Neath Port Talbot
Castell-nedd Port Talbot
County Borough Council Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol

Education, Leisure & Lifelong Learning Service
Strategic School Improvement Programme

CONSULTATION DOCUMENT

Proposal to discontinue Ysgol Gymraeg Ystalyfera Bro Dur in its current configuration and establish two separate Welsh-medium schools in its place on the current sites.



Large print and alternative format or language versions of this document are available on request

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Introduction

What is this report about?

This document is for parents/carers, school staff, school governors and anyone who has an interest in education in Neath Port Talbot.

It sets out details of the following proposal:

Discontinue Ysgol Gymraeg Ystalyfera Bro Dur in its current configuration and establish two separate Welsh-medium schools on the current sites, with the existing admission arrangements and age ranges retained, from 1 September 2028.

The background to our proposal

The Council is responsible for promoting high educational standards and delivering efficient primary and secondary education. Having the right schools in the right places, fit for 21st-century learners, requires the Council to review the number and type of schools and ensure that resources, facilities and Welsh-medium provision are used effectively.

Implementing the 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. It will also involve re-organising education provision to ensure pupils gain access to and benefit from the specialist support, skills and expertise available within the County Borough.

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

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

Following consideration of a report on 13 January 2016, the Council's Cabinet approved a proposal to establish Welsh-medium provision for pupils aged 3–18 in the north of the County Borough and for pupils aged 11–16 in the south. This led to the creation of Ysgol Gymraeg Ystalyfera Bro Dur as a single all-through school operating across the Ystalyfera and Bro Dur campuses. The arrangement was introduced to reduce surplus capacity, address accommodation, maintenance and accessibility issues, and secure the long-term sustainability of Welsh-medium education. **It was intended that the two campuses would remain under one governance and leadership structure until pupil numbers at each site were sufficient to support separate school budgets and independent operation.**

In recent years, there has been a significant increase in the number of pupils accessing Welsh-medium education across the Local Authority, with current pupil numbers now at their highest ever level.

Pupils age 3-18 attending Welsh-medium education within the Local Authority:

Table 1

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
Numbers	3221	3293	3339	3422	3497	3499	3536	3536	3588	3666
Percentages	15.5	15.7	15.9	16.1	16.2	16.5	16.9	17.0	17.7	18.3

In light of the significant increase in pupils accessing Welsh-medium education, together with projected future growth, the position has now developed to a point where both sites are expected to be able to operate independently from September 2028.

The proposal seeks to complement, enhance and further develop the Welsh-medium provision already available within the County Borough.

The proposal and schools affected

It is proposed to discontinue Ysgol Gymraeg Ystalyfera Bro Dur in its current configuration and establish two separate Welsh-medium schools on the existing

Ystalyfera and Bro Dur sites from 1st September 2028. Admission arrangements and age ranges would remain unchanged.

Ysgol Gymraeg Ystalyfera–Bro Dur is a Welsh-medium all-through school for pupils aged 3 to 18, operating across two sites in Neath Port Talbot. The Ystalyfera campus is located at Glan yr Afon, Ystalyfera, Swansea, SA9 2JJ, while the Bro Dur campus is located at Seaway Parade, Sandfields, Port Talbot, SA12 7BL. Welsh is the principal language of teaching and learning across the school, with the Ystalyfera campus providing education from nursery to sixth form and the Bro Dur campus providing secondary education for pupils aged 11 to 16.

The school's total pupil capacity is 1773 comprising: 200 primary phase (including 20 part-time nursery places); 680 secondary phase (north site); 650 secondary phase (south site); and 243 sixth form.

As of PLASC 2026, 1,591 pupils attend the school. Ystalyfera campus includes 20 nursery pupils, 127 primary pupils, 751 pupils age 11-16 and 214 sixth form pupils. There are 479 pupils age 11-16 attending the Bro Dur campus.

A new secondary age Welsh-medium Learning Support Centre will open on the Ystalyfera campus in 2027.

