

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Cabinet
21st October 2020

REPORT OF HEAD OF TRANSFORMATION ANDREW THOMAS

MATTER FOR DECISION

WARDS AFFECTED: Alltwen, Godre'rgraig, Pontardawe, Rhos Trebanos, Ystalyfera,

STRATEGIC SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME - PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH AN ENGLISH- MEDIUM 3-11 SCHOOL TO REPLACE ALLTWEN, GODRE'RGRAIG AND LLANGIWG PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Purpose of report

1. To obtain Cabinet approval to consult on a proposal to establish an English-medium 3-11 school with a specialist learning support centre, in new build premises to accommodate pupils from the current catchment areas of Alltwen Primary, Godre'rgraig Primary and Llangiwg primary, all of which will close on 31st August 2024.

Executive summary

2. 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.
3. Neath Port Talbot 's 21st century schools Band B Strategic Outline Plan included a proposal for a new build 3-16 middle school,

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however following informal discussions with stakeholders it was decided that the scheme should be amended.

4. It is proposed therefore to establish an English-medium 3-11 school with a specialist learning support centre, in new build premises to accommodate pupils from the current catchment areas of Alltwen Primary, Godre'rgraig Primary and Llangiwg primary, all of which will close on 31st August 2024.
5. It is proposed that the new school will be built on land in Council ownership at Parc Ynysderw, Pontardawe and that it will form part of learning, health and wellbeing community campus made up of Cwmtawe Community School and Pontardawe Leisure Centre. The campus will be further enhanced by the addition of a new build swimming pool on the site to complement the current health and wellbeing offer for pupils and the wider community.
6. The new build will be funded jointly from Welsh Government 21st century School Programme capital grant monies and from the Council's prudential borrowing capacity. Welsh Government 21st Century Schools Programme capital grant funding has been approved, in principle.

Background

7. The Council is responsible for promoting high educational standards and for delivering efficient primary and secondary education. Having the right schools in the right place and ensuring that they are fit for the 21st century learner is the challenge facing the Council. Achieving 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.
8. Implementing the Council's Strategic School Improvement Programme (SSIP) involves reviewing existing provision and determining the number and type of schools needed to deliver education effectively and efficiently across the County Borough. It will most likely lead to substantial change involving opening new schools, closing existing schools, merging or amalgamating schools, federating schools and promoting new initiatives that support collaborative working between schools.
9. The Council has determined to review its provision on the basis of:

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- educational standards
 - the need for places and the accessibility of schools
 - the quality and suitability of school accommodation
 - effective financial management
10. Neath Port Talbot Council's 21st Century Schools Band B proposal submitted to Welsh Government included a project for a new build school in the Swansea Valley. The initial plans were to establish an 'English-medium, 'all-through' 3-16 school with capacity for 1284 pupils aged 11-16 and 750 pupils aged 3-11 (incl. Nursery), and would require the closure of Alltwen, Godre'rgraig, Llangiwg and Rhydyfro primary schools resulting in a reduction in backlog maintenance and accessibility costs of c. £2.7m with education for the pupils being provided at a whole new (primary phase) build on the site of the existing Cwmtawe Comprehensive school'.
 11. Additional scoping work has been undertaken, alongside a review of the number of pupils residing in the Swansea Valley area which now makes it necessary to reconsider the original planned scheme.
 12. As a result it is proposed that the original scheme is amended to become a new build English-medium school for 630 full time and 140 part time nursery pupils aged 3-11 with a specialist learning support centre, in new build premises to accommodate pupils from the current catchment areas of Alltwen Primary, Godre'rgraig Primary and Llangiwg Primary, all of which will close on 31st August 2024.

Reasons for the Amended Proposal

– Informal Consultation with Stakeholders

13. Informal consultation took place with local ward Members for the Swansea Valley area along with the AM and MP for Neath Constituency, and headteachers and Chairs of Governors for all of the schools in the area - Welsh and English-medium, primary and secondary.
14. The meetings were held to better understand the requirements of the different communities in the area and to gather information which could help shape the development of a proposal for the new school.

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15. Positive comments were received about the idea of a new build primary school although there were consistent concerns raised about a 3-16 (all through) model.
16. Further concerns were noted regarding the possible effect on nursery pupils, transport and travel arrangements, the management of traffic in and around the possible site, the effect that losing a school could have on its community and the size and composition of a new school.
17. Comments were also received about possible impacts on the Welsh-medium schools in the area and the impact on the development of the Welsh language as a whole.

– **A 3-16 Model**

18. The development of ‘all-through’ schools within Neath Port Talbot is a distinctive response to specific circumstances where school organisational change is required. As a concept, it has not been adopted as a political imperative nor is it a Council policy directive.
19. The ‘all-through’ school is recognised as a transformational model of education delivery that has potential teaching and learning benefits together with operational and financial efficiencies. Notwithstanding the benefits and efficiencies that can be achieved with this approach, it is acknowledged that there is no single ‘all-through’ model that is fit for purpose in all school organisation settings or that the ‘all-through’ approach is an appropriate solution for every situation.
20. The new proposed new build primary is likely to be situated on available land at Parc Ynysderw, Pontardawe in close proximity to Cwmtawe Community School.
21. To create an ‘all through’ school in this particular situation would require the closure of Cwmtawe Community School as well as the identified primary schools, and subsequently necessitate opening a new establishment for pupils aged 3-16 with a new Governing Body, new Headteacher and deputy head teacher(s) posts (which would need to be advertised nationally in line with Council policy) and with a suitable staffing structure to facilitate teaching and learning across both the primary and secondary phases.
22. Cwmtawe Community School is a successful and popular secondary school; reorganisation is likely to impact on the settled leadership

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structure that exists and may cause unnecessary uncertainty and anxiety for the school community.

23. The initial 'all through' proposal focussed on new build premises only for primary aged pupils and as such Cwmtawe Community School would remain in its current building. This would mean that the two phases would effectively be on a split site, making cross phase working more difficult than it would be in one building and so creating further logistical and leadership challenges.
24. No support was expressed during the informal consultation process for a 3-16 school in the Swansea Valley and there has been strong opposition to involving Cwmtawe Community Comprehensive in reorganisation proposals.
25. While it is recognised that an all through school can deliver many benefits, it is also the case that many of these benefits can be achieved through improving and strengthening partnership working between the primary and secondary phases. This can be achieved more easily when the schools involved are in close proximity as would be the case in this proposal.

The case for a 3-11 Model

26. There are 7 primary schools in the Swansea Valley area. Alltwen, Llangiwg, Rhydyfro, Godre'rgraig and Rhos Primaries provide English-medium primary education while YGG Trebannws and YGG Pontardawe provide primary education through the medium of Welsh.
27. In the last 10 years pupil numbers have increased significantly in the Swansea Valley area, with over 160 extra primary aged pupils attending either Welsh or English-medium schools. The pupil population is transient across the primary schools. Data indicates that pupil numbers can alter significantly over a short period of time, with substantial numbers of pupils attending from outside their schools catchment area, but from within the wider Swansea Valley area.

Table 1: Pupil Numbers

English-medium 3-11	Pupil numbers
Rhos	150
Alltwen	231
Llangiwg	136
Rhydyfro	167
Godre'rgraig	153

PLASC 2020

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28. There is a risk that establishing a 750 place school would not create enough pupil places to accommodate all the pupils from the schools that were originally considered for inclusion in the 'all through' scheme, namely Alltwen, Llangiwg, Rhydyfro and Godre'rgraig Primary schools. There is also a need to ensure that there are sufficient places for pupils who reside in the catchment area of the proposed new school but attend elsewhere and who would be able to claim a place should they wish to return to their catchment school. This potentially further increases the size of the school.

Table 2: Schools and Catchment Pupil Percentages

English Medium Schools	Percentage of pupils in catchment				
	Alltwen	Llangiwg	Rhydyfro	Godre'rgraig	Rhos
Alltwen	58%	19	6	6	4
Llangiwg	13	66%	5	11	1
Rhydyfro	4	22	61%	5	1
Godre'rgraig	1	6	1	82%	0
Rhos	15	5	7	2	64%

Data source: PLASC 2019

29. The Local Development Plan contains details of a number of new housing developments, 14 of which are planned for the Swansea Valley areas which could generate over 700 units by 2026. This could see a further increase in pupil numbers in the area adding to the numbers of pupils the proposed new school would need to accommodate.
30. Generally the proposal for a new English-medium school was welcomed by consultees, but little support was expressed for an amalgamation of Alltwen, Llangiwg, Rhydyfro and Godre'rgraig Primary schools into one 750 place primary school.
31. Alltwen and Llangiwg Primary schools are the nearest schools to the prospective site, both within 2 miles. Godre'rgraig Primary School is approximately 3.2 miles away from the prospective site.
32. Total backlog maintenance and accessibility costs for all three schools amounts to amount to over £2m. Additionally Llangiwg Primary operates across two sites a short distance apart.

