



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

Education, Leisure & Lifelong Learning Service
Strategic School Improvement Programme

Consultation on the future of secondary education in the upper Afan Valley

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<https://www.npt.gov.uk/1891>

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1. Background

The Council is committed to providing high quality education for all children and young people across the County Borough. It has implemented a Strategic School Improvement Programme that will help ensure that the right schools are in the right places and that they are capable of delivering an education fit for children and young people in the 21st Century. The Strategic School Improvement Programme informs the planning and decision making processes that will enable the Council to secure first class schools, delivering high standards of teaching and learning - for now and into the future. At the heart of the programme is the delivery of quality educational experiences that encourage and support pupil development - experiences that meet the aspirations of young learners, enhancing and enriching their lives and their life opportunities.

Implementing the Strategic School Improvement Programme involves reviewing existing educational provision, including specialist provision for pupils with additional learning needs. It also involves determining the number and type of schools needed to deliver education effectively and efficiently across the County Borough. As a result of this there will be changes which will involve opening new schools, closing existing schools, merging or amalgamating schools, federating schools and promoting new initiatives that support collaborative working between schools. In some instances, such changes will impact upon specialist provision located at mainstream schools for which alternative arrangements will need to be made. The changes will be necessary to improve standards of education, reduce surplus capacity, reduce large building repair bills and ensure the right schools in the right places for both English and Welsh-medium education, together with provision for those pupils with special educational needs/additional learning needs.

The Council has decided to review its educational 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

On 9th November 2017 the Council's Education, Skills and Culture Cabinet Board gave permission to consult on the future of secondary education in the upper Afan Valley. The Council wishes to receive the views of parents, staff, pupils, the community and other key stakeholders.

2. The proposal and why the change is being proposed

The proposal

Consultation on the future of secondary education in the upper Afan Valley is being brought forward under a proposal to make arrangements for pupils who would otherwise attend Cymer Afan Comprehensive School, School Road, Cymmer, Port Talbot SA13 3EL to receive their secondary education at the new school at Margam, Bertha Road, Margam, Port Talbot, SA13 2AN and to discontinue Cymer Afan Comprehensive School.

If approved the proposal will take effect on the 1st September 2019 with Cymer Afan Comprehensive School closing on 31st August 2019

The new school at Margam is a 3-16, ‘all-through’, middle school, opening on 1st September 2018 in a new, purpose built facility at Margam, Port Talbot.

Why the change is being proposed?

The Council, as the local authority for the area, has a statutory responsibility for the planning of education provision. Where it intends making a significant change to provision (known as a regulated alteration) then a proposal to that effect needs to be published.

Cymer Afan Comprehensive School is a secondary school for boys and girls aged 11-16 years. Since September 2013 it has been part of a five school federation in the upper Afan Valley.

Cymer Afan Comprehensive School is a small school. In October 2017 it had 226 pupils on roll. It is one of only five established mainstream secondary schools in Wales with fewer than 300 pupils, one of which is set to close in 2018.

The five school federation in the upper Afan Valley comprises four primary schools (Croeserw Primary, Cymer Afan Primary, Glyncorwg Primary and Pen Afan Primary) and one secondary school (Cymer Afan Comprehensive).

The federation was formally established in 2013 in order to address falling school roles and the consequent reduction in revenue funding. Pupil numbers attending the local schools had been falling, putting pressure on the schools to deliver teaching and learning in the context of reduced budget allocations. As such, the governors of the upper Afan Valley schools, working with the Council, moved to a federated arrangement as, at that time, it offered the best way forward for supporting the pupils and the schools.

Federation is the process whereby a group of schools decide to work in formal partnership under a single governing body. Schools within a federation maintain their own delegated budgets and identity but are able to explore the advantages of sharing resources such as facilities, IT, staff, school buildings and costs.

The federation has enabled schools to pool resources, appoint a single leadership to manage the five schools, deploy staff across the federation and put in place a bespoke curriculum arrangement to meet the needs of the children and young people of the area. In this respect it operates along the lines of a single 'all-through' school based on five separate sites and is delivering improvement in pupil's learning and attainment.

However, supporting the federation in the upper Afan Valley is at a high cost, sustained by budgets with high levels of small school protection. More importantly, the number of pupils attending the upper Afan Valley federation, particularly at secondary level, has not increased since its establishment and is not forecast to increase significantly going forward. This brings into question the sustainability of 11-16 age provision given that there are other secondary schools within reasonable travelling distance which could accommodate the pupils of the upper Afan Valley.

The new school at Margam is proposed as the receiving school because it is a new, 21st Century school build which is able to accommodate pupils from the upper Afan Valley. A new school provides greater prospects for improving educational attainment for pupils. An Estyn report (Jan 2007) on the performance of schools before and after moving into new buildings states that ageing school buildings which are in a poor state of repair cannot meet modern teaching and learning needs. It 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 that improvement has been significant.

If the proposal is implemented then separate consideration on a way forward for the remaining schools in the federation will need to take place. Removal of Cymer Afan Comprehensive School from the federation will change the current federated structure and operational arrangements but should not diminish the benefits that can be realised from a formal collaborative working arrangement.