Full-time pupil numbers at the school are predicted to increase over the next five years as shown in table 2 and table 3.

Projected pupil numbers for Bro Dur campus based on current NPT primary pupil numbers (123% transfer in 2025-26 from Year 6 to Year 7 Welsh-medium within the Local Authority):

Table 2

Year	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033
Projected Pupil numbers for Bro Dur Years 7-11	563	591	641	685	708	705	721

The data excludes projected additional out-of-county pupils attending the Bro Dur campus, as these are more difficult to forecast.

Projected pupil numbers for Ystalyfera campus based on current NPT primary pupil numbers :

Table 3

Year	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032
Projected Pupil numbers for Ystalyfera Years 7-11	771	794	838	907	910	922	939
Projected Pupil numbers for Ystalyfera Years 12-13 (post 16)	208	237	230	237	267	278	266

Ystalyfera campus projections are more difficult to calculate than Bro Dur's because some cluster primary pupils transfer to secondary schools outside the Local Authority due to proximity to home, while the campus also receives a substantial intake from neighbouring local authorities.

Historical full-time pupil numbers for both sites are shown in table 4 and table 5.

Historical full-time pupil numbers for Ystalyfera Campus:

Table 4

F/T	2021/2022	2022/ 2023	2023/2024	2024/2025	2025/2026
	994	1052	1082	1064	1112

Historical full-time pupil numbers for Bro Dur Campus:

Table 5

F/T	2021/2022	2022/ 2023	2023/2024	2024/2025	2025/2026
	525	500	489	493	479

The decline in pupil numbers at the Bro Dur campus has reflected the wider reduction in the pupil population across Neath Port Talbot, a trend that was also evident within Welsh-medium education following the COVID-19 pandemic. Since that period, projected pupil numbers and anticipated transfers from the Bro Dur cluster primary schools have increased significantly, indicating a substantial future rise in the number of pupils attending the campus.

Ysgol Gymraeg Ystalyfera Bro Dur was last inspected by Estyn in 2022. A summary of the judgements can be found below:

Overall Performance

Ysgol Gymraeg Ystalyfera–Bro Dur provides a broad range of valuable learning experiences across its two campuses. Many pupils make sound progress and develop positive attitudes to learning, with strong opportunities to use Welsh in their work and daily life.

Well-being

Most pupils feel safe and enjoy school, behave well and show respect towards staff and one another. They benefit from supportive relationships and opportunities to contribute to school life.

Care, Support and Guidance

The school provides effective pastoral care and knows pupils and their individual needs well. Safeguarding arrangements are appropriate, and pupils with additional learning needs receive suitable support. Transition arrangements and support for pupils' personal development are positive.

Leadership and Management

Leaders have established a clear Welsh-medium ethos and manage the complex two-campus school with commitment. Staff work collaboratively and governors are supportive. There are opportunities to further strengthen self-evaluation and improvement planning, clarify roles and accountability, and develop how leaders assess the impact of their actions on teaching and pupil progress.

Overall Concise Summary

Estyn found Ysgol Gymraeg Ystalyfera–Bro Dur to be a caring Welsh-medium school with positive pupil behaviour, supportive relationships and valuable learning experiences across two campuses. Key priorities include improving attendance and strengthening leadership accountability.

The full Estyn report can be found here: Inspection report Ysgol Gymraeg Ystalyfera – Bro Dur 2022_0

Impact of the proposals on teaching and learning, well-being, care, support, guidance, and leadership

Teaching and Learning

Establishing two separate schools is expected to support teaching and learning by enabling each school to plan its curriculum, staffing, professional learning and improvement priorities around the needs of its own pupils. Dedicated leadership teams would be able to monitor standards and the quality of teaching more closely, while both schools would continue to deliver Welsh-medium education within their existing age ranges.

The full curriculum would remain available on both sites, and separate decision-making should allow timetabling and resources to be tailored more effectively to each school community.