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33. A new build school to accommodate pupils currently attending Alltwen, Godre'rgraig and Llangiwg Primary schools and those residing in the new school catchment attending English-medium schools in Neath Port Talbot or elsewhere who could claim a place would total 781 places (including part time nursery), should all pupils wish to attend.

The case for including a Learning Support Centre (LSC)

34. The Council provides for the pupils of Neath Port Talbot who require specialist support for their educational needs at two community special schools and at learning support/inclusion centres attached to community primary/secondary schools.
35. Recent work on reviewing the number and type of planned places and assessment provision across Neath Port Talbot has indicated that there is a need for extra places in the areas of Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (SEBD), and for those early years pupils with identified additional learning needs which require further assessment.
36. It is proposed that the new school includes an LSC for up to 16 primary aged pupils with a statement of ASD. Including this provision in the new build will ensure that pupils are provided with purpose built, 21st century standard facilities, with the aim of ensuring best possible outcomes for pupils, and will also address identified need for further provision for pupils with ASD, specifically primary aged pupils.
37. Currently for primary age pupils with ASD who need specialist support or assessment, provision is made at Gnoll Primary (18 places), Maesmarchog Primary (18 places) and Waunceirch Primary (17 places). Secondary provision is available at Cwmtawe Community School (13 places), Ysgol Bae Baglan (29 places), Ysgol Hendrefelin (16 places) and most recently at a newly established provision at Dwr Y Felin Comprehensive school (14 places). The high demand at both primary and secondary level is placing pressure on existing provisions which are consistently full
38. Data analysis suggests that a number of pupils within the Swansea Valley travel to gain additional learning support in specialist units elsewhere within Neath Port Talbot. Creating a new provision in the proposed new school would provide additional places in an area where need has been identified.

The Proposal

39. Taking account of the above considerations it is proposed to to establish an English-medium 3-11 school with a specialist learning support centre, in new build premises to accommodate pupils from the current catchment areas of Alltwen Primary, Godre'rgraig Primary and Llangiwg primary, all of which will close on 31st August 2024.
40. It is proposed that the new school will be built on land in Council ownership at Parc Ynysderw, Pontardawe and that it will form part of learning, health and wellbeing community campus made up of Cwmtawe Community School and Pontardawe Leisure Centre. The campus will be further enhanced by the addition of a new build 25 metre, 6 lane swimming pool with additional learner pool on the site, to complement the current health and wellbeing offer for pupils and the wider community.
41. The new English-medium community primary school for boys and girls aged 3-11 years will accommodate 630 full-time pupils and 140 part-time (70 a.m./70 p.m.) nursery age pupils. It will be managed with one head teacher and one governing body and will have one budget allocation and one group of staff.
42. The new school will serve the combined catchment areas of Alltwen, Llangiwg and Godre'rgraig primary schools. Pupils from the three existing schools will automatically transfer to the new school subject to parental preference.
43. The new school will provide primary education for children aged 3-11 in a new build 21st century facility which will provide a stimulating teaching and learning environment in state of the art facilities .
44. Additionally the new school will provide support for pupils through the establishment of an LSC for 16 pupils with a statement of ASD. It will also provide the opportunity to become a community hub for the area, building on the work already being undertaken by other well established primary school LSCs.
45. The new build will be funded jointly from Welsh Government 21st century School Programme capital grant monies and from the Council's prudential borrowing capacity.

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46. The scheme will also include a new build 25 metre 6 lane swimming pool with additional learner pool, to further enhance the physical activity and wellbeing opportunities for pupils who currently attend Alltwen, Godre'rgraig and Llangiwig primary schools and Cwmtawe Community School, as well as pupils attending nearby YGG Trebannws and YGG Pontardawe.
47. Furthermore the facilities will provide sustainable opportunities for swimming curriculum development for potentially 2500 pupils aged 3-16 in the nearby communities. The swimming pool will complement the current school and community facilities on site to deliver a 21st century health and wellbeing offer for pupils aged 0-16 and for wider community use, making it a sustainable delivery model.
48. The combined new build School, specialist ASD provision and pool will form part of a learning, health and wellbeing community campus at the Parc Ynysderw site, complementing the existing Cwmtawe Community School and Pontardawe Leisure Centre provision. In locating the new build facilities close to Cwmtawe Community School the development will enable pupils and staff from both schools to benefit from increased partnership working, made easier due to their close proximity.

Information about the proposed new school

49. The proposed new, 21st century build, English-medium 3-11 primary school will provide for up to 630 full-time primary age pupils, 140 part-time (70 a.m./70 p.m.) nursery age pupils. This will deliver sufficient accommodation for the total combined forecasted pupil numbers, including potential growth in pupil population. For the purpose of consultation, the proposed admission number for the new primary is 90.
50. A new build school provides 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.
51. With a new school comes more choices and improved opportunities because there is more space and better facilities. In the Estyn report of 2007, 'An evaluation of performance of schools before and after moving into new buildings or significantly refurbished premises', it is

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reported that the attainment and achievement of pupils improves significantly when they move into new or significantly refurbished buildings, particularly when schools are in areas with high levels of social and economic deprivation.

52. The new school will ensure that pupils have adaptable ICT facilities suitable for learning in the 21st century. Mobile technology will be integrated with a sound pedagogical base to provide pupils with enhanced learning experiences, equipping them with the key skills and motivation needed to raise standards.
53. The new build school will be an exciting place for pupils and staff both internally and externally. It will have spacious, light and airy classrooms, with access to a range of high quality and appropriate spaces for social interaction. The 2015 report, 'Clever Classrooms', found that well designed schools can significantly boost children's academic performance in reading, writing and maths. The school will allow for the delivery of a pupil centred, inclusive and skills based curriculum that extends to social and sporting activities. It will aim to promote equality and inclusion by providing facilities, sporting and cultural, which can be accessed by pupils and which the school can share with the community.
54. A new build of this kind is a significant investment in the future of the young people of the area and clearly signals that the Council is serious about making schools fit for purpose places of learning.

Information about the proposed LSC

55. The new school will include an LSC which will provide learning support for pupils with ASD for up to 16 pupils who are in receipt of a Statement of SEN.
56. The provision will be managed by the school and be under the school's governance. However it will be a provision recognised by the Council as reserved for pupils with ALN and pupils admitted to the provision would be in addition to the admission number of the school. Admission to the provision would be via a special admission panel of the Council and specific entry and exit criteria would apply.
57. Pupils at the proposed provision will benefit from being taught by specialist staff, experienced in working with pupils with ASD needs.

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There is also the possibility that mainstream pupils with ASD could also benefit from the expertise available.

58. The provision will alleviate the current pressure to address demand for places for pupils with more complex needs, avoiding potential costly out of county placements and allowing opportunities for children to access learning within their local community and will complement the specialist provision and support already available within the County Borough.

Information about the proposed pool

59. In addition to the new build primary school and specialist ASD provision, it is also proposed to include as part of the scheme a new build 25metre, 6 lane swimming pool with additional learner pool to replace the existing Pontardawe Swimming Pool. The pool will provide an additional facility alongside the leisure centre, revitalising and increasing the health and well-being facilities in the area.
60. The combined new build school, specialist ASD provision and leisure facilities will form part of a learning, health and wellbeing community campus at the Parc Ynysderw site, complementing the existing Cwmtawe Community School and Pontardawe Leisure Centre provision. The pool is currently used by some schools in the area but this scheme aims to increase usage by schools and by the wider community due to its improved co-location.
61. Pontardawe Swimming Pool was built in 1974. The latest condition survey from August 2014 indicated that while the building was in reasonable condition, the core building services have exceed their recommended anticipated lifecycle. A total of £1,221,783 of maintenance works was identified as being required between 2015 and 2022. Due to the complexity of the works required the recommendation at that time was that the vast majority of the works be completed within one single phase in order to reduce the overall disruption to the facility. To date due to Capital expenditure pressures and logistics surrounding phasing, these works have not been completed.
62. Given the relative poor condition and age of the current facilities, aligned with the space available at the proposed Parc Ynysderw site, the Council are presented with an opportunity to integrate the pool and school facilities creating a new sustainable school and

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community asset. Inclusion of a pool at the site will further enhance the physical activity and wellbeing opportunities open to pupils who currently attend Alltwen, Godre'rgraig and Llangiwig Primary schools as well as those at Cwmtawe Community School which is also closely located to the new build site, and those of other nearby schools including YGG Trebannws and YGG Pontardawe.