3. Impact of the proposal

The anticipated benefits of the proposal are that it will provide:

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

Potential risk areas in implementing the proposal include:

- resistance to change leading to lack of pupil, parent and staff support
- educational standards not maintained
- loss of community facilities
- increased home to school travel time impacting on attendance and performance
- staff anxiety about job security/job losses
- negative impact on existing federation

Impact on pupils and parents

The pupils directly affected by this proposal will be current year 7, year 8 and year 9 at Cymer Afan Comprehensive School and year 5 & year 6 at the federated primary schools, along with future primary to secondary education pupil transfers in the upper Afan Valley.

Transfer to the new school at Margam will provide greater opportunities for pupils to access a wider range of specialist staff and facilities, increasing the opportunities for learning and socialising with a wider group of peers.

Teaching and learning opportunities are increased in new build state of the art facilities. An evaluation of a new, 21st century school build in Neath Port Talbot has shown high levels of satisfaction and support from the pupils, their parents and other stakeholders.

For pupils from the upper Afan Valley, transfer to the new school at Margam will involve a daily travel journey of approx. 13 miles from the furthest communities for which transport will be provided to eligible pupils¹. A test run of the journey by coach, including pick-up/drop-off stops and at times corresponding to the start and end of the school day, shows the travel time to

¹ Eligibility for assistance with transport will be determined in line with the Council Home to School Travel Policy

be approximately 40 - 45 mins. in one direction. A significant number of pupils currently attending Cymer Afan Comprehensive travel to school by bus on a daily basis, although the travel time and distance will be much less than the journey to Margam. Pupils will see an increase in journey time of approx. 30 - 35 mins. in one direction.

If the proposal is implemented then the catchment area to be served by the new school at Margam will be revised to include the area currently served by Cymer Afan Comprehensive School. The arrangements for admission to the new school at Margam will be in line with the Council's approved admission arrangements for community schools which prioritises² places for pupils living in the catchment area over those living elsewhere.

Whereas this consultation proposal is based on making provision for pupils from the upper Afan Valley to receive their education at the new school at Margam, parents are entitled to express a preference for admission at an alternative school, which will be granted subject to the availability of places. For community schools in Neath Port Talbot, the Council's admission policy will apply. For Faith schools and schools in other local authorities, separate arrangements apply and contact will need to be made with the respective authority³.

In respect of face to face school/parent contact, the distance between the new school and the upper Afan Valley will require different management arrangements than those that currently exist. This is not a situation that is unfamiliar to schools. Similarly, arrangements will need to be made to ensure pupils are able to access the full range of facilities and opportunities available at the new school. Again, this is not a situation with which schools are unfamiliar and alternative arrangements can be made. Already, pupils from Cymer Afan Comprehensive School have participated in sporting activities with Ysgol Bae Baglan.

As part of the consultation process, pupil views will be sought and listened to. The views of pupils in previous school organisation proposal have resulted in specific actions in response to concerns raised. An example would be a concern over integration where pupils from different schools come together. In that instance a response was to bring pupils from the schools together in sports teams prior to a move to the new school.

² Highest priority is given to Looked After Children and children with statements of Special Educational Needs.

³ Contact Neath Port Talbot Council for advice.

The effect of the proposal on the schools that pupils attend

Table 1 below shows how proposed changes will impact pupils currently attending schools in the upper Afan Valley federation (Sept. '17 – Sept '20).

Table 1:

Pupils on roll at the Federated Schools of the Upper Afan Valley	School Year Beginning			
	Sept 2017	Sept 2018	Sept 2019	Sept 2020
Current Year 11	Y11 at Cymer Afan Comp.	Left school Aug 2018		
Current Year 10	Y10 at Cymer Afan Comp.	Y11 at Cymer Afan Comp.	Left school Aug 2019	
Current Year 9	Y9 at Cymer Afan Comp.	Y10 at Cymer Afan Comp.	<i>Y11 at the new school at Margam</i>	Left school Aug 2020
Current Year 8	Y8 at Cymer Afan Comp.	Y9 at Cymer Afan Comp.	<i>Y10 at the new school at Margam</i>	<i>Y11 at the new school at Margam</i>
Current Year 7	Y7 at Cymer Afan Comp.	Y8 at Cymer Afan Comp.	<i>Y9 at the new school at Margam</i>	<i>Y10 at the new school at Margam</i>
Current Year 6	Y6 at present primary school	Y7 at Cymer Afan Comp.	<i>Y8 at the new school at Margam</i>	<i>Y9 at the new school at Margam</i>
Current Year 5	Y5 at present primary school	Y6 at present primary school	<i>Y7 at the new school at Margam</i>	<i>Y8 at the new school at Margam</i>
Current Year 4	Y4 at present primary school	Y5 at present primary school	Y6 at present primary school	<i>Y7 at the new school at Margam</i>
Current Year 3	Y3 at present primary school	Y4 at present primary school	Y5 at present primary school	Y6 at present primary school
Current Year 2	Y2 at present primary school	Y3 at present primary school	Y4 at present primary school	Y5 at present primary school
Current Year 1	Y1 at present primary school	Y2 at present primary school	Y3 at present primary school	Y4 at present primary school
Current Rec. Year	Rec at present primary school	Y1 at present primary school	Y2 at present primary school	Y3 at present primary school

Table 2 below shows the corresponding arrangements for pupils currently attending Dyffryn School and Groes Primary who, from Sept. 2018 will transfer to the new school at Margam.

