

CABINET

1st October 2014

EDUCATION, LEISURE & LIFELONG LEARNING

REPORT OF HEAD OF RESOURCES & COMMISSIONING A. THOMAS

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Part 1, Section A, Item 1

STRATEGIC SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME: – CONSULTATION ON PROPOSALS TO CLOSE FIVE SMALL PRIMARY SCHOOLS

1. Purpose of Report

To obtain Cabinet approval to consult on school reorganisation proposals in relation to Bryn Primary, Clun Primary, Pontrhydyfen Primary, Tonmawr Primary and YGG Cwmgors; and also Cwmafan Primary (currently the separate schools of Cwmafan Infant and Junior), Crynallt Primary, Ynysfach Primary and YGG Gwaun Cae Gurwen as the schools proposed to subsequently provide for pupils from these areas.

2. Context

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.

Implementing the Strategic School Improvement Programme 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 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.

The Council has decided to review its provision on the basis of:

- a. educational standards
- b. the need for places and the accessibility of schools
- c. the quality and suitability of school accommodation
- d. effective financial management.

In this report, a reference to a small primary school applies to a school of 90 pupils or fewer. Statistical data on pupil numbers and school capacities are substantively drawn from the January 2014 PLASC return and current (2013) school capacity schedules.

Following approval to consult, detailed consultation documents will be published in relation to each school affected.

3. Formal consultation on a proposal to make provision for pupils in the area served by Bryn Primary school to receive English-medium primary education at Cwmafan Primary school and to close Bryn Primary school

a. The proposal

It is proposed to make provision for pupils in the area served by Bryn Primary school to receive primary phase, English-medium education at Cwmafan Primary school and to close Bryn Primary school.

Provision will be made enabling full-time pupils on roll at Bryn Primary school to transfer to Cwmafan Primary school. In line with the Council's admission policy, parents may express a preference for an alternative school. Admission applications for transfer from nursery to full-time education will be required in accordance with the Council's nursery to reception admission arrangements.

Subject to the outcome of consultation and Cabinet approvals, this change to provision will be implemented on 1st September 2015, with Bryn Primary school closing on 31st August 2015.

b. Reason for the proposal

The Council, as the local authority for the area, has a statutory responsibility for the planning of school provision.

Bryn Primary is a small primary school with 51% unfilled places and high per pupil costs. Maintaining the status quo at Bryn Primary school does not represent efficient use of resources or the effective delivery of education and improved outcomes.

Since January 2009 pupil numbers at the school have fallen by 17 % although projections suggest that numbers will increase over the next five years to 72 ft. However, it will still remain a small school.

The proposal will remove some £475k of backlog maintenance and accessibility responsibilities and deliver potential revenue savings of £519k through per pupil funding and leadership efficiencies.

Delivering the range and breadth of the curriculum from FP to KS2 can be more challenging in a small school, placing increased burdens on a small number of staff. In larger schools the workload and curriculum responsibilities can be shared across a wider staffing complement, providing greater opportunity for developing expertise and specialism, which in turn should lead to improved curriculum provision. Larger schools also present greater opportunity for wider friendship groups and a wider range of social sporting and cultural activities.

An alternative school, Cwmafan Primary, is available within reasonable travel distance. Cwmafan Primary school is the nearest Neath Port Talbot primary school, approximately 2.6 miles from Bryn Primary school. It, too, delivers education through the medium of English and is recognised as a school with good pupil outcomes and outstanding care and support.

There is sufficient accommodation at Cwmafan Primary school to provide for pupils who would otherwise have attended Bryn Primary school.

Cwmafan Primary school is a larger school and increased numbers will create additional opportunities for teaching and learning. Both schools are partner primary schools to Duffryn school.

c. Background information to the schools

Bryn Primary school

Bryn Primary school is an English-medium, community school for boys and girls aged 3- 11 years. It currently has 55 fte pupils on roll and English is the main teaching medium. The school serves the village of Bryn and immediate surrounding rural area. Some 81% of the pupils on roll are drawn from the school's catchment area. 4% of the pupils on roll reside in the Cwmafan Primary school catchment area. Bryn Primary school is a partner primary school to Dyffryn school, where secondary phase education is provided.

23.7% of the pupils are entitled to free school meals; this figure is higher than the County Borough average and higher than the national average. 31% of pupils have additional learning needs and 2 pupils have statements.

Bryn Primary school is sustained by high levels of budget allocation per pupil funding. At £5,280 per pupil funding at Bryn Primary school is 51% higher than the average for primary schools in the County Borough.