63. The facility will also provide sustainable opportunities for swimming lessons and participation to residents of all ages within the nearby communities. This campus will provide modern leisure facilities where people can enjoy physical activity, and where physical, mental health and wellbeing is positively promoted throughout local communities.
64. The Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) data states that six out of the eight LLSOA's that serve the Swansea Valley are in the 50% most deprived areas of Wales, including the employment, health, education and access to services domains. The creation of the learning campus will provide all members of the Swansea Valley community with modern, fit for purpose educational, health and leisure facilities, providing a community focal point for intergenerational health, wellbeing and cohesion in the wider Pontardawe area. It will help to deliver the Council's aim of improving the health and wellbeing of all people living in Neath Port Talbot and reducing the gap between the least and most healthy.

Information about the existing schools

Alltwen Primary School

65. Alltwen Primary School is an English-medium community school serving boys and girls aged 3-11 years. It is situated in the village of Alltwen approx. 0.7 miles from the possible site of the new school.

– Pupil Numbers

66. As at January 2020 there were 200 full-time and 31 part-time (nursery) pupils on roll. With the physical capacity to accommodate 239 full-time and 30 (30a.m/ 30pm) part-time (nursery) pupils, the school has a surplus capacity of 16% (39 full-time pupil places). Forecasts, based on current school admission trends, from January 2020 to January 2021 suggest a slight increase in pupil numbers.

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Table 1

Alltwen Primary School				
		Jan 2020		Jan 2021
	School capacity	Actual Pupil Numbers	Surplus places	Projected Pupil Numbers
Full-time	239	200	16% (39)	203
Part-time (Nursery)	30	31	-3% (-1)	33

67. The table below shows pupil numbers over a 5 year period:

Table 2

Alltwen Primary School						
School Census Jan 2016 – 2020 + Sept. '20 roll						
Year	16	17	18	19	20	Sept.20
Pupil numbers	215	223	234	240	231	211
Full Time	184	179	197	208	200	203
Part Time	31	44	37	32	31	8

Notes:

- Capacity: Taken from 19-20 Capacities
- Actual Pupil numbers: Taken from PLASC Report Jan 2020
- School Census Data '16-'19: Taken from PLASC – Actual.

– **Quality and standards in education**

68. Alltwen Primary School was last inspected in October 2018 and Estyn reported that it was a school with many good features, awarding good judgements in the 5 inspection areas. The school has shown recent improvement and the National Categorisation System placed the school in the yellow support category from 2016/17-2017/18, with an upward move in 2018/19 to the green category which continued into 2019/20, which recognises it as an effective school which has secured good levels of learner outcomes in key performance indicators.

Standards

69. Alltwen Primary school has 231 pupils on roll. The 'Academic-Achievement-pupils-aged-4-14-core-subjects-2019' indicates that the school has a lower than average number of children in receipt of free school meals (17%) when compared to other schools in Neath Port Talbot (23%) and similar to schools across Wales (20%). There are also a higher than average number of children who have been identified as having additional learning needs (37%) when compared with Neath Port Talbot (24%) and all Wales (23%).

70. Standards at the end of Foundation Phase are adequate in all areas of learning over three years, with 56% of pupils attaining the Foundation Phase indicator in 2019 (outcome 5 or higher in all three

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core areas of learning). This is lower than schools across Neath Port Talbot at 68% and all Wales at 80%.

71. At Key Stage 2 pupil outcomes are deemed to be adequate in all subjects over three years, with 76% of pupils attaining level 4 or higher in all three core subjects in 2019. This was lower than schools across Neath Port Talbot at 82% and all Wales at 88%.
72. Wellbeing and attitudes to learning of pupils was judged to be 'good' in the recent Estyn report (October 2018) in that: 'Pupils' wellbeing is a very strong aspect of the life of Alltwen School. Nearly all pupils feel safe, happy and secure in school.'
73. Attendance has been consistent, with current data showing a percentage of 94.7% for 2019/20, where nearly all pupils and their parents understand the importance of regular attendance at school. (Estyn October 2018).

Teaching and Learning

74. Estyn, in 2018, reported that across Alltwen Primary School effective teaching promotes pupils' good progress and as a result, relationships are positive and respectful, many classrooms are productive and orderly, and most pupils want to learn.
75. The quality of teaching and learning experiences in Alltwen Primary was judged to be good overall and there are well-planned opportunities to develop pupil's oracy and reading skills in a wide range of contexts across the curriculum. There are also carefully-thought-through opportunities to develop pupils' ICT skills and Welsh language skills effectively, although numeracy skills needs to be developed through other subjects.

Care, Support and Guidance

76. Estyn reported that care, support and guidance were good, noting that the Headteacher has established an inclusive and caring ethos that permeates the daily life of the school. This has improved pupils' wellbeing very effectively.
77. Estyn also report that there is a wide range of valuable provision to meet the needs of pupils who have additional needs.
78. Alltwen Primary currently has skilled teaching assistants providing high quality care and support to ensure that pupils with a range of

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additional needs integrate seamlessly into the daily life of the school, this led Estyn to report that, 'Adults know and care for their pupils well, particularly those who may be vulnerable to underachievement.' Increased staffing with a breadth of experience can be utilised to help target and support children as appropriate.

Leadership and Management

79. In 2018, Estyn judged Alltwen Primary school's leadership and management to be good, reporting that: 'The Headteacher is a well-motivated leader who provides a clear, shared and strategic vision for the school.'
80. In 2019, the Autumn Core Visit report also found that: 'The headteacher is a well-motivated leader who provides a clear, shared and strategic vision for the school. This focuses on ensuring the wellbeing of pupils and staff in a supportive and positive learning environment.'

– Quality of accommodation

81. Alltwen Primary school occupies a prominent elevated position on Alltwen Hill, Alltwen, Pontardawe and whilst contained within a single enclosed site, operates between two separate buildings (a short distance apart within the site boundary).
82. The most recent building condition survey (November 2018) reports that the building is overall in a fair condition, with investment needed internally and externally.
83. A new boiler has recently been installed, however the heating distribution system is old and inefficient and has exceeded its practical and recommended life span, and will need to be renewed.
84. Overall the site is graded C+ for condition i.e. the building is operational but major repairs or replacement will be needed.
85. Backlog maintenance and accessibility costs amount to £611,000.

Godre'rgraig Primary School

86. Godre'rgraig Primary School is an English-medium community school serving boys and girls aged 3-11 years. It is situated in the village of Godre'rgraig approx. 3.2 miles from the possible site of the new school.

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87. In July 2019 Godre'rgraig Primary was relocated temporarily from Godre'rgraig to Parc Ynysderw, adjacent to Cwmtawe Community School after geological experts found there was a potential landslide risk to the school's playground.
88. Earth Science Partnership (ESP), the experts commissioned by Neath Port Talbot Council, reported a medium level risk from a quarry spoil tip near the school after the Council asked them to extend their extensive landslide risk investigation work carried out in nearby Panteg, Ystalyfera.
89. Further work has revealed that the risk remains and that it would be unsafe for staff and pupils to return to the school. The new build school provides the opportunity for Godre'rgraig Primary pupils to be permanently relocated and to benefit from the 21st century facilities provided.

– **Pupil Numbers**

90. As at January 2020, there were 135 full-time and 18 part-time (nursery) pupils on roll. With the physical capacity to accommodate 162 full-time and 19 (19 am/ 19 pm) part-time (nursery) pupils, the school has a surplus capacity of 17% (27 full-time pupil places). Forecasts, based on current school admission trends, from January 2020 to January 2021 suggest a slight increase in pupil numbers.

Table 5

<i>Godre'rgraig Primary School</i>				
		<i>Jan 2020</i>		<i>Jan 2021</i>
	School capacity	Actual Pupil Numbers	Surplus places	Projected Pupil Numbers
<i>Full-time</i>	162	135	17% (27)	134
<i>Part-time (Nursery)</i>	19	18	5% (1)	22

91. The table below shows pupil numbers over a 5 year period:

Table 6

<i>Godre'rgraig Primary School</i>						
<i>School Census Jan 2016 – 2020 + Sept. '20 roll</i>						
<i>Year</i>	16	17	18	19	20	<i>Sept.20</i>
<i>Pupil numbers</i>	138	147	156	159	153	144
<i>Full Time</i>	114	122	134	134	135	136
<i>Part Time</i>	24	25	22	25	18	8

Notes:

- Capacity: Taken from 19-20 Capacities
- Actual Pupil numbers: Taken from PLASC Report Jan 2020
- School Census Data '16-'19: Taken from PLASC – Actual.