Table 2

Pupils on roll at Dyffryn School and Groes Primary	School Year Beginning			
	Sept 2017	Sept 2018	Sept 2019	Sept 2020
Current Year 11	Y11 at Dyffryn School	Left school Aug 2018		
Current Year 10	Y10 at Dyffryn School	<i>Y11 at the new school at Margam</i>	Left school Aug 2019	
Current Year 9	Y9 at Dyffryn School	<i>Y10 at the new school at Margam</i>	<i>Y11 at the new school at Margam</i>	Left school Aug 2020
Current Year 8	Y8 at Dyffryn School	<i>Y9 at the new school at Margam</i>	<i>Y10 at the new school at Margam</i>	<i>Y11 at the new school at Margam</i>
Current Year 7	Y7 at Dyffryn School	<i>Y8 at the new school at Margam</i>	<i>Y9 at the new school at Margam</i>	<i>Y10 at the new school at Margam</i>
Current Year 6	Y6 at Groes Primary school	<i>Y7 at the new school at Margam</i>	<i>Y8 at the new school at Margam</i>	<i>Y9 at the new school at Margam</i>
Current Year 5	Y5 at Groes Primary school	<i>Y6 at the new school at Margam</i>	<i>Y7 at the new school at Margam</i>	<i>Y8 at the new school at Margam</i>
Current Year 4	Y4 at Groes Primary school	<i>Y5 at the new school at Margam</i>	<i>Y6 at the new school at Margam</i>	<i>Y7 at the new school at Margam</i>
Current Year 3	Y3 at Groes Primary school	<i>Y4 at the new school at Margam</i>	<i>Y5 at the new school at Margam</i>	<i>Y6 at the new school at Margam</i>
Current Year 2	Y2 at Groes Primary school	<i>Y3 at the new school at Margam</i>	<i>Y4 at the new school at Margam</i>	<i>Y5 at the new school at Margam</i>
Current Year 1	Y1 at Groes Primary school	<i>Y2 at the new school at Margam</i>	<i>Y3 at the new school at Margam</i>	<i>Y4 at the new school at Margam</i>
Current Rec. Year	Rec at Groes Primary school	<i>Y1 at the new school at Margam</i>	<i>Y2 at the new school at Margam</i>	<i>Y3 at the new school at Margam</i>

Impact on travel arrangements

Support with home to school travel is made available in line with the Council's Home to School Travel policy which provides assistance with transport for secondary age pupils living 3 miles or more from their nearest suitable school which includes a school in another Authority. This proposal designates the new school at Margam as the receiving school, therefore the Council will consider this school to qualify as a 'nearest suitable' school and, as the

distance between the upper Afan Valley and Margam is more than 3 miles, assistance with travel will be provided to eligible pupils.

Currently, around 130 pupils attending Cymer Afan Comprehensive School receive assistance with home to school transport. Transfer to the new school at Margam will involve a daily travel journey of approximately 13 miles from the furthest communities. A test run of the journey by coach, including pick-up/drop-off stops and at times corresponding to the start and end of the school day, shows the travel time to be approx. 40 - 45 mins. in one direction.

The current annual cost of transporting pupils to Cymer Afan Comprehensive School is c.£64k. Based on current assumptions the annual cost of home to school transport between the upper Afan Valley and the new school at Margam is estimated to be in the region of c.£140k. As such, this proposal will result in an annual increase in travel costs of c.£76k.

There are regular (hourly) public transport bus services travelling between the upper Afan Valley and Port Talbot, details of which can be found using the electronic link: <https://www.firstgroup.com/south-west-wales/routes-and-maps/route-maps>

There is nothing to suggest significant disruption of the bus services because of highway conditions.

An analysis of school closure information due to inclement weather reveals that over the past four winters Cymer Afan Comprehensive School has been closed for snow on only three occasions and these were in January 2013. These 3 days of disruption need to be seen in the context of the 190 days when a school is open in each school year.

Should the proposal be implemented then routes will be assessed to ensure the new school at Margam is accessible to pupils. Site configuration at the new school provides sufficient parking for school buses.

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

The Council's Home to School Travel Policy can be viewed on the Council's website using the following electronic link:
https://www.npt.gov.uk/media/4231/npt_home_to_school_travel_policy_2017.pdf

Impact on school based staff

– Federated school staff

There are 65 school based staff recorded as employed by the Federation of Schools in the Upper Afan Valley with contracts attached to Cymer Afan Comprehensive School. Of these 29 have homes addresses in the upper Afan Valley. The home addresses of the remaining 36 suggest that they live elsewhere. 26 are teaching staff or senior leaders. The remaining 39 are school support staff.

Should a decision be taken to close the school, staff with contracts attached to Cymer Afan Comprehensive School will be declared redundant. Employees identified at risk of redundancy will be supported by the Council's policies and HR staff.

Employment for some may continue within the federation whilst there is also the potential for employment opportunities at the receiving school because of increased numbers.

The governing bodies of schools in Neath Port Talbot have pledged to employ redundant staff where possible.

– Staff support

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 as a result of school reorganisation some staff take the opportunity to undertake 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 proven track record for supporting staff in such situations.

Impact on governors

The five schools in the upper Afan Valley are managed by a federated governing body. The federation could continue following the closure of Cymer Afan Comprehensive School, albeit with a revised structure and purpose. Benefits associated with federation can still be realised within a federation of primary schools alone.