Table 1

	<i>Financial year 2014/15</i>		
	<i>Bryn Primary school</i>	<i>Pri. sector av.</i>	<i>Lowest funded</i>
<i>Per pupil funding</i>	£5,280	£3,499	£2,863

Cwmafan Primary school

Cwmafan Primary school is an English-medium, community school for boys and girls aged 3-11 years. It currently has 373.0 (f.t.e.) pupils on roll and English is the main teaching medium. The school serves the village of Cwmafan. 88% of the pupils on roll are from within the school's catchment area.

Cwmafan Primary school is a partner primary school to Dyffryn school where secondary phase education is provided.

24.7% of the pupils are entitled to free school meals; this figure is higher than the County Borough average and higher than the national average. 31% of pupils have additional learning needs and 2 pupils have statements.

The enhanced numbers at Cwmafan Primary school will enable the school to continue to be sustained by below average levels of budget allocation per pupil funding. For comparative purposes, its notional per pupil funding at £2,874 would be 18% lower than the average for primary schools in the County Borough.

Table 2

	<i>Financial year 2014/15</i>		
	<i>Cwmafan Primary school (notional)</i>	<i>Pri. sector av.</i>	<i>Lowest funded</i>
<i>Per pupil funding</i>	£2,874	£3,499	£2,863

d. Pupil numbers

The following tables show a 5 year forecast for pupil numbers in respect of Bryn Primary school, Cwmafan Primary school and the combined roll of both schools, together with historical pupil numbers.

Table 3

<i>Pupil projections</i>						
Schools	Jan 2014	Jan 2015	Jan 2016	Jan 2017	Jan 2018	Jan 2019
Bryn Primary school (exc. nursery)	51	45	51	56	60	67
Bryn Primary school nursery	8	11	10	10	10	10
Cwmafan Primary school (exc. nursery)	344	349	343	353	354	356
Cwmafan Primary school nursery	58	65	64	63	64	64
Combined roll	461	470	468	482	488	497
Combined roll f.t.e.	428.0	432.0	431.0	445.5	451.0	460.0

Table 4

<i>Historical numbers</i>					
Schools	Jan 2010	Jan 2011	Jan 2012	Jan 2013	Jan 2014
Bryn Primary school (exc. nursery)	60	50	45	49	51
Bryn Primary school nursery	5	6	15	10	8
Cwmafan Primary school (exc. nursery)	310	299	316	315	344
Cwmafan Primary school nursery	62	70	68	70	58
Combined roll	437	425	444	444	461
Combined roll f.t.e.	403.5	387.0	402.5	404.0	428.0

e. Quality of teaching and learning

Outcomes

Bryn Primary has been judged by Estyn (November 2013) as having adequate outcomes for pupils. This is because pupil performance in 2013 places the school almost entirely in the bottom 25% of similar schools at both the expected and higher levels in both Key Stages. The school is currently being monitored by Estyn.

During the autumn core visit in 2013 the local authority also found that outcomes for pupils were adequate and placed the school in the category of 'school causing concern', within the context of the following categories of schools: Good and Outstanding Schools/ Schools that need to improve outcomes/ Schools that need to improve aspects of leadership and / or provision, or Schools Causing Concern. A considerable amount of support has been provided for the school by school improvement officers over the last 2 years in an effort to improve outcomes for pupils; some improvements have been noted in this time.

Cwmafan Primary school will be formed from the amalgamation of Cwmafan infant and junior schools in January 2015. Cwmafan Infant school was inspected in February 2009, and six of the seven key questions were awarded a grade 2, 'good features and no important shortcomings' and one awarded a grade 1, 'good with outstanding features'. The most recent local authority Autumn Core Visit (ACV) judged the school as having good learner outcomes and good capacity to improve, and placed it in the category of 'Good and Outstanding Schools'. Cwmafan Junior School was inspected in January 2012 and the current performance was found to be good with adequate prospects for improvement. The school was revisited by Estyn in April 2013 and all recommendations were met. The most recent ACV by the local authority judged the school as having adequate learner outcomes and good capacity to improve, placing the school in the 'Schools that need to improve outcomes' category.

In Bryn Primary, more able children do not appear to be performing as well as expected in both Key Stages. The local authority work scrutiny visit (May 14) found that more able children needed to produce work of a higher standard and that there was little evidence of literacy and numeracy skills at the appropriate level. This reflected the Estyn findings where it was reported that more able pupils in both Key Stages do not achieve their full potential.