– **Quality and Standards in Education**

92. Godre'rgraig Primary School was last inspected in June 2017 and Estyn reported that it was a school with many good features, awarding good judgements in the three inspection areas and awarded a good for current standards and a good for prospects for improvement. The school is showing improvement and the National Categorisation System continues to place the school in the Yellow support category since 2015/16 through to 2019/20, which recognises it as an improving school which is beginning to secure good levels of learner outcomes in key performance indicators.

Standards

93. Godre'rgraig Primary school has 153 pupils on roll. The All Wales Core Data 'Academic-Achievement-pupils-aged-4-14-core-subjects-2019' indicates that the school has a lower than average number of children in receipt of free school meals (21%) when compared to other schools in Neath Port Talbot (21%). There are also a higher than average number of children who have been identified as having additional learning needs (35%) when compared with Neath Port Talbot (24%).
94. Standards at the end of Foundation Phase are adequate in all areas of learning over three years 68% of pupils attained the Foundation Phase indicator in 2019 (outcome 5 or higher in all three core areas of learning). This is equal to schools across Neath Port Talbot at 68% but below Wales at 80%.
95. At Key Stage 2 pupil outcomes are deemed to be adequate with all subjects over three years. However, in 2019, 93% of pupils attained level 4 or higher in all three core subjects which was above the local authority at 82% and all Wales at 88%.
96. Wellbeing was judged to be 'good' in the latest Estyn report (June 2017) in that: 'Pupils are confident that all staff care for them and will sort any issues quickly and fairly;' and '.....a real strength of pupils, throughout the school, is the way that they work collaboratively and interdependently'.
97. Attendance had shown a steady improvement, and current 2019/20 data is at a five year high at 94.7%. Estyn in June 2017 stated that, 'staff promote the importance of good attendance thoroughly. Pupils benefit from a range of strategies and rewards to encourage good attendance.'

Teaching and Learning

98. Estyn in 2017 report that Godre'rgraig Primary School provides learning experiences that are adequate across the school. The quality of teaching in Godre'rgraig Primary was judged to be good overall with nearly all teachers matching work well to the wide range of needs and abilities in their class. This is a strength of teaching across the school.
99. Care, support and guidance were also judged 'good' with Estyn (June 2017) stating that, 'the school promotes a caring environment that develops pupils' health and wellbeing effectively,' with 'the school's attention to ensuring that pupils attain high levels of emotional wellbeing is central to its caring ethos. New pupils to the school settle quickly and feel secure. This is a strength of the school.'
100. Provision for pupils who have additional learning needs at Godre'rgraig Primary School is strong. Effective procedures enable staff to identify pupils' needs at an early stage. The school makes successful use of the expertise of staff to implement a wide variety of useful intervention strategies. As a result, pupils with additional learning needs make good progress against their targets.

Leadership and Management

101. In 2017, Estyn judged Godre'rgraig Primary school's leadership and management to be good, reporting that: 'The headteacher has a clear vision for the school and she shares this effectively with all stakeholders. All staff work together successfully to ensure that standards and pupils' wellbeing improve continually.'
102. In 2019, the Autumn Core Visit report also found that, 'The headteacher, supported by the deputy headteacher provide strong leadership for the school. The school development plan is a detailed, useful document. There is an appropriate balance between development and monitoring activities.'

Quality of Accommodation

103. Godre'rgraig Primary school occupies a prominent elevated position on Graig Road, Ystalyfera and whilst contained within a single enclosed site operates between two separate buildings (a very short distance apart within the site boundary) for Foundation Phase and KS2

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104. The most recent building condition survey (November 2018) reports that the buildings are in poor to fair condition and are categorised as condition grade C-.
105. The school is circa 100 years old. Externally stonework surfaces are scaling, hard play surfaces require resurfacing and works are required to the covered play area. Internally the building requires general refurbishment to lift the dated appearance. The school kitchen also requires upgrading and refurbishing whilst the boiler and heating distribution systems have reached the end of their lifespan and require renewal.
106. The combined total backlog maintenance and accessibility costs for Godre'rgraig Primary school amount to £740,050
107. Since July 2019 Godre'rgraig Primary has been relocated from Godre'rgraig to temporary buildings at Parc Ynysderw. These buildings are of a good standard and suitable for the purpose of accommodating primary aged pupils, however they are not intended for permanent use in the longer term.

Llangiwig Primary School

108. Llangiwig Primary School is an English-medium community school serving boys and girls aged 3-11 years. It is situated in the village of Ynysmeudwy approx. 1.3 miles from the possible site of the new school.

– Pupil Numbers

109. As at January 2020, there were 119 full-time and 17 part-time (nursery) pupils on roll. With the physical capacity to accommodate 147 full-time and 53 (53 am/ 53 pm) part-time (nursery) pupils, the school has a surplus capacity of 19% (28 full-time pupil places). Forecasts, based on current school admission trends, from January 2020 to January 2021 suggest a slight decrease in pupil numbers.

Table 3

<i>Llangiwig Primary School</i>				
		<i>Jan 2020</i>		<i>Jan 2021</i>
	School capacity	Actual Pupil Numbers	Surplus places	Projected Pupil Numbers
<i>Full-time</i>	147	119	19% (28)	109
<i>Part-time (Nursery)</i>	53	17	68% (36)	16

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110. The table below shows pupil numbers over a 5 year period:

Table 4

<i>Llangiwg Primary School</i>						
<i>School Census Jan 2016 – 2020 + Sept. '20 roll</i>						
<i>Year</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>17</i>	<i>18</i>	<i>19</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>Sept.20</i>
<i>Pupil numbers</i>	<i>152</i>	<i>150</i>	<i>136</i>	<i>138</i>	<i>136</i>	<i>127</i>
<i>Full Time</i>	<i>130</i>	<i>124</i>	<i>120</i>	<i>124</i>	<i>119</i>	<i>109</i>
<i>Part Time</i>	<i>22</i>	<i>26</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>17</i>	<i>18</i>

Notes:

- Capacity: Taken from 19-20 Capacities
- Actual Pupil numbers: Taken from PLASC Report Jan 2020
- School Census Data '16-'19: Taken from PLASC – Actual.

– **Quality and standards in education**

111. Llangiwg Primary School was last inspected in January 2019 and Estyn reported that it was a school with many good features, awarding good judgements in 4 inspection areas and 1 inspection area as adequate and needing improvement. The school has, however, shown improvement and the National Categorisation System placed the school in the Red category in 2015/16 moving to the Amber support category in 2016/17 through to 2018/19, with a further upward move in 2019/20 to the Yellow support category, which recognises it as an effective school which has secured good levels of learner outcomes in key performance indicators.

Standards

112. Llangiwg Primary school has 136 pupils on roll. The All Wales Core Data 'Academic-Achievement-pupils-aged-4-14-core-subjects-2019' indicates that the school has a slightly lower than average number of children in receipt of free school meals (22%) when compared to other schools in Neath Port Talbot (24%). There are also a slightly lower than average number of children who have been identified as having additional learning needs (22%) when compared with Neath Port Talbot (24%).

113. Standards at the end of Foundation Phase are adequate in all areas of learning over three years, with 57% of pupils attaining the Foundation Phase indicator in 2019 (outcome 5 or higher in all three core areas of learning). This is lower than schools across Neath Port Talbot at 68% and all Wales at 80%.

114. At Key Stage 2 pupil outcomes are deemed to be adequate with all subjects over three years, with 71% of pupils attaining level 4 or

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higher in all three core subjects in 2019. This was lower than schools across Neath Port Talbot at 82% and all Wales at 88%.

Wellbeing and attitudes to learning

115. Wellbeing and attitudes to learning of pupils was judged to be 'adequate and needs improvement' in the recent Estyn report (January 2019) but stated that, 'Most (pupils) show high levels of engagement and approach tasks with enthusiasm..... and engage constructively with other pupils.'

116. Attendance has shown a steady improvement with current data for 2019/20 displaying a percentage of 94.5%. Estyn (January 2019) stated that 'most pupils are aware of the importance of attending school regularly and punctually.'

Teaching and Learning Experiences

117. Estyn in 2019 report that Llangiwg Primary School provides a broad, balanced curriculum enhanced by a range of experiences, activities and visits that consolidate and enrich the learning.

118. The quality of teaching and learning experiences in Llangiwg Primary was judged to be good overall (Estyn January 2019). Estyn state that, 'most teachers set appropriate expectations for pupils' achievement and motivate them to work hard.'

Care Support and Guidance

119. Estyn also reported that care, support and guidance were good, noting that, 'The school is a happy, inclusive and caring community, where pupils and staff show high levels of respect for each other.' Estyn also report that all staff responded sensitively to the social and emotional needs of pupils.

120. Estyn commented that, 'the school's provision for pupils with additional learning needs is good with well-focused learning plans with clear targets for pupils' development.'

