, the educational psychologist service and school counsellor, in line with other schools in Neath Port Talbot with vulnerable pupils.

Actions (to mitigate adverse impact or to address identified gaps in knowledge).

NPTCBC believe that Dyffryn School (Dyffryn School is used by the Council as a proxy for the new school) offers at least the same level of support for eFSM and vulnerable pupils as Cymer Afan Comprehensive and as such the efforts to reduce social exclusion and poverty will continue.

Currently, at both schools:

- engagement officers work closely with individual pupils to support them in developing their emotional well-being and resilience so that they are more equipped to deal with the challenges that school presents and that often act as barriers to their learning; and
- literacy and numeracy support officers work with individual eFSM pupils identified as needing additional support (through the POD facility in Cymer Afan and through a facility labelled 'COPE' in Dyffryn).
- PDG

This provision will continue in Ysgol Cwm Brombil and will benefit Cymer Afan pupils should the proposal be implemented.

Additionally Ysgol Cwm Brombil has identified an area of the new building which has already been designated as a student services hub where all pupils will be able to access additional support appropriate to need. This is likely to improve provision for support for Cymer Afan pupils as a wider range of services will be available to them than those they experience currently.

(c) Community Cohesion

Impact on Community Cohesion

There are potential positive impacts associated with transferring schools for pupils regarding community cohesion. Research suggests that mixed schools (defined as schools with intergroup contact) result in more social mixing between ethnic groups, and that pupils generally have more positive attitudes towards those from different ethnic groups. In contrast, in predominately White-British schools, pupils in the study reported having no close outgroup friends towards the end of their first year of secondary school.¹⁸ Cymer Afan Comprehensive school has only one BAME pupil; BAME pupils at Dyffryn School (the secondary school currently serving the area) represent 8% of the

¹⁸ Department for Education (2017), Diversity and Social Cohesion in Mixed and Segregated Secondary Schools in Oldham, available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/634118/Diversity_and_Social_Cohesion_in_Oldham_schools.pdf

pupil cohort. The additional BAME cohort increases opportunities for cultural awareness and integration, and positively supports community cohesion.

A community impact assessment has been carried out in line with the requirements of the School Organisation Code. This is an assessment of the impact on community usage of those facilities and services currently available at Cymer Afan Comprehensive school. The assessment recognises the importance of Cymer Afan Comprehensive school and the part it plays in the wider community. Community provision and activities that have been developed over an extended period at the school site will be displaced under this proposal; however opportunities exist to relocate activity from the school to alternative locations and the area under review is well served by community facilities. The assessment reports that these locations can be enhanced as appropriate with no loss of amenity to the wider community and recommends that plans are put in place to mitigate any loss.

Actions (to mitigate adverse impact or to address identified gaps in knowledge).

Actions to enhance the possible positive impacts may include:

- Encouraging socialising/mixing between pupils who transfer from Cymer Afan Comprehensive School to establish new peer/friendship groups. This could include:
- Special taster sessions for new pupils at the new school so that pupils can meet their peers.

Actions to mitigate for loss of amenity to the wider community could include:

- Negotiations with 'Llandarcy Park Ltd' and the 'NPTC Group' to relocate the school Fitness Suite to the Afan Valley Swimming Pool. This would involve infilling the Learner Pool to create a separate gym facility which would augment the current pool usage, the recently installed sauna and the jacuzzi that is being planned for. Initial concept plans have been drawn up following the UAV Sports Facilities Feasibility Study completed by 'Community Design Gwent' in May 2009.
- Displacing the Youth Club that is staged on a Tuesday and Friday to the Cymer Afan Primary school Sports Hall. This has the capacity to accommodate the 48 individuals that make use of the Service in 2016/17.
- Transferring management of the Red Field to the Croeserw F.C. If this proved to be uneconomic in the short to medium term the playing field would revert back to nature with the football club then concentrating its fixtures on Tudor Field.
- Making new management arrangements for the Cymer Afan Primary School Sports Hall and floodlit artificial turf pitch. Consultees felt there was insufficient administrative support within the primary schools to undertake this function in the absence of the Comprehensive School and a Business Manager. Initial discussions have been held between 'Llandarcy Park Ltd' and the Local Authority with regard to managing the Sports Hall and the artificial turf pitch at arm's length from the Afan Valley Swimming Pool. This will need to be further explored.
- Displacing community hires such as 'Slimming World' to an alternative location such as the Croeserw Community Enterprise Centre.
- Renewing the management capacity of the four remaining federated primary schools to ensure the continued benefit of shared leadership, staffing, buildings, IT, facilities and experience is enjoyed.

