

Risk Assessment

Strategic School Improvement Programme – future of secondary education in the upper Afan Valley

Context

1. This risk assessment¹ has been carried out in line with the Council's Risk Management Policy 2015.
2. Implementing the proposal will result in the closure of Cymer Afan Comprehensive School with educational provision being made for the pupils at Ysgol Cwm Brombil which will subsequently serve the catchment of the upper Afan Valley.

The reasons for the proposal

3. The Council is responsible for promoting high educational standards and for delivering efficient primary and secondary education. This will involve reviewing the number and type of schools the Council has in its area and assessing whether or not best use is being made of resources and facilities in order to ensure future provision is sustainable.
4. 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.
5. Cymer Afan Comprehensive is by any measure a small secondary school. A school with 600 pupils or fewer is generally regarded as a small secondary school. Currently, Cymer Afan Comprehensive School has 229 pupils on roll.
6. Pupil numbers are not forecasted to increase sufficiently to change its small secondary school status.
7. Cymer Afan Comprehensive school building has significant surplus places. It has capacity for approx. 640 pupils but with 229 pupils on roll it is carrying nearly 64% surplus capacity.

¹ First iteration: 311017 (rvg) /second iteration: 050618 (rc/rvg)

8. In the current financial year², 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. This compares to £7,111³, per pupil during the previous financial year, approx. 60% above the average.
9. Cymer Afan Comprehensive school has backlog maintenance and accessibility costs amounting to c.£3m. The site is assessed as overall condition C, with many of the building and mechanical elements are nearing the end of their life span and will require replacing within the next 2-4 years.
10. There is suitable, alternative English-medium provision available within the County Borough at Ysgol Cwm Brombil, which offers a new build 21st Century school, and at Cefn Saeson Comprehensive school. There is also suitable English-medium provision at Maesteg Comprehensive School.
11. The Council is proposing to make arrangements for pupils from the upper Afan Valley to receive their secondary education at Ysgol Cwm Brombil, a £30m investment by the Council in a new build school with 21st century school facilities.
12. Teaching and learning opportunities are increased in new build state of the art facilities and an evaluation of a new, 21st century school build in Neath Port Talbot has shown high levels of satisfaction and support from the pupils, their parents and stakeholders.

Risks associated with the proposal

13. The potential risks associated with the proposal comprise the Council's reputation, educational standards, financial management, staff employment and service delivery.
14. Potential risk areas in implementing the proposal include:

² School budget share allocation: 2018/2019

³ School budget share allocation: 2017/2018 as reported in the consultation document

- resistance to change leading to lack of pupil, parent and staff support
- educational standards not maintained
- loss of community facilities
- increased home to school travel time impacting on attendance and performance
- staff anxiety about job security
- negative impact on existing federation
- budget allocation insufficient to meet needs
- Welsh language not developed further

15. Failing to implement the proposal will result in the following teaching/learning and financial benefits not being fully realised, particularly in relation to:

- providing a stimulating and innovative teaching and learning environment that will impact positively on the self-esteem and well-being of all pupils
- access to a wider range of staff expertise
- opportunities for wider peer group interaction
- a more efficient and effective use of resources, and savings from economies of scale
- greater protection against the impact of a schools funding formula review
- reduction in the number of surplus pupil places and improving the school building environment

Risk assessment

16. The benefits of reorganisation, as set out above, together with the planned action measures in the table below will mitigate the effects of identified risks. A new school provides greater prospects for improving educational attainment for pupils. Estyn (Jan 2007) reported on the performance of schools before and after moving into new buildings, stating that ageing school buildings which are in a poor state of repair cannot meet modern teaching and learning needs. The report also states that inadequate buildings make improvements in standards more challenging and that in nearly all schools with new or refurbished buildings, pupils attainment and achievement have improved and in some cases the improvement has been significant.

17. To address staff anxiety about their employment situation all school based staff will be supported by the relevant school policies and procedures which will include full consultation. Previous experience has shown that some staff will take the opportunity to take on new challenges elsewhere. Employees identified at risk of redundancy will be given access to the Council's prior consideration register. The Council is committed to supporting staff at risk of compulsory redundancy and has secured the support and goodwill of the teacher associations/trade unions and governing bodies across the Council, via an employers' pledge. The Council has a good track record for supporting staff in such situations.
18. The distance between the upper Afan Valley and Ysgol Cwm Brombil is more than 3 miles, therefore assistance with travel will be provided to eligible pupils. Support with home to school travel will be made available in line with the Council's Home to School Transport policy. The Council is also obliged to provide transport to the nearest suitable school including schools Authority's area.
19. Whereas the need to understand and mitigate the impact of a school reorganisation proposal on a community is a right and proper consideration, the deciding factor in determining school organisation proposals should be one of securing the best educational offer for pupils.

Risk register

No	Risk description	L'hood score	Impact score	Overall Risk (Lxl)	Prox'ty *	Planned action to mitigate	Target Date	Owner	Update	Trend - Up - Down - No change
1	Resistance to change leading to lack of pupil, parent and staff support	5	4	High risk	1	Consultation meetings. Effective communication with pupils, parents and staff. Thorough transition planning	Spring/summer terms 2018	- SSIP team - Governing bodies and head teachers (Cymer Afan Comprehensive and YNM)	Consultation completed Feb 2018	- No change
2	Educational standards not maintained	1	5	Low risk	4	Implementation of proposal, and appropriate support and challenge to ensure entitlements are met and provision delivered	Sept 2019 on going	- SSIP team - ELLLS - Temp Governing Body (YNM) - Head Teacher (YNM) - Support for inclusion/school governance team		- No change

3	Loss of community facilities	1	4	Low risk	1	Full committee usage impact assessment to be undertaken as part of the consultation. Outcome will inform decision making	Spring 2018	SSIP team	Community Impact Assessment completed Nov 18- all school based activities re able to be relocated	-	Down
4	Increased home to school travel time impacting on attendance and performance	2	4	Medium risk	2	Support available through Council's Home to School transport policy. EWO support for pupils and families	Autumn term 2019	Road Safety Team EWO service SSIP team		-	No change
5	Staff anxiety about job security	5	4	High Risk	1	Support made available for staff through relevant school and county policies	Summer/autumn terms 2018	HR SSIP team		-	No change
6	Negative impact on existing federation	2	3	Medium risk	3	Planning and support provided for potential reorganisation of federation	Spring/summer terms 2019	SSIP team ELLLS EDS Governing Body (federation)		-	No change

7	Budget allocation insufficient to meet needs	2	5	Medium risk	3	Implementation of proposal together with a formula funding review	2018/2019	ELLLS SSIP team	-	No change
8	Welsh language development not developed further	1	3	Low risk	4	Welsh will be taught in line with the national curriculum guidelines for an English-medium school. A larger school presents greater opportunity for language diversity and development with potentially more Welsh speakers available on the staff complement.	Ongoing: 2019	ELLLS Temp Governing Body Head Teacher	-	No change