121. The school has effective links with parents and carers and 'parents feel that the school's inclusive ethos nurtures all pupils and builds their confidence and self-esteem well.' (Estyn January 2019)

Leadership and Management

122. In 2019, Estyn judged Llangiwg Primary school's leadership and management to be good, reporting that: 'Leaders at all levels plan

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appropriately for the strategic development of the school and bring about worthwhile improvements.'

123. In 2019, the Autumn Core Visit report also found that: 'The headteacher provides strong and purposeful leadership for the school and sets a clear strategic direction for improving the school. Senior leaders use an effective range of self-evaluation activities to evaluate the school's performance and plan for improvement.'

– ***Quality of accommodation***

124. Llangiwg Primary School holds a prominent kerbside position on New Road, Ynsymeudwy and operates across two distinct sites approximately 100m apart along the same road.

125. The main teaching block is constructed of stonework with concrete detailing and concrete cladding to the front whilst the separate nursery is housed in a demountable type building.

126. The most recent building condition survey (November 2018) reports that the nursery block has received moderate investment over recent years and is categorised as condition grade B, i.e. the building is sound, operationally safe and exhibits only minor deterioration.

127. The main block overall is in poor to fair condition and is categorised as condition grade C. The boiler system and distribution has reached the end of its practical and economic lifespan and needs to be replaced. Internally, timber floor coverings and kitchen areas require upgrading.

128. Overall the combined total condition and accessibility costs for Llangiwg Primary school across both sites amount to £701,550.

Options that have been considered

Option 1 – Status quo: maintain Alltwen, Godre'rgraig and Llangiwg Primary Schools, maintain the pool in its current position, do not establish a new ASD provision.

129. The Council has the responsibility for ensuring that it is making the best use of resources and facilities in order to deliver the very best educational opportunities for the children and young people.

130. Maintaining the three schools at their present sites is not considered to be the best use of resources or facilities.

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131. Llangiwg Primary is currently located over two sites and has combined total backlog maintenance and accessibility costs of £701,550. The main school has terraced, hard surface playgrounds and is on a confined site.
132. Alltwen Primary has a number of demountable buildings and requires backlog works for condition and accessibility amounting to £611,000.
133. Maintaining these schools on separate sites would lead to cost inefficiency and would mean that the potential benefits afforded by a new school build would not be realised. Increasing pupil numbers on one site by combining the three schools in a brand new purpose built facility would provide a far more effective use of public money as well as addressing surplus places and providing a 'state of the art' 21st Century teaching and learning environment delivering a positive impact on pupil outcomes.
134. As a result of the landslide risk Godre'rgraig Primary is currently housed in temporary demountable classrooms which are leased to the local authority, adjacent to Cwmtawe Community School. Maintaining status quo is not an option in this situation as although the temporary buildings are of a good standard and suitable for the purpose of accommodating primary aged pupils, the school could not remain in temporary, leased buildings indefinitely.
135. There is no direct capital cost associated with this option, although Godre'rgraig Primary would not be able to remain in temporary accommodation and a more permanent solution would be needed. It is likely that any permanent solution would incur significant capital costs.
136. If all three schools were to remain on their current sites the opportunity for a new, purpose built LSC would not present itself. It is unlikely that any of the three schools currently could accommodate the extra provision in the space available.
137. It is also the case that if the pool remains in its present position the opportunity to create a complementary facility alongside the leisure centre would be lost. Without the pool the vision of a community learning and wellbeing campus would also not be realised.
138. This option is not recommended as a basis for consultation

Option 2 – Establish a federation of Alltwen, Godre’rgraig and Llangiwg Primary schools, maintain the pool in its current position, do not establish a new ASD provision

139. In a federation schools are managed by a single governing body which takes decisions about matters such as staffing structures and expenditure. Under a single leadership and governance there are potential teaching and learning benefits, staff development opportunities and efficiencies that can arise from a federated arrangement. A single governing body will be able to pool resources, maximise staff expertise and share facilities.
140. A federation also presents the opportunity to co-ordinate curriculum provision and employ whole school teaching/learning strategies that will improve school performance and enhance educational experiences. In a federation schools remain separate legal entities retaining their name, registered pupils and budget, and can retain their existing sites.
141. Because of this, the federation would not necessarily achieve efficiencies through removing duplication, for example all three schools would be inspected separately by Estyn and there would be separate expenditure trails to manage and audit.
142. This option would also not resolve the need for Godre’rgraig Primary to be permanently relocated from the temporary buildings it currently occupies.
143. There is no direct capital cost associated with this option, although a permanent location would need to be found for Godre’rgraig Primary School which is likely to incur capital costs.
144. Whilst there is a significant cost to building a new primary school, the benefits of a purpose built 21st Century school outweigh any potential teaching and learning benefits and modest funding efficiencies that can arise from a federated arrangement between the three schools. In addition, federation would not remove the issues of surplus capacity, confined and restricted sites and significant repair and maintenance costs, or remove the need for a permanent solution to Godre’rgraig Primary School’s need for relocation.

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145. A federation does not provide the opportunity for a new, purpose built LSC. It is unlikely that any of the three schools currently could accommodate the extra provision in the space available.

146. It is also the case that if the pool remains in its present position the opportunity to create a complementary facility alongside the leisure centre would be lost. Without the pool the vision of a community learning and wellbeing campus would also not be realised.

147. This option is not recommended as a basis for consultation.

Option 3 – Close two of the schools and transfer all pupils to the remaining school, maintain the pool in its current position, do not establish a new ASD provision.

148. This option would prevent pupils and staff from benefitting from a new, purpose built school, meaning that recognised advantages from a modern learning environment would not be realised.

149. Additionally Llangiwg and Alltwn Primary schools are on confined and restricted sites and have significant repair and maintenance costs.

150. There is insufficient space at Llangiwg Primary school site to accommodate all the pupils from Alltwn and Godre'rgraig primaries.

151. Llangiwg Primary is located over two sites and neither site would be able to accommodate the necessary additional buildings and external areas that a larger school would require.

152. There is insufficient space at Alltwn Primary School to accommodate all the pupils from Llangiwg and Godre'rgraig Primary schools.

153. Godre'rgraig Primary has been relocated from its original site due to the risk of landslide and so would not be a suitable choice for accommodating pupils from any of the schools. It would also not be feasible to consider accommodating extra pupils from Llangiwg and Alltwn in Godre'rgraig Primary School's temporary building.

154. There is no direct capital cost associated with this option.

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155. This option does not provide the opportunity for a new, purpose built LSC. It is unlikely that any of the three schools currently could accommodate the extra provision in the space available.

156. It is also the case that if the pool remains in its present position the opportunity to create a complementary facility alongside the leisure centre would be lost. Without the pool the vision of a community learning and wellbeing campus would also not be realised.

157. This option is not recommended as a basis for consultation.

Option 4 – Close one of the three schools and transfer pupils to the remaining two schools, maintain the pool in its current position, do not establish a new ASD provision.

158. This option would prevent pupils and staff from benefitting from a new, purpose built school, meaning that recognised advantages from a modern learning environment would not be realised.

159. Additionally Llangiwg and Alltwn Primary schools are on confined and restricted sites and have significant repair and maintenance costs.

160. Godre'rgraig Primary has been relocated from its original site due to the risk of landslide and so would not be a suitable choice for accommodating pupils from any of the schools. It would also not be feasible to consider accommodating extra pupils from Llangiwg or Alltwn in Godre'rgraig Primary School's temporary building.

161. There is insufficient space at Llangiwg Primary school site to accommodate all the pupils from Godre'rgraig Primary. PLASC 2020 data indicates that combining Llangiwg Primary and Godre'rgraig Primary pupils on the site of Llangiwg Primary would require 254 pupil places (R-Yr6) which would be 107 pupils over capacity.

162. There is insufficient space at Alltwn Primary School to accommodate all the pupils from Godre'rgraig Primary School. PLASC 2020 data indicates that combining Alltwn and Godre'rgraig Primaries on the site of the current Alltwn Primary would require 335 pupil places (R-Yr6) which is 97 pupils over capacity.

163. Currently the majority of pupils attending Godre'rgraig Primary School are from its catchment area. It could be possible to close

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Godre'rgraig Primary and split the current catchment area so that pupils could be allocated to either Llangiwig Primary or Alltwen Primary but this could be potentially divisive for the pupils and the Godre'rgraig community as a whole.

164. There is no direct capital cost associated with this option.

165. This option does not provide the opportunity for a new, purpose built LSC. It is unlikely that any of the three schools currently could accommodate the extra provision in the space available.