Well-being, Care, Support and Guidance

Separate schools should enable pastoral care, safeguarding, inclusion and pupil support to be organised more closely around the needs of each school community. Clearer local accountability could strengthen relationships with pupils, parents, staff and partner agencies and support earlier, more responsive intervention.

Pupils would remain on their existing sites and admission arrangements and age ranges would not change, limiting disruption to daily school life. Nonetheless, clear communication and carefully managed transition arrangements will be essential to support wellbeing and maintain continuity for pupils, families and staff.

Leadership and Management

The proposal would create two distinct governance and leadership structures, with each school having its own governing body, headteacher, senior leadership team, delegated budget and strategic plan. This would clarify accountability and

allow each school to set priorities and make decisions that reflect its pupils, staff and local context.

Separate delegated budgets would improve transparency in financial planning, resource allocation and monitoring. Independent leadership would also help each school plan sustainably for projected pupil growth while supporting the Council's wider strategy for Welsh-medium education.

The main implementation risks relate to appointing suitable leadership, establishing effective governing bodies, consulting and supporting staff, and maintaining purposeful collaboration between the two schools. These matters will require detailed transition, governance, financial and workforce planning.

Overall Evaluation

Overall, the proposal is likely to have a positive impact by providing more focused teaching and school improvement, locally responsive wellbeing and support, and clearer leadership, governance and financial accountability. The current sites, admission arrangements and age ranges would remain unchanged, while each school would gain greater autonomy to respond to its community.

The proposal would support continued delivery of the full curriculum by allowing each school to develop coherent provision suited to its age range, pupil profile and projected growth. It would also strengthen the long-term sustainability of Welsh-medium education in the north and south of the County Borough.

Successful implementation will depend on careful planning to maintain staffing stability, curriculum continuity, shared specialist expertise and effective links between the two schools. With these arrangements in place, the proposal should provide a clearer and more sustainable organisational structure for learners and staff.

Expected benefits and disadvantages of the proposal

The proposal would deliver a range of benefits that support the effective, sustainable and long-term development of Welsh-medium education across the County Borough.

Compared with the status quo, establishing two separate schools would provide clearer and more effective governance arrangements, with each school having its own governing body, leadership structure, budget and strategic priorities. This would enable decision-making to be more closely aligned to the needs of each school community, while strengthening accountability and allowing each school to respond more directly to local circumstances.

A separate school model would also support clearer leadership and management arrangements. Operating one school across two geographically separate sites can create additional complexity in terms of staffing, communication, curriculum planning, pastoral support and day-to-day operational management. Separate schools would allow each headteacher and senior leadership team to focus fully on the needs of their own learners, staff and community.

There are also potential benefits for pupils, parents and staff. Each school would be able to develop its own identity, ethos and improvement priorities, while maintaining a clear focus on Welsh-medium education. This could strengthen relationships with families and local communities and provide a more coherent experience for learners on each site.

From a financial and strategic planning perspective, the creation of two separate schools may also provide a more transparent basis for budget management, resource allocation and future planning. As pupil numbers in Welsh-medium education continue to increase, separate school budgets would allow both schools to plan independently and sustainably, supporting the long-term growth of Welsh-medium provision across the local authority.

In addition, two separate schools would support the local authority's wider Welsh in Education Strategic Plan by strengthening Welsh-medium provision in distinct parts of the county borough. This approach would help ensure that

Welsh-medium education remains accessible, responsive and sustainable, while supporting increased demand and projected future growth.

The principal disadvantages are potential disruption and uncertainty for pupils, families and staff; potential additional costs and administrative demands arising from separate leadership, governance and operational structures; and a risk that curriculum breadth, shared specialist expertise and collaboration could be weakened. These impacts would be mitigated through early and ongoing consultation, clear communication, phased transition and workforce planning, robust financial and governance arrangements, and formal collaboration between the two schools to maintain curriculum continuity, specialist support and shared good practice.