Cymer Afan Comprehensive School will continue to exist and be managed by the federated governing body until its closure.

Impact on special needs education needs provision

There is no specialist unit for pupils with statements of special educational needs at Cymer Afan Comprehensive School. 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 same arrangements will apply at the new school at Margam.

Impact on Welsh language education

At Cymer Afan Comprehensive school the Welsh dimension is strongly supported. There are many valuable opportunities provided to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of the history, culture and industry of Wales. All pupils follow an appropriate course in Welsh in key stage 4, and a majority of pupils gain a qualification in Welsh at GCSE.

Whereas the new school at Margam has yet to open, the experience at Dyffryn School serves as a helpful benchmark as the new school would wish to build on the strengths of existing provision. At Dyffryn School almost all Year 10 pupils follow the full GCSE course in Welsh second language, with many pupils following the course at the higher level. This was reported by Estyn to be strength of the school, who also noted that the school has been effective in promoting positive attitudes to the learning of Welsh.

The school is working towards improving pupils' Welsh language skills beyond formal Welsh lessons, and to encourage greater pupil self-confidence when using the language.

There is no reason to suggest that Welsh language provision at the new school will not be at least comparable with the provision currently offered at Cymer Afan Comprehensive School and that implementing the proposal should result in a positive impact on Welsh language development.

The full Welsh language assessment is available on the council website using the electronic link⁴: <https://www.npt.gov.uk/1891>

Impact on the community

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

Whereas the need to understand and mitigate the impact of a school reorganisation proposal on a community is a right and proper consideration, the deciding factor in determining school organisation proposals should be one of securing the best educational offer for pupils.

The full Community Impact Assessment can be viewed on the Council's website using the following electronic link⁵: <https://www.npt.gov.uk/1891>

Equality Impact Assessment

An equality impact assessment has been carried out and found that the consultation on the future of secondary education in the upper Afan Valley should have no adverse effect on any particular group. The process has checks and monitoring in place to ensure any unmet need is identified and any potential adverse effect is fully evaluated and impact mitigated.

The assessment can be viewed⁶ on the Council's website:
<https://www.npt.gov.uk/1891>.

4. Options that have been considered

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

⁴ Hard copy is available on request.

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⁶ Hard copy is available on request.

Option 1 – Status quo: maintain the existing five school federation in the upper Afan Valley.

The schools in the five school federation would continue to support each other and there would be no immediate disruption to current arrangements for teaching and learning, staff employment or the provision of community facilities.

However the high cost of maintaining a small secondary school is not efficient use of Council resources.

The benefits of a new, 21st century school environment will not be realised by maintaining the status quo, and so opportunities for improved teaching and learning experiences would be lost.

Implementing the proposal to close Cymer Afan Comprehensive School would effectively remove backlog maintenance and accessibility costs of c.£3m. Maintaining the secondary school at the existing site would require significant investment which is not considered to be the best use of resources.

Cymer Afan Comprehensive School is operating with 65% surplus places, this is not sustainable in the long term.

Option 2 – Federate with another secondary school

In a federation, schools are managed by a single governing body which takes decisions about matters such as staffing structures and expenditure. Under 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. 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.

Although a federated arrangement with another secondary school would provide additional teaching and learning support and opportunities for wider peer group interaction as well as retain secondary education in the upper Afan Valley and avoid an increase in annual home to school travel costs, it does not address the high costs of maintaining a small secondary school. Neither will it deal with the significant surplus places at Cymer Afan Comprehensive school

and ongoing cost of building maintenance and repair. Importantly, it does not enable the pupils of the upper Afan Valley to benefit from education in a new, purpose built, 21st Century school environment. In addition, the high cost of education delivery at a small school would remain.

Option 3 – Build a new ‘all-through’ middle school to replace the existing secondary and four primary schools.

The benefits of a 21st century school teaching and learning environment would be realised and significant backlog maintenance and repair liabilities would be removed together with significant surplus places and additional redundancy costs. However, delivering secondary phase education with the necessary specialist teaching facilities and the high cost of sustaining the curriculum would still be a challenge given the small number of secondary age pupils. On cost alone, this would make the benefits of the investment difficult to justify. For a secondary school of less than 300 pupils it is unlikely that a business case could be developed to secure grant funding for a new 21st century school build or a replacement facility

Option 4 – Make arrangements for the pupils to receive their secondary education at the new school at Margam and close Cymer Afan Comprehensive School.

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. With a new school come more choices and improved opportunities because of better facilities.

An evaluation of a new, 21st century school build in Neath Port Talbot has shown high levels of satisfaction and support from the pupils, their parents and stakeholders.

Cymer Afan Comprehensive School has backlog maintenance and accessibility costs amounting to c.£3m. The site is assessed as overall condition C, i.e. poor, elements are exhibiting major defects and/or not operating as intended. This option would remove these financial liabilities. There are school budget share revenue savings to be made from educating the pupils of the upper Afan Valley at the new school at Margam, savings that will be reinvested into the education budget.

Delivering the range and breadth of the curriculum can be more challenging in a small school, placing increased burdens on a small number of staff. A larger school is better placed to offer a wider range of options due to economies of scale and, in general, curriculum provision is broader and more balanced.

The new school at Margam is within reasonable travel distance for pupils living in the upper Afan Valley.

Option 5 – Make arrangements for the pupils to receive their secondary education at a secondary school other than the new school at Margam and close Cymer Afan Comprehensive School.