In Cwmafan more able children generally perform very well when compared to similar schools, schools within Neath Port Talbot and schools across Wales. In 2013, Foundation Phase pupils attained significantly higher results at Outcome 6 in all three core areas of learning and in Key Stage 2, boys in particular attained very good results at level 4+.

At Bryn Primary, attendance data places the school in the lower 25% of similar schools and a few pupils are consistently late, contributing to the school having an adequate judgement for 'wellbeing' by Estyn. At the end of July 2014 the overall attendance percentage for Bryn Primary was 93.79%. At Cwmafan Infant and Junior schools Foundation Phase and Key Stage 2 pupils attained over 94% at the end of the year.

At both Bryn Primary and Cwmafan Infant and Junior schools, pupil behaviour is generally good and relationships between staff and pupils are positive.

Children entering Cwmafan Primary would not be disadvantaged and are likely to attain good standards

Provision

Bryn Primary school is a small, close knit community and gives a high priority to the wellbeing of pupils. It has a caring and supportive ethos and ensures that every pupil feels valued. Cwmafan Infant school Foundation Phase has also been recognised as providing outstanding care, support and guidance for pupils by Estyn, and in addition Key Stage 2 pupils are noted to show care and respect for each other and feel secure and valued in school.

Estyn judged that Bryn Primary school provides good learning experiences for pupils, noting that stimulating indoor and outdoor activities are provided for children in Foundation Phase in particular. Education for sustainable development and global citizenship was noted to be a strength of the school. The school provides a range of well attended extra-curricular clubs and sporting activities, including sports club and gardening club.

Cwmafan Junior school also provides good learning experiences for pupils; at Key Stage 2, good use is made of visits, special events and visitors, to enrich pupils' learning experiences, and across the primary school a good range of extra-curricular activities are available including music and sport.

Teaching was found by Estyn to be adequate in Bryn Primary school, and the inspection report highlights the need for work to be differentiated to match pupils' ability, particularly to challenge more able children. The local authority also found that some lower ability children who have individual education plans are not being set targets appropriate to their needs, although the overall structure for monitoring additional learning needs is well organised. Delivering the whole curriculum from Foundation Phase to Key Stage 2 can be very challenging in a small school where there are fewer staff to take responsibility for leading subjects or aspects of learning; larger schools are able to share the workload and curriculum responsibilities which can in turn lead to better curriculum provision.

At Cwmafan Infant school the quality of teaching in the Foundation Phase was judged by Estyn to be consistently good with the majority of lessons observed having outstanding features, while teaching at Cwmafan Junior school, Key Stage 2 was found to be adequate. During the Estyn revisit in April 2013, it was reported that teachers in Key Stage 2 provide good opportunities for independent work with emphasis on investigation, creativity and problem solving skills.

Bryn Primary has well maintained, spacious and secure grounds that provide a good learning resource for pupils, especially for those in Foundation Phase. The learning environments at Cwmafan Infant and Junior schools were judged by Estyn to be good, and the outdoor areas have been developed effectively to providing a good learning environment for pupils.

Leadership and Management

Estyn notes that Bryn Primary school benefits from a strong culture of teamwork and the governing body is proactive, well informed and supportive. Support staff are utilised effectively and work well to support teaching and learning.

The relationship between teachers and support staff at Cwmafan Infant and Junior schools is also very strong and support staff contribute well to teaching and learning. All stakeholders are involved in school self-evaluation.

Partnership working was reported by Estyn as being a strength of Bryn Primary school, enjoying good relationships with parents and carers. The school also benefits from strong links with the local community which contributes to pupil learning and enriches their experiences both in school and in the village.

At the Cwmafan schools, Foundation Phase relationships with parents and the wider community is noted to be outstanding by Estyn, and at Key Stage 2 valuable links with individuals and groups in the neighbourhood effectively foster pupils' sense of community involvement.

Bryn Primary School is currently managed by an acting head teacher who is a deputy head teacher at another Neath Port Talbot school. Potentially this places the school in a vulnerable position as changes in leadership could hinder the progress made by the school and may have an adverse effect at the Estyn revisit towards the end of the year.

Resource management in Bryn Primary is reported by Estyn to be adequate and this is often a challenge in smaller schools. Larger schools are often able to resource the curriculum more effectively due to economies of scale; this ensures that pupils are not disadvantaged through the lack of learning resources that may be more readily available in larger schools.

f. Welsh language education

At both Bryn Primary and Cwmafan Primary (currently separate Infant & Junior) schools English is the main teaching medium and the language of the day to day business of the school.