What options have been considered?

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

The following options have been considered for this proposal:

Option 1- **status quo- one school operating over two sites**
Keeping one school across two sites could provide continuity for pupils, staff and families, as the existing governance, leadership and operational arrangements would remain in place. It may also reduce the immediate disruption associated with structural change and avoid the need to establish new governing bodies and leadership arrangements.
However, continuing with one school over two geographically separate sites may retain existing operational complexities, including challenges around leadership capacity, communication, staffing, curriculum planning, financial management and day-to-day decision-making. It may also limit each site's ability to develop its own priorities, identity and governance arrangements, particularly as pupil numbers continue to grow and each site becomes increasingly able to operate independently.

This option is not preferred by officers.

Option 2- **discontinue Ysgol Gymraeg Ystalyfera Bro Dur in its current configuration and establish two separate Welsh-medium schools in its place on the current sites.**

The proposal would support clearer governance, leadership and accountability by establishing two separate Welsh-medium schools on the current sites. This would enable each school to operate with its own strategic direction, budget and priorities, ensuring that decision-making is more closely aligned to the needs of its pupils, staff and local community. It would also provide a more sustainable structure for managing future growth in Welsh-medium education, while allowing each school to develop its own identity and respond more effectively to local circumstances across the County Borough.

This option is preferred by officers.

The quality of the school building and accommodation

Overall the school campuses are currently graded as follows:

Ystalyfera campus – condition grade A with suitability grade A
Bro Dur campus- condition grade A with suitability grade A

There is no transfer or disposal of land or buildings that arise as a result of the proposal and there are no capital receipts or recurrent costs savings directly related to this proposal.

What is the impact on pupils and parents of the proposal?

Pupils would remain on their existing sites with unchanged age ranges and admission arrangements, while benefiting from leadership, curriculum planning and pastoral support tailored more closely to each school community. Parents should benefit from clearer accountability and stronger links with their local school, although the transition may cause some initial uncertainty; this would be

mitigated through timely communication, consultation and carefully planned arrangements.

What is the impact on the workforce?

The proposal will have workforce implications as the establishment of two separate Welsh-medium schools will require separate leadership, governance and staffing structures for each school. Staff will need to be engaged and consulted throughout the statutory process, including appropriate consultation with trade unions, in line with employment legislation and the Council's employment policies. It is anticipated that posts will be considered in accordance with agreed HR processes, with arrangements developed to minimise disruption and support staff through the transition.

What is the impact on travel arrangements?

Pupils' travel needs will be assessed in line with the Council's Home to School Transport policy. Primary age pupils living 2 miles or more from the school or secondary age pupils living 3 miles or more from the school will be considered for assistance with travel costs.

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

Both campuses are established school sites with existing travel arrangements and routes. As pupils would remain on their current sites, the proposal is not expected to create new routine journeys.

Impact on additional learning needs provision

The proposal should not reduce access to additional learning needs provision, as pupils would remain on their existing sites and each new school would retain its statutory duties to identify needs and deliver the support specified in pupils' Individual Development Plans. Separate leadership, budgets and improvement planning could enable ALN provision and specialist support to be tailored more closely to each school community. Potential risks could include disruption to established relationships, inconsistent practice and reduced sharing of specialist expertise during transition; these would be mitigated through coordinated ALN transition planning, continuity of support and staffing, consultation with pupils, families and partner agencies, and formal collaboration between the two schools.

What is the impact on Welsh medium education?

All local authorities in Wales now have to produce a Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP). This document indicates how the local authority intends to promote the teaching of the Welsh Language, how it intends working towards increasing the number of children taught through the medium of Welsh and how it can assist achieving the Welsh Government's target of having one million people in Wales speaking Welsh by 2050.

The proposal is expected to have a positive impact on Welsh-medium education by strengthening sustainable provision in the north and south of the County Borough. Separate schools would have clearer governance, leadership and planning arrangements and would be better placed to respond to local demand while retaining current admission arrangements and age ranges.