There are two other secondary schools that are near to the upper Afan Valley. They are Cefn Saeson Comprehensive School, Cimla, Neath and Maesteg School, Maesteg.

Cefn Saeson Comprehensive School has surplus capacity. However, at present it cannot offer the 21st century new build facilities of the kind that will be available at the new school at Margam. Cefn Saeson Comprehensive School is some 9 miles for the furthest communities of the upper Afan Valley.

Maesteg School is under the control of Bridgend County Borough Council. As such, its admission arrangements are outside the control of Neath Port Talbot. Admission for pupils from the upper Afan Valley could not be guaranteed at this juncture. A formal agreement with the neighbouring Authority would need to be put in place. Bridgend County Borough Council is a consultee. Information received from Bridgend County Borough Council indicates that pupils from the upper Afan Valley currently attend Maesteg School which is the nearest alternative suitable secondary school to the upper Afan Valley, some 7 miles for the furthest community.

Option 6 – to establish the upper Afan Federation of schools as the centre for public services in the upper Afan Valley

This option has been submitted to the Local Authority for consideration. Under this option it is proposed that the upper Afan Valley federation of schools could be further developed to meet the needs of health, education and the economy in the upper Afan Valley. It is envisaged that this would involve longer opening hours of the school buildings, greater community use of the school facilities and the federation becoming the focus for all public services in the area.

Currently there are many, varied community facilities available within easy reach of the secondary school and whereas the rationalisation of facilities and resources, together with the benefits of closer working arrangements with statutory and voluntary services, are worthy of consideration further expansion of activities does not appear to be necessary at the school site. Many of the current community facilities are well used in their current locations suggesting that they are already meeting the needs of the local community groups who use them, and implying that movement to a central school setting would not necessarily be beneficial.

Establishing the upper Afan Valley federation of schools as a focus of public services would depend upon those statutory and voluntary services identifying this as a desirable option and on those bodies developing plans to create or relocate services. This has not been the case to date, however a federation of primary schools could still deliver many of the perceived benefits of this option.

Further information regarding the evidence base and financial implications of this option is awaited.

Preferred Option for consultation - Option 4

Having considered information gathered to date, the option to make arrangements for the pupils to receive their secondary education at the new school at Margam and close Cymer Afan Comprehensive School is recommended as the basis for consultation, being affordable and educationally transformational.

5. Details of the schools affected

Cymer Afan Comprehensive School and the upper Afan Valley Federation
Cymer Afan Comprehensive School is an English-medium community school for boys and girls aged 11-16 years. Since September 2013 it has been part of a five school federation in the upper Afan Valley.

Cymer Afan Comprehensive School is a small school. In October 2017 it had 226 pupils on roll. It is one of only five established mainstream secondary schools in Wales with fewer than 300 pupils.

The five school federation in the upper Afan Valley, formally established in 2013, comprises four primary schools (Croeserw Primary, Cymer Afan Primary, Glyncorwg Primary and Pen Afan Primary) and one secondary school (Cymer Afan Comprehensive).

Cymer Afan Comprehensive School also hosts a number of on-site community facilities which, notionally would be displaced by the closure of the school. However, the community impact assessment which informs this document sets out a number of mitigation proposals to ensure no loss of amenity to the wider community.

There has been a 36% (127) fall in pupil numbers over the past ten years with a 2016 low of 210. Pupil numbers for this period are shown in table 3 below.

Table 3

Cymer Afan Comp.												
	Annual census - January											Oct
Year	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2017
Pupil Nos.	353	343	351	326	302	288	266	244	216	210	213	226

Forecasts based on January annual census returns suggest a potential increase of 54 pupils by 2021 (table 4). However, Cymer Afan Comprehensive will still be a small secondary school with numbers returning only to 2013 equivalent levels. Pupil numbers are projected to fall slightly in 2022/23.

Table 4

Cymer Afan Comp.							
	Annual census - January	January forecasts					
Year	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Pupil numbers	213	221	220	241	267	259	260

Surplus capacity impact

The proposal directly addresses unfilled places at Cymer Afan Comprehensive school. With the physical capacity to accommodate 641 pupils (table 5) the school has a significant surplus capacity of 65% (415 places). Even at the forecasted high in 2021 there will still be 58% surplus capacity at the school, leaving the school notionally over half empty. This level of surplus capacity has revenue and capital costs associated with maintaining the school.

Table 5

Cymer Afan Comp.				
		Jan 2017		Jan 2023
	School capacity	October 2017 Pupil Nos.	Surplus places	Projected Pupil Numbers
<i>Pupil numbers</i>	641	226	415	260

The new school at Margam

Consultation on the future of secondary education in the upper Afan Valley is being brought forward under a proposal to provide secondary education at the new school at Margam for the pupils who would otherwise attend Cymer Afan Comprehensive School. This is a new, 21st century build, 3-16, ‘all-through’ middle school with capacity to provide for 1200 secondary age pupils. (It will also provide for 210 full-time primary age pupils, 45 nursery age pupils specifically from the catchment area currently served by Groes Primary school.) The new school at Margam is an English-medium community school which has room to accommodate pupils from the upper Afan Valley (table 6 below).

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.

With a new school come more choices and improved opportunities because of better facilities. Estyn report 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.