Welsh-medium education is available at YGG Rhos Afan, which serves the catchment areas of both schools.

g. Surplus places impact

The proposal directly addresses excess places. Based on current accommodation usage full-time surplus capacity is reduced from 108 places (21%) to 4 places (1%).

Table 5

<i>Bryn Primary school</i>				
		<i>Jan 2014</i>		<i>Jan 2015</i>
	<i>School capacity</i>	<i>Act. Pupil Nos.</i>	<i>Surplus capacity</i>	<i>Proj. Pupil Nos.</i>
<i>Full-time</i>	105	51	54	45
<i>Part-time (Nursery)</i>	18	8	10	11

Table 6

<i>Cwmafan Primary school</i>				
		<i>Jan 2014</i>		<i>Jan 2015</i>
	<i>School capacity</i>	<i>Act. Pupil Nos.</i>	<i>Surplus capacity</i>	<i>Proj. Pupil Nos.</i>
<i>Full-time</i>	398	344	54	349
<i>Part-time (Nursery)</i>	96	58	38	65

Table 7

<i>Combined roll (Cwmafan Primary school site)</i>			
		<i>Jan 2015</i>	
	<i>School capacity</i>	<i>Proj. Pupil Nos.</i>	<i>Surplus capacity</i>
<i>Full-time</i>	398	394	4
<i>Part-time (Nursery)</i>	96	76	20

There is sufficient capacity at Cwmafan Primary school to accommodate pupils who would otherwise attend Bryn Primary school.

h. School estate

Capital build does not form part of this proposal. Building repair and maintenance requirements will be dealt with as part of the Council's Capital programme for maintaining schools and from the school's delegated budget responsibilities.

Bryn Primary school

Bryn Primary school site comprises of the main school building which is of a CLASP construction and external playgrounds that include a large surrounding area laid to grass and soft landscaping. The most recent building condition assessment for Bryn Primary categorises the overall school site as a Grade B with no significant issues being noted.

However, whilst recognising that the building is of non-traditional construction, the assessment highlights that ageing fixtures and finishes require renewal. Similarly, although there was no operational issue presently with the heating and lighting installations, they are dated and have exceeded their life expectancy and as such should be replaced within five years. Overall, the condition assessment concludes that some £475k will be needed to deal with the outstanding repair, maintenance and accessibility requirements.

Cwmafan Primary school

The Cwmafan Primary school site comprises school buildings and play areas of the existing Cwmafan Infant and Junior schools on a shared site with a number of shared facilities such as canteen and boiler.

The most recent building condition assessment for the Infant school, states that whilst external paths and walls require remedial works, the building appears sound with only minor repairs required and the school is graded 'B' overall.

The most recent building condition assessment for the junior school assesses the condition of the school to be a grade 'C'.

Backlog maintenance & accessibility costs amount to £242k at the Infant school and £1,239M at the Junior school.

The amalgamation of Cwmafan Infant and Junior schools to form a single, primary school enables more flexible use of existing accommodation to meet fluctuations in pupil numbers across the 3 – 11 age range and to provide scope for potential growth in pupil numbers.

i. Impact on staff

As with any school closure there will be changes to current staffing arrangements. However, the Council will be working with Bryn Primary school and with the teacher associations/trade unions, to secure the employment of staff. The Council has a proven track record for supporting staff in such situations.

j. Pupil Admission

Implementation of the proposal will mean that, as from 1st September 2015, Bryn Primary school will close and the designated area will be served by Cwmafan Primary school. Full-time pupils on roll at Bryn Primary school will be able to transfer to Cwmafan Primary school. However, applications will be needed for transfer from nursery to full-time education at Cwmafan Primary school, in line with the Council's nursery to reception admission arrangements. Similarly, for all other admission requests the Council's admission policy will apply.

Parents may, of course, express a preference for an alternative school. After Cwmafan Primary, the next nearest English-medium schools are Plasnewydd Primary and Nantfyllon Primary in the County Borough of Bridgend, approx. 2.8 & 2.9 miles respectively from Bryn Primary school.

k. Travel to school/ school accessibility

Under the Council's school transport policy two miles is within the recognised walking distance for primary aged school children. Assistance with transport is provided where home addresses are more than two miles from the designated catchment school. As part of the proposal's development, learner travel needs will be assessed to ensure the availability of safe travel routes and to determine entitlement to assistance with home to school transport.