The Welsh Language Impact Assessment concludes that the proposal supports the continued growth and resilience of Welsh-medium education and the Council's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan. No adverse impacts on access to Welsh-medium education have been identified.

What is the financial impact?

There are no direct capital financial implications arising from the proposal, as both schools would continue to operate from their existing sites. However, the establishment of two separate schools would require each school to operate with its own delegated budget from the point of implementation. This would provide greater transparency in relation to budget planning, resource allocation and financial monitoring for each site. Any revenue implications associated with separate leadership, governance and operational arrangements would need to be considered as part of the Council's school funding arrangements and managed within the Directorate's existing budget planning processes.

Integrated Impact Assessment and Welsh Language Impact Assessment

A first stage impact assessment 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, the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Environment (Wales) Act 2016.

The proposal is considered to have a broadly neutral impact in relation to age, race, sex and disability, as the existing sites, age ranges and admission arrangements would remain unchanged; however, there may be positive impacts for learners if the new arrangements strengthen leadership, planning and support, provided that accessibility and individual needs continue to be addressed throughout the transition.

Following a Welsh Language Impact Assessment, the proposal is likely to have a positive impact on the Welsh language, as it supports the continued growth and sustainability of Welsh-medium education across the County Borough. Establishing two separate Welsh-medium schools would provide clearer governance, leadership and planning arrangements, enabling each school to respond more effectively to local demand while maintaining and strengthening access to education through the medium of Welsh

What are the legal impacts?

This proposal constitutes a regulated alteration requiring the statutory publication of the proposal. The School Standards & Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 (the Act) provides the legislative framework by which the Council may implement a proposal. The Welsh Government's School Organisation Code, March 2026, made under Sections 38 and 39 of the Act, imposes on the Council requirements and guidelines on matters relating to school organisation. The Council's procedures are in line with legislative requirements.

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, 2027-28.

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.

Impact on community usage

The proposal is expected to have a neutral or potentially positive impact on community use because both sites and their facilities would remain open. Separate leadership and governance may enable each school to develop stronger local partnerships and tailor community access more closely to local needs. Any short-term disruption caused by changes to management or booking arrangements would be mitigated by maintaining existing commitments, communicating changes clearly and coordinating the transition with community users.

Valleys Communities Impacts

The impact on Neath Port Talbot's valley communities will be the same as all other areas of the County Borough as the new schools will continue to admit pupils from across the whole of the county borough, including valley communities.

Risk Management

The council is committed to a proactive approach to risk management and recognises risk management is an essential part of delivering good governance and reduces the uncertainty of achieving the council's vision, purpose and priorities, as set out in the Corporate Strategy.
Potential risk areas in implementing the proposal include:

- educational outcomes for pupils are not improved
- the demand for Welsh-medium places is not as high as expected
- current Welsh-medium schools pupil numbers reduce
- increased staff anxiety
- resistance to change leading to lack of pupil, parent and staff support

Failing to implement the proposal will result in a range of benefits not being fully realised. They include:

- Progress towards the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan may not be fully achieved
- More focused leadership and management for each site may not be achieved.
- Clearer school improvement priorities for each school may not be realised.
- More effective curriculum planning tailored to each school community may be limited.
- Existing operational challenges linked to managing one school across two geographically separate sites may continue.
- Opportunities for each campus to develop its own identity, priorities and local focus may be restricted.
- Clearer and more transparent budget planning for each site may not be achieved.
- Independent resource allocation, monitoring and financial management may remain limited.

- Financial planning may continue to be more complex, with one budget covering two separate sites.
- Each site's ability to plan sustainably for future Welsh-medium growth may be constrained.

The potential effects of the identified risks will be mitigated through detailed transition, governance, workforce and financial planning; early and ongoing consultation; clear communication; and continued collaboration between the two schools.