The new school at Margam will provide adaptable ICT facilities suitable for learning in the 21st century. Mobile technology will be integrated with a sound teaching and learning base to provide pupils with enhanced learning experiences, equipping them with the key skills and motivation needed to raise standards.

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.

Following the first year of operation, an evaluation of the transfer to a new, 21st century school build in Neath Port Talbot has shown high levels of satisfaction and support from the pupils, their parents and stakeholders.

Table 6

<i>The new school at Margam (secondary school capacity = 1200).</i>							
	<i>Annual census January</i>	<i>January forecasts</i>					
<i>Year</i>	<i>2017</i>	<i>2018</i>	<i>2019</i>	<i>2020</i>	<i>2021</i>	<i>2022</i>	<i>2023</i>
Est. pupil numbers	790 (Dyffryn School)	787	826	848	843	847	855
Cymer Afan Comp.	n/a	n/a	220	241	267	259	260
Total:	n/a	787	1046	1089	1110	1106	1115

For comparison purposes, the pupil roll at Dyffryn School for the previous four years is set out below in table 7

Table 7

<i>Annual School Census Return – Dyffryn School.</i>				
	<i>Jan 2014</i>	<i>Jan 2015</i>	<i>Jan 2016</i>	<i>Jan 2017</i>
11-16	773	758	790	790

Quality of accommodation

The building condition of Cymer Afan Comprehensive School was last assessed in 2015. The site is categorised as overall building condition C, i.e. poor, elements are exhibiting major defects and/or not operating as intended. Many of the building and mechanical elements are nearing the end of their life span and will require replacing within the next 2-4 years. The school has received some investment over recent years, including replacement of the main boiler and controls.

The building accessibility appraisal completed in 2015 reports that the school is access grade D which indicates that buildings are inaccessible, are non-compliant with accessibility legislation and cannot be made so at reasonable expense.

The costs of backlog maintenance and accessibility amount to c.£3m, as can be seen on the survey report's cover page below. This figure is an estimation of costs as at the date the condition assessment was undertaken in 2015. The effect of inflation and possible further deterioration over the intervening period will mean that current costs will be as high if not higher. The detailed building condition and accessibility assessment can be accessed on the Council's website using the following electronic link⁷: <https://www.npt.gov.uk/1891>

Plans for a vacated Cymer Afan Comprehensive School site have not yet been developed. The school site is owned by the Council and any future use will be considered within the context of the Council's corporate asset management process. If the site or part of the site is sold the monies raised will be reinvested into the general education budget.

Survey report - cover page

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL CYNGOR BWRDEISTREF SIROL CASTELL-NEDD PORT TALBOT			
CONDITION ASSESSMENT REPORT			
			Report run on: December 22, 2015 3:11 PM
UPRN:	286001195975	CYMER AFAN COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL SCHOOL ROAD CYMMER PORT TALBOT	
Assessment Date:	24 NOV 2015	Assessment Id	701
Surveys By:	PROPERTY & REGENERATION	Public Access:	YES
Asbestos:	ASBESTOS WIDELY PRESENT - WELL MANAGED / LOW RISK; MINOR DAMAGE TO CEILING BOARDS AND VINYL FLOOR TILES. PRESENCE OF ASBESTOS WILL AFFECT REFURBISHMENT WORKS.		
	Condition Grade	Condition Cost	Access Grade
Unit 0	EXTERNAL AREAS	109,500.00	59,000.00
Unit 1	CYMER AFAN COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL SCHOOL BLOCK 1	1,375,000.00 D	146,750.00
Unit 2	CYMER AFAN COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL SCHOOL BLOCK 2	1,046,750.00 C	100,250.00
Unit 3	CYMER AFAN COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL SPORTS HALL AND SWIMMING POOL BLOCK 3	88,000.00 C	42,000.00
OVERALL SITE	C	2,619,250.00 D	348,000.00
<i>Site Comments: OVERALL, THE SITE HAS RECEIVED MINIMAL TO MODERATE INVESTMENT OVER RECENT YEARS. THE MAIN BOILER AND CONTROLS WERE RECENTLY RENEWED. REMAINING BUILDING AND MECHANICAL ELEMENTS ARE NEARING THE END OF THEIR LIFESPAN AND REPLACEMENTS / REFURBISHMENTS REQUIRED.</i>			

The new school at Margam is a c.£30m investment in a new build 21st century school which 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. New build facilities offer improved teaching and learning opportunities and can have significant impact on the attainment and achievement of pupils.

⁷ Hard copy is available on request.

The new school is a purpose built facility. It will be equipped with general classrooms, specialist teaching areas, hall, sports hall, ancillary rooms and administrative areas compatible with the requirements of building bulletins 98 & 99. Similarly, outdoor play area and pitches will be appropriate to the needs of a 3-16, 'all-through' school. These facilities, indoor and outdoor, will be available for community use under the management of the school.

Other schools that are, or could potentially be, affected by this proposal

Croeserw Primary, Cymer Afan Primary, Glyncorwg Primary and Pen Afan Primary schools are partner schools with Cymer Afan Comprehensive in the upper Afan Valley federation. All four are English-medium community schools maintained by Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council. They provide for boys and girls aged 3-11 and are situated in upper Afan Valley villages of Croeserw, Cymmer, Glyncorwg and Blaengwynfi respectively. Croeserw Primary hosts a learning support centre for pupils with special educational needs.