1. Financial Benefits

This financial appraisal is based mainly on current (2014/2015) school budget allocations as determined by the formula funding arrangements for distributing money to Neath Port Talbot schools.

In the table below, the status quo position (a) shows the combined current school budgets of Bryn Primary school and Cwmafan Primary school, rolled forward five financial years.

The effect of the proposal to close Bryn Primary school and to make provision for the pupils at Cwmafan Primary school (b) is represented as an illustrative budget for the school based on current budget data, again rolled forward five financial years.

On the basis of this illustrative appraisal, the effect of implementing the proposal is that potential savings of some £519k could be realised over a 5 year period. These figures do not include any additional revenue expenditure arising from implementation of the proposal, e.g. potential redundancy costs.

Table 8

	Financial years					5yr effect
	2014/15 (7/12th) k	2015/16 k	2016/17 k	2017/18 k	2018/19 K	2019/20 K
Status quo (a)	£767	£1,314	£1,325	£1,338	£1,356	£6,100
Proposal effect (b)	£701	£1,203	£1,212	£1,224	£1,241	£5,581
Potential savings (b-a)	-£66	-£111	-£113	-£114	-£115	-£519

NB: The figures in the table above are notional as annual budget allocations are dependent on the Council's revenue support grant allocation; the amount of money set aside for schools (the individual schools budget); and the formula for allocating that money to individual schools.

The impact of the proposal is that Cwmafan Primary school's per pupil funding would be 18% (£625) lower than the average for primary schools in the County Borough.

Table 9

	Financial year 2014/15		
	<i>Cwmafan Primary school (inc Bryn Primary school)</i>	<i>Pri. sector av.</i>	<i>Lowest funded</i>
<i>Per pupil funding</i>	£2,874	£3,499	£2,863

The issue of higher per pupil funding costs at Bryn Primary school would obviously be removed as a consequence of the school's closure, as would the liability costs for repair, maintenance, and accessibility.

m. Risks associated with the proposal

- The proposal requires the closure of Bryn Primary school, as a result staff may be concerned and worried about their future employment.
- There could be a concern that pupils will not successfully integrate into a different, larger school and that they will not receive the same level of individual attention and support.
- It could be perceived that there would be a loss of identity for the school community resulting from the closure.

- There will be increased travel distance and travel time for pupils and parents which could impact on regular school attendance.
- Given the distance to alternative English-medium primary schools, some parents may choose not to transfer their children to Cwmafan Primary school, preferring instead to seek admission elsewhere.
- Some parents may choose not to transfer their children to Cwmafan Primary school, preferring instead to seek admission at Welsh-medium primary schools.

n. Options available to the Council

Option 1 - Status quo: maintain Bryn Primary and Cwmafan Primary as separate schools.

Bryn Primary school is a small, English-medium primary school with high per pupil costs and significant surplus places. Cwmafan Primary school is a nearby English-medium primary school, with below average per pupil costs and with sufficient capacity to accommodate pupils who would otherwise attend Bryn Primary school.

There is significant cost inefficiency in maintaining the two schools on separate sites. The efficiencies and economies of scale that can be achieved at larger schools with increased numbers on roll provide a more effective use of public money and can deliver a wider range of learning and development opportunities for pupils.

This option is not recommended.

Option 2 – Establish a federation of Bryn Primary and Cwmafan Primary schools

Under a single leadership and governance, there are potential teaching/learning benefits, staff development opportunities and some funding efficiencies that can arise from a federated arrangement although both schools would continue to be funded separately, therefore Bryn would continue to be supported by high pupil costs. As such, the federation would not address the significant cost inefficiency in maintaining a small, high per pupil cost school nor would it achieve efficiencies through removing duplication, for example, both schools would be inspected separately by Estyn.

The benefits and opportunities presented by a federation are, in this instance, outweighed by the inefficiencies that remain, particularly in light of the availability of alternative arrangements.

This option is not recommended.

Option 3 – Establish a federation of Bryn Primary, Cwmafan Primary and other nearby small schools

Whereas the benefits of federation as set out in Option 2 above may be increased, adding to the number of schools in a federated arrangement would not, in this instance, address the significant cost inefficiency in maintaining a small, high per pupil cost school nor would it achieve efficiencies through removing duplication, for example, all schools would be inspected separately by Estyn.