Legal process and consultation

Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council is the proposer and the Council wishes to hear the views of all interested parties before deciding whether to progress its proposal. All responses to this consultation will be considered when making its decision and a consultation report will be published following the end of the consultation period. The consultation report will summarise the issues raised by consultees and include a response from the Council. The consultation report will also set out Estyn's view on the proposal.

Having considered the views expressed by interested parties, if the Council decides to proceed with its plan it will publish a statutory proposal. Once the statutory proposal is published there will be a 28 day period to respond in writing, known as the 'objection period'. Only objections submitted during this period will be considered. If objections are received an objection report will be published following the end of the objection period. The report will summarise each objection raised and provide the Council's response.

Please note: *only written objections submitted during the statutory notice period will be considered. Any comment submitted as part of the consultation process will need to be re-submitted in writing during the statutory notice period if it is to be considered as an objection.*

Following the conclusion of the objection period the Council is required to determine the proposal and the matter will go before Cabinet for decision. In its decision making, Cabinet will give due consideration to any objections raised

alongside the case for the proposal. The proposal will be determined in line with the requirements of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and associated School Organisation Code 2026.

Process timetable

The consultation process must follow the Welsh Government guidelines as set out in the School Organisation Code 2026.

Subject to approval, formal consultation is intended to take place from November 2nd 2026 to December 14th 2026. Responses will be reported to Cabinet for consideration.

Making comment on the proposal

The purpose of this consultation document is to provide information and invite views on the Council's proposal to discontinue Ysgol Gymraeg Ystalyfera Bro Dur in its current configuration and establish two separate Welsh-medium schools on the current sites, with the existing admission arrangements and age ranges retained, from 1 September 2028.

If you have questions regarding this consultation document then please contact the Council at the address below.

A full list of those being consulted can be seen below:

<table>
<tr><th colspan="2">List of Consultees</th></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="4">Ysgol Gymraeg Ystalyfera Bro Dur:
Pupils
Parents / carers
Staff
Governing Body
Wider School Community</td><td>NAASH (Secondary Schools Forum)</td></tr>
<tr><td>LLAN (Primary Schools Forum)</td></tr>
<tr><td>WESP forum</td></tr>
<tr><td>Bordering authorities – Swansea/ Bridgend/ Carmarthenshire/ Powys/ RCT</td></tr>
<tr><td>All other NPT schools</td><td>Associated Town Councils and Community Councils</td></tr>
<tr><td>NPT Elected Members</td><td>WG Schools Management Division</td></tr>
<tr><td>Diocesan Directors of Education
- Diocese of Menevia, Swansea
- Diocese of Llandaff, Vale of Glamorgan</td><td>MP and MS

For Neath</td></tr>
<tr><td>Trade Unions</td><td>Regional Members of the Senedd</td></tr>
<tr><td>Estyn</td><td>ALN Partners- SNAP, Action for Children, Child and Adult Mental Health Services (CAMHS), Consultant Community Paediatrician, The Children’s Centre NPT Hospital (Therapeutic Services), National Autistic Society, NPT Special Needs Support Group</td></tr>
<tr><td>Regional Education Consortium (ERW)</td><td>Children and Young Person Partnership (inc.Early Years Development and Childcare)</td></tr>
<tr><td>NPTCBC Integrated Transport Unit</td><td>Police and Crime Commissioner</td></tr>
<tr><td>Communities First Partnership</td><td>NPTC Officers</td></tr>
</table>

Consultation

Formal consultation is intended to take place during the period: November 2nd 2026 to December 14th 2026**.**

Comments on the proposal must be submitted in writing by letter, e-mail or on the comment form attached to this document.

The closing date for responses to this consultation is December 14th 2026.

Unfortunately, consultation responses received after this date may not be considered.

Responses should be sent to the following address: **Andrew Thomas, Director of Education Leisure and Lifelong Learning, (marked for the attention of the SSIP Team), Civic Centre, Port Talbot SA13 1PJ** or e-mail to: **SSIP@npt.gov.uk**