Section 5 Consultation and Engagement

Consultation and engagement undertaken (e.g. with the public and/or members of protected groups) to support the views in section 3 and 4

On 9th November 2017, the Neath Port Talbot Council's Education, Skills and Culture Cabinet board decided to consult on the future of education in the upper Afan Valley. A consultation of stakeholders at the Cymer Afan Comprehensive School, interested parties and the wider community was undertaken between 11th December 2017 to 14th February 2018. The full list of consultees is available in Appendix A of the 'Future of Secondary Education in the Upper Afan Valley Consultation Report' (2018). On 20th June 2018 the Council determined to publish its proposal allowing 28 days, i.e. until the 23rd July 2018 for the receipt of objections. The Council's response to the objections received is available in the "The 'Future of Secondary Education in the Upper Afan Valley Objection Report' (2018).

Through this consultation and engagement, stakeholders and objectors expressed a number of concerns related to the potential equality impacts of the proposal to close Cymer Afan Comprehensive School. The impacts that were identified by stakeholders were understood to have the potential to affect those with a disability and children aged 16 and under, which are protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010, as well as those suffering from deprivation, who would also be vulnerable to the effects of the decision.

Impacts on pupils from deprived backgrounds

Through this consultation, concerns were raised about the impact of moving school on vulnerability of deprived students, who are already a vulnerable group, as moving schools is an indicator of deprivation for the local authority's Vulnerability Assessment Profile (VAP).

- Moving schools is included in the VAP because pupils who move many times during their school years can increase risk of underachievement, and that the purpose of the VAP is not only to identify vulnerable pupils, but also to ensure the school and local authority plan and provide for their needs and provision.
- The Council believes that the impact of the proposal would remain the same in this regard, as the pupils that have been identified by the VAP will still be included in and catered for by this tool.

Stakeholders and objectors also raised concerns about the potential negative impacts of moving from a smaller school to a larger school on academic performance, and how this would specifically impact on deprivation.

- Estyn's report 'School Size and Educational Effectiveness' (December 2013) suggests that larger schools of 1,101 pupils or more outperform small secondary schools of less than 600 pupils, and that larger schools were found to require less 'significant improvement' or 'special measures', and were found to have greater pupil well-being
- Neath Port Talbot has the second highest number of pupils entitled to free school meals in Wales, and that it could be argued that all schools in the County Borough are affected by deprivation to some degree (which implies that the impact of school size is negligible).
- There are potential positive impacts to be gained from moving to a larger school as a larger pupil population provides greater resources available to support pupils, and more opportunities for pupils to benefit from social interaction with a wider peer group

Impacts on pupils with a disability

Through this consultation and engagement, concerns were raised around the impact of losing existing successful working relationships between Additional Learning Needs (ALN)

pupils and staff at Cymer Afan Comprehensive school.

The Council supports all schools in making provisions for pupils with ALN, and both Cymer Afan Comprehensive and Dyffryn School have ALN pupils (Dyffryn School is used by the Council as a proxy for the new school). Dyffryn School have around 200 (24%) pupils with ALN, and they have introduced a range of strategies, including the use of a school-based counsellor, to improve pupil resilience and well-being. The intervention programmes taking place in the Place of Development (POD) facility, which has been reported by Estyn in 'Inspection report Cymer Afan Comprehensive School (2015) to be of high quality, are similar to the programmes taking place in all secondary schools in Neath Port Talbot. For example, the Emotional Literacy Support (ELSA) programme, which is provided by the POD, is also provided at Dyffryn School.

- The Council believes that the support currently received by ALN pupils at Cymer Afan Comprehensive is likely to be of at least the same standard if they transfer to Ysgol Cwm Brombil, and that Cymer Afan Comprehensive's robust and thorough identification and monitoring of ALN pupils' needs, and the creation of high quality individual education plans, will all aid in the transition to Ysgol Cwm Brombil. The transition will be supported by work between Cymer Afan Comprehensive and Ysgol Cwm Brombil to ensure each pupil's statement or individual education plan has been reviewed, and appropriate provisions have been made.
- Additionally, Ysgol Cwm Brombil has appointed a Special Education Needs Coordinator (SENCO) and an Additional Learning Needs Coordinator (ALNCO) to oversee the range of needs that will be present in the new school, and an area of the building has already been designated as a student services hub, where all pupils can access support services.
- Pupils would be transferring to a new build school which will be a state of the art 21st Century building and therefore will be fully compliant in terms of the requirements for disabled pupils, and will offer enhanced teaching and learning facilities.