The benefits and opportunities presented by a federation are, in this instance, outweighed by the inefficiencies that remain, particularly in light of the availability of alternative arrangements.

This option is not recommended.

Option 4 – Establish a 3-11 years English-medium primary school serving the catchment area of Bryn Primary and Cwmafan Primary schools based at the Cwmafan Primary school site.

This option removes the issues surrounding a small school with high per pupil costs and significant surplus places. There is sufficient capacity at Cwmafan Primary school to accommodate pupils who would otherwise attend Bryn Primary school. A single larger school removes the cost inefficiency in maintaining the two schools on separate sites in particular the maintenance/repair liabilities at Bryn Primary school.

The efficiencies and economies of scale that can be achieved at a larger, single school with increased numbers on roll and single governance and leadership structures provide a more effective use of public money and deliver a wider range of learning and development opportunities for pupils and staff.

Although this option will involve disruption for the pupils, parents and staff at Bryn Primary school, the benefits to be realised from a single site primary school outweigh the alternative options.

This option is recommended.

Option 5 – Establish a 3-11 years English-medium primary school serving the catchment area of Bryn Primary and Cwmafan Primary schools based at the Bryn Primary school site.

There is insufficient accommodation at Bryn Primary school to provide for the pupils of Cwmafan Primary school and, even with significant investment, the location and consequent travel issues does not support this option.

This option is not recommended.

8. Community impact:

A community impact assessment will be undertaken as part of the consultation process to understand the effect on each community of the proposed school closures.

9. Equality impact assessment

An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has been undertaken to assist the Council in discharging its Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2010. It is essential that Members read the Equality Impact Assessments, which are attached to the report at Appendix A.

10. Consultation

It is proposed that consultation on these five proposals will take place during the Autumn term on a staggered basis, between 20th October 2014 and 16th January 2015. During this period detailed consultation documents will be issued and meetings with key stakeholders held. Comments received and issues raised will be reported to Members.

11. Recommendation

Having given due regard to the EIA in respect each of the proposals it is recommended that, in line with Section 48 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013, Members approve formal consultation of proposals to:

- i. make provision for pupils in the area served by Bryn Primary school to receive English-medium primary education at Cwmafan Primary school and to close Bryn Primary school
- ii. make provision for pupils in the area served by Clun Primary school to receive English-medium primary education at Ynysfach Primary school and to close Clun Primary school
- iii. make provision for pupils in the area served by Pontrhydyfen Primary school to receive English-medium primary education at Cwmafan Primary school and to close Pontrhydyfen Primary school
- iv. make provision for pupils in the area served by Tonmawr Primary school to receive English-medium primary education at Crynallt Primary school and to close Tonmawr Primary school
- v. make provision for pupils in the area served by YGG Cwmgors to receive Welsh-medium primary education YGG Gwaun Cae Gurwen and to close YGG Cwmgors

Consultation to take place between 20th October 2014 and 16th January 2015

12.Reason for the Proposed Decision

To enable the Council to:

- i. promote high standards and the fulfillment of every child's potential
- ii. meet its duty to secure efficient education in its area
- iii. comply with legislative requirements

13.List of Background Papers

- i. Strategic School Improvement Programme Principles Paper: September 2008
- ii. Welsh Government - School Organisation Code, July 2013
- iii. School Standards & Organisation (Wales) Act 2013
- iv. Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008 & the Learner Travel Statutory Provision and Operational Guidance 2014.
- v. Small Primary Schools in Wales, Estyn 2006 & Formula Funding review, Cabinet Report June 2011
- vi. Defining schools according to Welsh-medium provision - WG Information document: October 2007

14.Wards Affected

Bryn & Cwmafan, Cimla, Gwaun Cae Gurwen, Lower Brynaman, Pelenna, and Resolven

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STRATEGIC SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME: – CONSULTATION ON PROPOSALS TO CLOSE FIVE SMALL PRIMARY SCHOOLS

(a) Implementation of Decisions:

The decision is proposed for implementation after the 3-day call-in period

(b) Sustainability Appraisal: Community Plan Impacts

Economic Prosperity	-	positive
Education, Leisure & Lifelong Learning	-	positive
Better Health & Well Being	-	positive
Environment & Transport	-	positive
Crime & Disorder	-	positive

Other Impacts

Welsh Language	-	positive
Sustainable Development	-	no impact
Equalities	-	positive
Social Inclusion	-	positive

(c) Consultation

These proposal are subject to public consultation the outcomes of which will be reported to Cabinet.