166. It is also the case that if the pool remains in its present position the opportunity to create a complementary facility alongside the leisure centre would be lost. Without the pool the vision of a community learning and wellbeing campus would also not be realised.

167. This option is not recommended as a basis for consultation.

Option 5 – Close Alltwen, Godre'rgraig and Llangiwig Primary schools and build a new replacement primary school on one of the existing school sites, maintain the pool in its current position, do not establish a new ASD provision

168. There is a significant capital investment cost associated with this proposal for which Welsh Government grant funding would be needed.

169. All three schools are on confined and restricted sites which would not allow the benefits of a new school build and facilities to be fully realised, including access to grant funding.

170. Additionally the potential cost of temporary accommodation to house pupils during the construction phase would incur further costs.

171. Additionally Godre'rgraig Primary school site is deemed unsafe due to the risk of landslide which would further rule out the possibility of building on this site.

172. This option does not provide the opportunity for a new, purpose built LSC. As the three schools currently are on restricted or temporary sites there it would not be desirable to increase the footprint of the school in order for it to accommodate the extra provision.

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173. It is also the case that if the pool remains in its present position the opportunity to create a complementary facility alongside the leisure centre would be lost. Without the pool the vision of a community learning and wellbeing campus would also not be realised.

174. This option is not recommended as a basis for consultation.

Option 6 - Close Alltwn, Llangiwg and Godre'rgraig Primary schools and build a new school in Parc Ynysderw to accommodate 630 pupils (plus 140 nursery pupils) from the catchment areas of Alltwn, Llangiwg and Godre'rgraig establish a new ASD provision and build a new pool.

175. Whilst there is a significant cost to building a new primary school, the existing schools on their current sites are hindered through lack of space for implementing improvements. Land is available at Parc Ynysderw which will enable the new school to have access to large outdoor play areas and improved physical activity and wellbeing opportunities, and will offer far more space to accommodate a greater number of pupils in a purpose built school appropriate to the requirements of the modern curriculum.

176. The new 21st century school will accommodate 630 full-time pupils and 140 part-time (70 a.m. /70 p.m.) nursery age pupils and will create significant teaching and learning benefits for pupils, staff and the community. New builds have been shown to have a positive impact on standards and pupil wellbeing, and can improve many aspects of curriculum delivery. Combining the three schools can deliver more effective curriculum provision and greater teaching and learning opportunities.

177. Increasing pupil numbers at a single site school by combining the three schools in a brand new purpose built facility would provide a far more effective, long-term use of public money, addressing surplus places and providing a purpose built 'state of the art' 21st century teaching and learning environment which will improve pupil outcomes.

178. The new build will be funded jointly from Welsh Government 21st century School Programme capital grant monies and from the Council's prudential borrowing capacity.

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179. The new build will also remove existing maintenance and repair liabilities at the three current sites.
180. Including an LSC provision in the new build will ensure that pupils are provided with purpose built, 21st century standard facilities, with the aim of ensuring best possible outcomes for pupils, and will address identified need for further provision for pupils with ASD, specifically primary aged pupils.
181. The pool will provide an additional facility alongside the leisure centre, revitalising and increasing the health and well-being facilities in the area. The pool is currently used by some schools in the area but this scheme aims to increase usage by schools and by the wider community due to its improved location.
182. This option is recommended by officers.

Option 7 - Close Alltwen, Llangiwig and Godre'rgraig Primary schools and build a new school on another site to accommodate 630 pupils (plus 140 nursery pupils) from the catchment areas of Alltwen, Llangiwig and Godre'rgraig Primaries, establish a new ASD provision and maintain the pool in its current location

183. The benefits of a 21st Century school teaching and learning environment would be realised and significant backlog maintenance and repair liabilities would be removed.
184. However identifying a second site which would be large enough to accommodate all the requirements of a 21st century school in an area within reasonable travelling distance for all pupils is very difficult as there is very little suitable land available.
185. Additionally the benefit of being in Parc Ynysderw with the improved leisure offer and close proximity to Cwmtawe Community School would not be realised if the school was built elsewhere.
186. If a large enough site could be identified then it would be possible to include an LSC for primary aged pupils with a statement of ASD. Including this provision in the new build will ensure that pupils are provided with purpose built, 21st century standard facilities, with the aim of ensuring best possible outcomes for pupils, and will address identified need for further provision for pupils with ASD, specifically primary aged pupils.

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187. If the pool was not to be located at Parc Ynysderw then the opportunity to create a complementary facility alongside the leisure centre would be lost. The vision of a community learning and wellbeing campus would also not be realised if the Parc Ynysderw site is not utilised.

188. This option is not recommended as a basis for consultation

Option 8 - Build 3 new, replacement primary schools on the existing sites of Alltwen, Llangiwg and Godre'rgraig Primary schools, maintain the pool in its current position, and establish a new ASD provision on one of the sites

189. All three schools are on confined and restricted sites which would not allow the benefits of a new school build and facilities to be fully realised, and could increase costs significantly. Building three schools rather than one would not be cost effective and access to grant funding is unlikely to be successful. There are potentially significant additional costs associated with the need to provide temporary accommodation to decant pupils whilst the construction phase progresses.

190. Additionally a new site would need to be identified for Godre'rgraig Primary, and suitable land of the appropriate size is not available within the catchment area.

191. This option does provide the opportunity for a new, purpose built LSC on one of the sites, should a space large enough be found in the area. However including this provision would further increase the costs of the option.

192. It is also the case that if the pool remains in its present position the opportunity to create a complementary facility alongside the leisure centre would be lost. Without the pool the vision of a community learning and wellbeing campus would also not be realised.

193. This option is not recommended as a basis for consultation.

Preferred Option – Option 6

194. Having considered all the information gathered to date, it is the view of officers that closing Alltwen, Llangiwg and Godre'rgraig Primary

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schools and establishing a new community school for 630 pupils and 140 nursery pupils in a 21st century new build will deliver the greatest benefits to pupils, staff and the wider community as a whole.

195. The inclusion of an LSC for primary aged pupils with ASD gives an opportunity to provide pupils with a purpose built facility with the aim of ensuring best possible outcomes for pupils,

196. Additionally establishing the school on the identified site of Parc Ynysderw and creating enhanced learning, health and wellbeing facilities to include the leisure centre, new swimming pool and Cwmtawe Community Comprehensive, will provide opportunities to develop and improve primary education in the area.

Impact on pupils and parents

197. The new primary school will serve the combined catchment areas of Alltwen, Godre'rgraig and Llangiwg Primary schools. The proposed new school will provide 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, including those pupils attending the LSC.

198. The new school will have sufficient playing fields and green space available on site which is not the case with the existing schools and which can be made available for community use.

199. The arrangements for admission to the new primary school will allow full-time pupils on roll at Alltwen, Godre'rgraig and Llangiwg Primary schools at the point of closure to transfer to the roll of the new school, subject to the wishes of parents or unless pupils are transferring to secondary education. Prospective pupils (including nursery pupils transferring to full-time education) will need to apply for a place at the primary school, in line with the Council's school admissions policy.

200. Class sizes at the new primary school will be set by the head teacher and governing body. When setting the class sizes the relevant Welsh Government legislation and guidelines will be followed, including the recommendation that classes are no larger than 30 pupils.

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201. Admission to the proposed LSC would be via a special admission panel of the Council and specific entry and exit criteria would apply.

Impact on travel arrangements

202. For many of the primary aged pupils the possible location of the proposed new school on the site at Ynysderw remains within 2 miles travel distance for homes in the catchment area. Home to school journey times from within the catchment area fall within reasonable limits for primary age pupils. Prior to the new school opening suitable walking routes will be assessed.

203. Support with home to school travel will be made available in line with the Council's Home to School Transport policy. This means that primary school aged pupils living 2 miles or more from their nearest suitable or designated school will be considered for transport assistance.

204. Under the School Travel Plan requirements, all schools, together with the Council's Road Safety Team, are committed to:

- improving road safety within the local community
- raising awareness about travel issues
- encouraging walking, cycling and public transport for the school journey where applicable
- encouraging independent travel where applicable

Impact on governors

205. A temporary governing body will be established prior to the opening of the new school. The temporary governing body will take important decisions about the new school including the appointment of a head teacher, agreeing a staffing structure and adopting operating procedures and agreeing a name for the school. The temporary governing body will also resolve other issues including school uniform which, in line with good practice, will be determined following consultation with pupils and parents.

206. The temporary governing body is likely to be made up of existing governors from Alltwn, Godre'rgraig and Llangiwg Primary schools as this ensures continuity and will place the new school on a sound footing.