The combined capacity of the four schools is 540 with 357 full-time pupils on roll.

These schools are affected by this proposal in three key areas. Firstly, if the proposal is implemented then at secondary school transfer the pupils will attend a school other than Cymer Afan Comprehensive. Secondly, if the proposal takes effect on the 1st September 2019 as proposed then current Year 5 and Year 6 pupils at the four primary schools will be directly affected as the first cohort of pupils to transfer under the new arrangement. Thirdly, removal of Cymer Afan Comprehensive School from the federation will change the current federated structure.

Table 8

Primary schools (inc Nursery & LSC)							
	Annual census - January	January forecasts					
Year	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Croeserw	158	162	164	155	148	149	144
Cymer Afan	74	70	69	77	74	79	87
Glyncorwg	91	87	87	84	84	77	71
Pen Afan	126	130	134	141	141	147	154
Total:	449	449	454	457	447	452	456

Table 9

<i>Primary schools (inc Nursery & LSC)</i>												
	<i>Annual census - January</i>											<i>Oct</i>
<i>Year</i>	<i>2007</i>	<i>2008</i>	<i>2009</i>	<i>2010</i>	<i>2011</i>	<i>2012</i>	<i>2013</i>	<i>2014</i>	<i>2015</i>	<i>2016</i>	<i>2017</i>	<i>2017</i>
Croeserw	170	153	150	126	138	155	153	149	162	170	158	158
Cymer Afan	69	66	63	66	63	69	75	70	61	63	74	72
Glyncorrwg	100	92	88	94	91	83	96	88	95	96	91	89
Pen Afan Abergwynfi Inf/Jun until 2010	132	125	109	100	99	98	92	104	111	115	126	122
Total:	471	436	410	386	391	405	416	411	429	444	449	441

Cefn Saeson Comprehensive School is an English-medium community school maintained by Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council. It provides for boys and girls aged 11-16 and is situated in Cimla, a residential area about one mile from Neath town centre. It has capacity to accommodate 924 pupils and has 653 pupils on roll (Jan 2017). Cefn Saeson Comprehensive School is some 9 miles from the furthest communities of the upper Afan Valley.

The latest Estyn inspection reported that Cefn Saeson Comprehensive is a school with an inclusive and supportive ethos where pupils feel safe and who think that the school deals well with matters important to their welfare. Estyn also reported that the school provides a caring and supportive environment that has a positive impact on pupils' personal development. Provision for pupils with additional learning needs is effective and enables them to progress well with their learning. The school is currently placed in the Green category of support.

Table 10

<i>Annual School Census Return – Cefn Saeson Comp.</i>				
	<i>Jan 2014</i>	<i>Jan 2015</i>	<i>Jan 2016</i>	<i>Jan 2017</i>
11-16	685	631	619	653

Table 11

<i>Five Year Forecasts – Cefn Saeson Comp.</i>					
	<i>Jan 2018</i>	<i>Jan 2019</i>	<i>Jan 2020</i>	<i>Jan 2021</i>	<i>Jan 2022</i>
11-16	722	720	754	771	785

In respect of building condition, Cefn Saeson Comprehensive school is assessed as condition grade category D, and category C for access. The main

building was constructed in 1972 and many of the original components have exceeded their life expectancy.

Cefn Saeson Comprehensive School is affected by this proposal as it is a potential receiving school for pupils from the upper Afan Valley whose parents choose to send their children to a nearby alternative school.

Maesteg School is an English-medium community school maintained by Bridgend County Borough Council. It provides for boys and girls aged 11-18, and is situated in the town of Maesteg. It moved locations from two separate sites to a new build on one site in 2008. Currently, the school has 1046 pupils on roll and capacity for 1333, incl. sixth form pupils. Maesteg School is approx. 7 miles from the furthest communities of the upper Afan Valley.

Estyn inspected the school in 2012 and found that performance and prospects for improvement were both good, reporting that pupils benefit from an excellent level of support which impacts positively on wellbeing and standards. Pupils with additional learning needs are reported to achieve well, often above expectations, and the school environment is noted to contribute to a positive learning atmosphere. The school is currently placed in the Amber category of support which indicates it is a school in need of improvement and has aspects of performance which are not improving quickly enough.

In respect of building condition, Maesteg School is assessed as condition grade category A, i.e. Good/performing as intended and operating efficiently. For suitability it is assessed as grade category A, i.e. Good/facilities suitable for teaching, learning and wellbeing in schools.

Table 12

Annual School Census Return – Maesteg School				
	Jan 2014	Jan 2015	Jan 2016	Jan 2017
11-16	922	903	909	927
6 th Form	202	193	204	177

Table 13

	Five Year Forecasts – Maesteg School				
	2018	2019	2020	Jan 2021	Jan 2022
11-16	902	892	899	884	896
6 th Form	167	171	168	186	184

Maesteg School is affected by this proposal as it is a potential receiving school for pupils from the upper Afan Valley whose parents choose to send their children to a nearby alternative school.

6. Quality of teaching and learning

Outcomes

Cymer Afan has 38% of pupils entitled to free school meals and 45% with identified additional learning needs. This places the school in benchmarking group 5. The school was inspected in April 2015 and both the current performance and the prospects for improvement were judged to be adequate. Estyn monitored the school and in November 2016 the school was judged to have made good progress in respect of the key issues for action.