Impacts on children aged 16 and under

During the consultation and engagement, stakeholders and objectors raised concerns related to impacts of closing Cymer Afan Comprehensive and moving school on children aged 16 and under. These included comments on the impact of moving to a school that could be of lesser quality, the disruption in learning caused by closing the school, and the impact of longer travel distances and travel times to and from school on the children's health, well-being and education.

- Statistics published by the Wales National School Categorisation System for 2016 and 2017 imply that Dyffryn School is outperforming Cymer Afan Comprehensive in GCSE achievement. Dyffryn School has also been categorised as a 'green' support category school for 2017-2018, indicating that it requires the least support and is a highly effective school with a track record in maintaining a high level of learner outcomes, whereas Cymer Afan Comprehensive School is within the 'yellow' support category, which indicates that it requires slightly more support, and is an effective school with a track record in maintaining good learner outcomes. Estyn state that overall, the proposal is likely to at least maintain the standards of education and provision in the area.
- Should the proposal be approved, pupils will start as a group at Ysgol Cwm Brombil in September 2019, the beginning of the school year, and this move will be preceded by planned transition events for pupils, regular staff meetings to discuss pupils, curriculum arrangements. ALN support, and other endeavours to support the move. In addition, care will be taken to plan for pupils in Year 10 and 11 who will be sitting GCSE examinations at the time of the move, in order to minimise disruptions.

- The Council believes that the move is unlikely to have a detrimental impact on attainment; data gathered from another recent school reorganisation project with a similar pupil cohort has demonstrated that those pupils exceeded expectations at the end of key stage 4 and it is to be expected that this would be the case in this situation also.

A comment was raised around the impact of losing the expertise of secondary school teachers, who currently provide some specialist curriculum to primary pupils.

- The Council recognises that if the secondary school were to close then secondary staff who work across the federation may no longer be available and the delivery of some more specialist curriculum areas in the primary schools could be lost. It is anticipated that a partnership between Ysgol Cwm Brombil and partner primary schools in the upper Afan Valley will be developed further and could include similar specialist teaching as is currently experienced.

A number of stakeholders and objectors were concerned about the potential detrimental impacts of the long bus journey to the new school on the children's health, safety and education.

- The Council acknowledges that for some pupils the ability to walk or cycle from home to school will be lost under this proposal, which has detrimental impacts on health. To mitigate this, the school will provide curricular and extra-curricular opportunities to take part in activities that promote fitness and health, and opportunities to learn about the importance of a healthy lifestyle.
- The Council notes that current school travel arrangements have pupils travelling to Cymer Afan Comprehensive by bus, and that future arrangements can be made to have the bus pick students up at points that would better facilitate walking or cycling to the bus stop. The Council considers travel by bus to the new school to be the most reasonable mode of transport, and that the journey time is of a reasonable length (45 minutes to the farthest community each way)
- The Council's response to concerns raised around the impact of the long journey on well-being is that discussions with pupils imply that the experience of the bus journey is an individual experience, which can either increase stress and anxiety, or be an enjoyable and productive experience, and that evidence implies that the journey should not have a significant impact on well-being.

Additional comments were made regarding the potential detrimental health impacts of increased pollution, due to increased road travel to and from the new school.

- The Council encourages families to make use of the free home to school travel services.
- To address concerns around impacts on education due to having to rise earlier for the journey, and potentially spending less time participating extra-curricular activities including visiting the pool and the library, Ysgol Cwm Brombil will seek to put in place the necessary arrangements to ensure pupils have adequate access to extra-curricular activities.

Impacts on deprivation in the Upper Afan Valley

There were concerns raised about the effect of school closure on the deprivation in the community, due to the jobs that will be lost.

- Should a decision be taken to close the school, all staff with contracts attached to Cymer Afan Comprehensive School will be declared redundant, and these employees will be supported by the Council's policies, which includes full consultation, and HR staff. While it is expected that some staff will take up positions at the new school, previous experience has shown that in a school reorganisation

some staff will seek work elsewhere.

Further concerns were raised around impacts of the school closure on deprivation in the community, as the closure could increase isolation of the upper Afan Valley from other parts of Neath Port Talbot.