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207. Each school will continue to exist, managed by their respective governing bodies, until all three schools are closed on 31st August 2024. During this period the existing and temporary governing bodies will undertake their duties in parallel.
208. When the new school is opened, it will be managed by the temporary governing body until a permanent governing body is established. The governing bodies of Alltwen Primary, Godre'rgraig Primary and Llangiwig Primary will cease to exist once the new school is opened.

Impact on special needs education provision

209. There are no specialist units for children with statements of special educational needs at either of the three schools, i.e. provision recognised by the Council as reserved for pupils with SEN. Pupils with additional learning needs, including children with statements of special educational needs, are supported in a mainstream setting with appropriate funding for this purpose. The new school will continue to offer this level of support.
210. Data analysis suggests that a number of pupils within the Swansea Valley travel to gain additional learning support in specialist units elsewhere within Neath Port Talbot. The data also shows increasing demand for specialist support at primary age for pupils in NPT with Autistic Spectrum Disorder.
211. Pupils attending the proposed LSC provision within the new school will benefit from being taught by specialist staff, experienced in working with pupils with ASD needs. There is also the possibility that mainstream pupils with ASD could also benefit from the expertise available as the specialist knowledge and skills-set of the staff employed to work at the proposed LSC will be available to share with mainstream staff and, as such, will indirectly benefit SEN provision at the new school.
212. It is also envisaged that the LSC provision will be able to provide support and training for other mainstream primary schools across Neath Port Talbot, building skills, competencies, expertise and capacity of all staff working with children with ASD.

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Financial impact

213. The cost of the new build is estimated at c.£22,705,000 apportioned as per table 6 below.

Table 7

Project	NPT Investment	WG Investment	Total Investment
Ysgol Newydd Swansea Valley	7,946,750	14,758,250	22,705,000

214. Welsh Government 21st Century Schools Programme capital grant funding has been approved, in principle. The full business case will be with the Welsh Government for decision in due course.

215. Combined backlog maintenance and accessibility costs for the existing schools amounts to circa. £2m which would be removed by this proposal along with the ongoing need to fund the associated costs of Godre'rgraig Primary School's current off-site hired/leased accommodation. Additionally backlog maintenance costs for the current pool amounting to £1,221,783 would also be removed by this proposal.

216. Revenue funding for schools is distributed on an annual basis by means of an approved formula. This ensures school budget shares are allocated on a simple, objective and measurable basis.

217. Most of the revenue budget allocation to Alltwen, Godre'rgraig and Llangiwg Primary schools is generated by pupil numbers. Similarly, the new primary school's budget will be based mainly on the combined pupil roll. Savings will occur as the new school will have one head teacher and one management structure. Revenue savings will be re-invested in the education budget. In this regard, the proposal supports the Council's effective management of its education budget and promotes the more equitable distribution of funding across local schools.

218. The proposed new school will receive additional funding to manage the LSC provision for up to 16 pupils. Meeting the special needs education of pupils in local settings, i.e. within the County Borough, avoids having to secure expensive out-of-county provision. The cost of providing education outside the County Borough for pupils with specialist needs is high, and can amount to circa. £80k per pupil per

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year. This annually presents a significant demand on the Council's education budget.

219. Additional recurring revenue costs associated with this proposal such as potential additional transport costs may be incurred. Similarly there will be revenue efficiency savings associated with this proposal.
220. Based on the funding delegated to schools in the 2020/2021 financial year, per pupil funding for Alltwen Primary school is £3,685 whilst for Llangiwg Primary school per pupil funding is £3,965 and for Godre'rgraig Primary school £ 3,886. This compares with the average for NPT primary schools at £3,941.
221. Prior to the new primary school opening on 1st September 2024 Alltwen, Godre'rgraig and Llangiwg primary schools will receive their annual school budget shares for the 5/12^{ths} of the financial year 2023/2024. When the new school opens on 1st September 2024 it will receive a budget share based on the number of pupils on roll at that time.

Integrated Impact Assessment

222. A first stage Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) has been undertaken to assist the Council in discharging its legislative duties (under the Equality Act 2010, the Welsh Language Standards (No.1) Regulations 2015, and the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 the Environment (Wales) Act 2016).
223. The first stage screening assessment is attached as appendix A. This indicates that the proposal is likely to have an impact on pupils, staff and other potential users of the new school. The proposal may also impact on opportunities to use the Welsh language.
224. Members should note that work on the IIA is an ongoing process and following full consultation where views of all stakeholders will be gathered, greater information will be available which will further help to inform the full assessment.
225. A fully completed IIA will be put before Members prior to any final decision being taken on whether or not the proposal is to be implemented. The impact on different protected groups, together with the three equality needs to which Members must have regard will be set out in the IIA.

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226. As part of the IIA the impact on the proposal on people's opportunities to use the Welsh language and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than English will also be fully assessed.
227. Members are reminded that in response to the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 the Council has set three strategic objectives which contribute to the seven national well-being goals that the Welsh Government requires all public bodies in Wales to contribute to, in order to achieve 'the Wales we want'.
228. The Council's well-being objectives and the supporting improvement priorities are set out in the Council's Corporate Plan. This proposal directly supports wellbeing objective 1 – 'to improve the wellbeing of children and young people' through the provision of a 21st century school for current and future generations of primary aged pupils.
229. Through creating facilities that can be used by the community the proposal also supports wellbeing objective 2 – 'to improve the wellbeing of all adults who live in the county borough' and wellbeing objective 3 'to develop the local economy and environment so that the wellbeing of people can be improved', through the creation of sustainable jobs.

Welsh in Education Strategic Plan

230. The Council recognises that language and culture are essential parts of an individual's identity and is committed to promoting and celebrating the Welsh language and culture in a pro-active and inclusive way. The Council's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) details how it intends to support and further develop Welsh language education in schools.
231. WESP objective 'To ensure that second language provision across all schools provides pupils with the skills and ability to become confident and sustained speakers of Welsh and that the provision develops a meaningful relationship between the language and the learner' is of particular relevance to this proposal.
232. Alltwn, Godre'rgraig and Llangiwig primaries teach Welsh as a second language and this will also be the case for the new school. Currently 25% of staff across the three schools are fluent or fairly fluent Welsh speakers. By combining the three schools Welsh language provision could be improved as there could be greater

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impact on having a more concentrated group of Welsh speakers able to support pupil and staff language development skills through the medium of Welsh.

233. The Swansea Valley area is a linguistically significant area as it contains the highest number and percentages of Welsh speakers in Neath Port Talbot, and is amongst the highest in Wales as a whole.
234. Primary education through the medium of Welsh is available at Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Pontardawe and Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Trebannws. Additionally Ysgol Gymraeg Ystalyfera –Bro Dur, which is approximately 5 miles from the proposed site, provides all through 3-19 education through the medium of Welsh.
235. Significant investment has taken place at Ysgol Gymraeg Ystalyfera –Bro Dur through projects in both Band A (circ. £17.5m) and Band B (circ. £9m) of 21st Century Schools Capital Funding Programme.
236. In addition funding of £1.6m has been secured to improve provision at Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Pontardawe, including extended and enhanced childcare and Foundation Phase facilities. Work is expected to be completed in 2021.
237. It is not expected that this proposal would reduce Welsh language provision in the area, however further exploration of possible impacts on the Welsh language will be undertaken during consultation.

Workforce impacts

School staff

238. There are potential teaching and learning benefits for staff working at a large primary school, including greater opportunity for staff development and career progression through a broader range of experiences.
239. The proposal will mean changes that impact on the employment of school staff as the existing schools will close on 31st August 2024. Upon closure all staff will cease to be employed at their respective schools. The new school will set a new staffing structure appropriate to its needs and budget.
240. A temporary governing body will be established before the opening of the primary school. The temporary governing body will have the

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responsibility of appointing a head teacher. Specifically in relation to the posts of head teacher and deputy head teacher, the Council's policy is for these to be advertised nationally. Once the head teacher has been appointed that person will, together with the temporary governing body, be responsible for determining the staffing structure for the new primary school.

241. The new primary school will open on 1st September 2024 and school staff will be employed by the new governing body for the primary school (albeit appointed by the temporary governing body).

Centrally employed staff

242. Although this proposal rationalises provision across the three schools, there will be employment opportunities at the new school for centrally employed catering and cleaning staff.

Staff support

243. As part of the process 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 wish to secure employment in the new school but others 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.

Legal impacts

244. Members are referred to Appendix C which sets out in detail the relevant legislation and legal implications relating to a decision on this proposal.

245. The proposal requires the establishment and discontinuation of schools. The School Standards & Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 (the Act) provides the legislative framework by which the Council may implement the proposal. The Welsh Government's School Organisation Code, November 2018, made under Sections 38 and 39 of the Act, imposes on the Council requirements and guidelines on matters relating to school organisation, including consultation.

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246. Pupil travel arrangements will be in line with the requirements of the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008; the Learner Travel Statutory Provision and Operational Guidance 2014; and the Council's Home to School Travel Policy.

247. Revenue funding will be in line with the requirements of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998; the School Funding (Wales) Regulations 2010; and the Council's approved formula for funding schools.

248. The management of staff affected by the proposal will follow the relevant school policy and procedure requirements.

249. The legislation referred to above is available using the electronic links in the section on background papers, below.

Risk management

250. A risk assessment has been carried out under the Council's Risk Management Policy 2018.

251. The potential risks associated with the proposal comprise the Council's reputation, educational standards, financial management, staff employment and service delivery.

252. Potential risk areas in implementing the proposal include:

- resistance to change leading to lack of pupil, parent and staff support
- educational standards not maintained
- less effective support for pupil well-being in a larger school and in a different location
- increased home to school travel time for some pupils
- staff anxiety about job security and new management arrangements
- loss of school identity from closure of existing establishments
- forecasted pupil numbers do not materialise
- budget allocation insufficient to meet needs
- 21st Century School capital funding opportunity not realised
- Welsh language not developed further
- discrimination against protected characteristics
- loss of community facilities
- increased governance and staff responsibilities

253. Failing to implement the proposal will result in the following

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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 and staff
- pupils accessing a wider range of staff expertise
- opportunities for wider peer group interaction
- staff having greater opportunity for curriculum development and career opportunities through broader experience and enhanced continuing professional development options
- a more efficient and effective use of resources, and savings from economies of scale
- reducing the number of surplus pupil places and improving the school building environment
- creating a learning and recreational campus promoting community cohesion

254. The benefits of implementing the proposal 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.

255. The full risk assessment is attached to this report as appendix B.

Community usage impact assessment

256. The proposal for the new build school also includes the creation of a learning, health and wellbeing community campus through the addition of a new build pool on the Parc Ynysderw site, with the aim of providing opportunities for all members of the Swansea Valley community to benefit from modern, fit for purpose facilities.

257. The new build school and pool co-location alongside the existing Cwmtawe Community School and Pontardawe Leisure Centre will provide opportunities to further develop and integrate community

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provision with delivery partners for indoor and outdoor sporting activities. The pool is currently used by some schools in the area but this scheme aims to increase usage by schools and by the wider community due to its improved location

258. Cwmtawe Community School has a range of facilities that can be used by community groups including hard tennis courts, meeting spaces, specialist facilities and performance spaces. These facilities will continue to be available and can be fully utilised by the community, and the primary school facilities will complement and extend these, providing a wide range of activities, services and experiences for pupils, families and the wider community.
259. Early years and childcare facilities are already available within walking distance of the new school, and it is expected that wrap around care will be easier to facilitate due to the location.
260. Additionally Pontardawe has a rich cultural heritage, and is known for promoting and developing the arts both through the medium of Welsh as well as English. The close proximity of the new learning campus to the heart of Pontardawe town would ensure pupils and families are able to both benefit from and contribute to this heritage.
261. This proposal will help to deliver the Council's aim of improving the health and wellbeing of all people living in Neath Port Talbot and reducing the gap between the least and most healthy.
262. A more detailed community impact assessment will be undertaken during the consultation period and the findings reported following the end of the consultation process.

Fields in Trust

263. The playing fields at Parc Ynysderw are one of 471 King George Fields established as a memorial to King George V.
264. Fields in Trust is the sole trustee of the King George's Fields Foundation and as such its consent is needed for any disposals or changes of use. Fields in Trust works to protect parks, playing fields and other spaces and as part of the planning process supports Sport Wales in its role as the statutory consultee on developments affecting playing fields.

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265. Officers have formally engaged with Fields in Trust to seek their views on the proposal before progressing. Fields in Trust has stated that it is responsive to local change and flexible in its dealings with landowners and will be happy to consider a possible exchange of land to accommodate the new school. The proposal will be assessed against the relevant policy set out in Planning Policy Wales and consideration will also be given to the playing field needs of the school as set out in Building Bulletin 99: Building Framework for Primary School projects which is adopted by the Welsh Government's 21st Century Schools Programme.

Consultation

266. This school organisation proposal is being brought forward under the Council's Strategic School Improvement Programme. Formal consultation is required in line with the Welsh Government's School Organisation Code, November 2018, which specifies the procedures to be followed, including the content of the consultation document and those to be consulted.

267. Subject to approval, it is intended to consult on this proposal between 3rd November 2020 and 5th January 2021 - see timeframe below. This allows an extra 3 weeks in addition to the statutory 6 weeks for consultees to consider the proposal and submit a response. Responses to the consultation will be reported to Cabinet for consideration by Members in February 2021.

268. If, following consideration of the responses, Members decide to progress the proposal then a 28 day period will follow for the submission of objections.

Publication of consultation document	3 rd November 2020
Period for submitting responses	3 rd November 2020-5 th January 2021
Consultation report published	5 th February 2021
Proposed implementation date	1 st September 2024

269. When establishing a new school it is necessary to ensure that enough time is set apart to enable decisions to be made in a considered and timely manner, and additionally when building a new school there is a great deal of time needed for planning to ensure the

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final build meets the needs and desires of the pupils, staff and community who will be using it. As such it is necessary to start statutory processes at the current time to ensure that there is sufficient time available to complete all necessary processes.

270. Information on the proposal and the consultation document will be available on line on the Council's website and also on the websites of the affected schools. Hard copies will also be available on request.

271. All consultees, as directed by the Code will be sent the Consultation document via email. The Council's social media channels will also contain information on how to access the consultation document.

272. Consultation responses can also be submitted using the Consultation Portal on the Council's web page, or by email to SSIP@npt.gov.uk, or in writing.

273. Due to the ongoing public health situation there will be no face-to-face consultation events arranged for this consultation. Questions concerning the proposal can be submitted to SSIP@npt.gov.uk.

274. It is the intention of officers to meet with pupils during the course of the school day, either remotely or in person depending on the views of the schools and parents, and on the Public Health Wales guidelines in place.

Recommendation

275. Having given due regard to the impact assessments in relation to equality, risk, community usage and Welsh language, and to the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act (Wales 2015), together with the legal implications, it is recommended that, in line with Section 48 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013, Members approve consultation on the proposal to establish an English-medium 3-11 school with a specialist learning support centre, in new build premises to accommodate pupils from the current catchment areas of Alltwn Primary, Godre'rgraig Primary and Llangiwg primary, all of which will close on 31st August 2024.

276. The proposed date of implementation to be 1st September 2024

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Reasons for proposed decision

277. This decision is necessary to comply with the formal consultation requirements imposed on the Council by the School Organisation Code.

278. Subject to the outcome of consultation, implementation of the proposal will enable the Council to promote high educational standards and the fulfilment of every child's potential. It will also enable the Council to meet its duty to secure efficient education in its area.

Implementation of the decision

279. The decision is proposed for implementation after the three day call in.

Appendices

Appendix A: Integrated Impact Assessment First Stage

Appendix B: Risk Assessment

Appendix C: Legal Implications

List of background papers

- a. Cabinet Report: October 2017
<http://moderngov.npt.gov.uk/documents/s32731/CABINET%20report%20041017.pdf>
- b. Strategic School Improvement Programme Principles Paper: September 2008
[https://democracy.npt.gov.uk/Data/Cabinet/20080924/Agenda/\\$CAB-240908-REP-EL-KN.doc.pdf](https://democracy.npt.gov.uk/Data/Cabinet/20080924/Agenda/$CAB-240908-REP-EL-KN.doc.pdf)
- c. Welsh Government - School Organisation Code: November 2018
<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-10/school-organisation-code-second-edition.pdf>
- d. School Standards & Organisation (Wales) Act 2013
http://www.legislation.gov.uk/anaw/2013/1/pdfs/anaw_20130001_en.pdf
- e. Well-being of Future generations (Wales) Act 2015
<https://gov.wales/well-being-future-generations-wales-act-2015-guidance>
- f. Learner Travel (Wales) Measure: 2008 & the Learner Travel Statutory Provision and Operational Guidance: 2014.
http://www.legislation.gov.uk/mwa/2008/2/pdfs/mwa_20080002_en.pdf
<http://gov.wales/docs/det/publications/140616-ltogg-en.pdf>
- g. Home to School Travel Policy: 2017

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https://www.npt.gov.uk/media/4231/npt_home_to_school_travel_policy_2017.pdf?v=20170627002146

h. **Corporate Plan 2019-2022**

<https://www.npt.gov.uk/media/11925/2019-20-corporate-plan-eng-3.pdf?v=20190920114145>

i. **Estyn**

<https://www.estyn.gov.wales/inspection/search>

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