- The Community Impact Assessment found that there are opportunities to relocate community-based activity from the school to alternative locations, with no loss of amenity to the wider community. It was also explained that the proposal is not intended to isolate the upper Afan Valley, rather, it is expected to expand opportunities and experiences for children and young people in the community. There is no impact on public transport or highway provision associated with this proposal.

Actions (to mitigate adverse impact or to address identified gaps in knowledge)

The Council has responded to the potential impacts raised by responses to the consultation and has set out where and how they will mitigate potential adverse impacts, these should be monitored and action plans set in place to ensure their delivery.

Should a disproportionate impact on a particular protected group be identified, there is no real risk of indirect discrimination as the Council is pursuing a legitimate aim (improving the quality and efficiency of education in the Council's area) and the decision to publish the proposals to discontinue Cymer Afan Comprehensive school is a proportionate means of achieving that aim.

Section 6 – Post Consultation

Outcome of the consultation/objections

The outcomes of the consultation have been reported to the Council’s Joint Cabinet and Education, Skills and Culture Scrutiny Committee on 20th June 2018.

Members determined to progress the proposal to the statutory notice period, commencing on 26th June 2018, allowing for 28 days for receipt of objections.

The outcome of the objection period will be considered by Members before final determination of the proposal on 6th September 2018.

Section 7 - Monitoring arrangements:

The arrangements in place (or those which will be put in place) to monitor the impact of this function, service, policy, procedure, strategy, plan or project:

Monitoring arrangements:

NPTCBC details that monitoring will be via:

- data received from each school;
- reports from challenge advisor Core Visits; and
- Estyn Inspection reports.

Actions: see action plan

Section 8 – Outcomes:

Officers have considered each of the three equality needs, as outlined above. No risk of direct discrimination has been identified, as the Council’s proposal does not treat any person less favourably because of a protected characteristic. No risk of indirect discrimination has been identified. The way in which the proposal may affect different protected groups has been set out above. It has been identified that the proposal may have a particular impact on female members of staff (as they make up 72% of the staff of the school). However, any particular disadvantage suffered by a particular protected group does not give rise to real risk of indirect discrimination, as a decision to close Cymer Afan Comprehensive School will be pursuing a legitimate aim and is proportionate. The Council is pursuing a legitimate aim, namely that of improving the quality and efficiency of education for pupils in its area. The proposal is a proportionate means of achieving that aim, in light of all the mitigating measures set out above. Implementing the proposal will provide the pupils of the upper Afan Valley with a 21st century learning environment and increased learning opportunities. It will also enable the Council to make more effective use of its resources for investment in education. The conclusion of this assessment is that Outcome 1 is the course of action to be pursued.

- | | |
|----------------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Outcome 1: Continue the initiative... | X |
| Outcome 2: Adjust the initiative... | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Outcome 3: Justify the initiative... | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Outcome 4: Stop and remove the initiative... | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Action Plan:

Objective - What are we going to do and why?	Who will be responsible for seeing it is done?	When will it be done by?	Outcome - How will we know we have achieved our objective?	Progress
Monitor impact on protected groups following closure of Cymer Afan Comprehensive (CAC) (subject to proposal implementation)	Director of ELLL, Head of Transformation, SSIP, EDS	Information gathered end of academic year 2019 -2020	Mitigating measures have been successful; enhancing measures have led to improved experiences for pupils	
Monitor transition arrangements for pupils from CAC to Ysgol Cwm Brombil (YCB)	SSIP, EDS, SFL, GB of both schools	Work undertaken throughout academic year 2018-2019. Review in Autumn 2019, further information gathered end of academic year 2019 -2020	Transition arrangements have ensured that all pupils who transfer to YCB are secure and confident about arrangements	
Monitor staff redeployment data for staff employed at CAC at point of closure	Director of ELLL, Head of Transformation, HR, SSIP	Information gathered end of 2019	Data demonstrates that where appropriate staff have been successfully redeployed	
Actions from WESP implemented at YCB as appropriate	Director of ELLL, Head of Transformation, EDS	Ongoing	WESP actions successfully implemented	
Monitor ALN provision at YCB to ensure vulnerable pupils are supported effectively	Director of ELLL, Head of Transformation, Inclusion support teams, EDS	Through academic year 2019 -2020	Vulnerable pupils are succeeding at YCB and are receiving effective support	
Support community groups to relocate services as applicable and as appropriate	Project development team	Ongoing	No loss to community facilities reported	