Estyn (2015) report that standards are ‘adequate’ and note that ‘When compared with their attainment in previous key stages, pupils make sound progress’.

In 2016/2017 the school was judged to be in the yellow support category of the National Categorisation system, which indicates it is an effective school with many aspects of performance which are self-improving.

Estyn report that wellbeing is ‘good’ at Cymer Afan Comprehensive School and that pupils are generally polite and well behaved. Estyn also report that ‘many pupils enjoy their lessons and most have positive attitudes to learning’.

In 2015/2016 attendance improved to 92.3% from 91.5%, resulting in the school performing in the top 50% when compared to similar schools.

In the first year of operation the secondary pupil cohort at the new school at Margam will comprise pupils who would otherwise have attended Dyffryn School. In this regard, whereas the new school at Margam has yet to open, the current performance at Dyffryn School serves as a helpful comparator, as the new school would wish to build on the strengths of existing provision.

Dyffryn School has 20% of pupils entitled to free school meals and 24% with identified additional learning needs. The school is placed in benchmarking group 3. The school was inspected in April 2014 and both the current performance and the prospects for improvement were judged to be good. The school’s performance at key stage 4 in the indicators that include English and Mathematics place the school consistently in the top 50% of similar schools, with a drop to quartile 3 in 2015.

Dyffryn School is currently in the yellow support category (2016/2017). Estyn report that pupil wellbeing is good and that pupils treat each other with respect, listen to each other's views and co-operate very well when working together. They enjoy coming to school and behave very well in lessons and around the school. Attendance data indicates the school is consistently above similar schools and is currently almost 94% (2016/2017 data).

In their report 'School Size and Education Effectiveness' (December 2013) Estyn state that 'large primary and secondary schools tend to perform better than small and medium size schools'. 71% of secondary schools with less than 600 pupils require follow up activity after an Estyn inspection, compared to 46% of schools with more than 1,100 pupils. 21% of the smaller schools will be placed in a statutory category (significant improvement or special measures) while just 4% of larger schools will require the same level of support. In the same report, Estyn also state that the performance of pupils in key stage 3 and key stage 4 is generally better in large secondary schools, and note that large secondary schools can provide more appropriate levels of challenge and support.

End of Key Stage 3 Data

Performance indicators for Key Stage 3 place Cymer Afan Comprehensive School consistently in 3rd or 4th quartile for core subjects at level 5+ and at level 6+. In 2016, 57% of pupils attained the expected level 5 or above in the core subjects of English, Maths and Science compared to 71% of pupils in similar schools, 78% in Neath Port Talbot and 86% across Wales.

In 2015 and 2016 Dyffryn School Key Stage 3 data also places the school in quartile 3 and 4 for core subjects at level 5+ and at level 6+. Pupils are performing above the local authority average and just below similar schools and schools across Wales in all core subjects.

Key Stage 4 Data

Results at Key Stage 4 at Cymer Afan Comprehensive School have shown a steady improvement over three years in all key indicators with a significant rise in 2016.

Table 14

Cymer Afan	2014	2015	2016
Level 2 Inc. E/W & M	31	33	59
Level 2	85	93	96
Level 1	97	98	100
CSI	31	33	49

Results for level 2 (5A*-C grades) show the school is performing better than similar schools, schools in Neath Port Talbot and schools across Wales as a whole, and since 2014 the school has been placed consistently in quartile1. In 2016, 59% of pupil attained 5 A* -C GCSEs including English and Maths, a 26% increase from 2015.

Table 15

	Cymer Afan	Family	LA	Wales
Level 2 Inc. E/W & M	59	42	61	60
Level 2	96	78	89	84
Level 1	100	91	95	95
CSI	49	36	57	58

At Dyffryn School results for level 2 also indicate that the school is consistently in quartile 1 when compared to similar schools and also performs well against schools in Neath Port Talbot and across Wales.

Table 16

Dyffryn	2014	2015	2016
Level 2 Inc. E/M	51	48	75
Level 2	98	94	96
Level 1	99	97	100
CSI	51	47	73

75% of pupils attained 5 GCSEs at A*-C grades including English and Maths in 2016, an increase of 27%. The school is performing well in every key indicator when compared to the family of similar schools, other schools across Neath Port Talbot and schools across Wales.

Table 17

	Dyffryn	Family	LA	Wales
Level 2 Inc. E/W & M	75	62	61	60
Level 2	96	86	89	84
Level 1	100	98	95	95
CSI	73	59	57	58

Provision

Estyn report that Cymer Afan Comprehensive has a warm, happy and friendly ethos that respects the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, and learning experiences are judged to be good. The school supports pupils well and works with a wide range of agencies to promote health and wellbeing.

This has a positive impact on improving pupils' behaviour, engagement and attitudes to learning.

At Dyffryn School, Estyn report that learning experiences are good with an extensive range of extra-curricular activities, which include sport and music. Teaching is also judged to be good and pupils demonstrate motivation and engagement in learning. Pupils benefit from strong care, support and guidance, and safeguarding arrangements are good.

Estyn report in their publication 'School Size and Education Effectiveness' (December 2013) that 'curriculum provision tends to be broader and more balanced in large secondary schools'. Cymer Afan Comprehensive is a small secondary school with 226 pupils on roll. Delivering the range and breadth of the curriculum can be more challenging in a small school, placing increased burdens on a small number of staff.

Dyffryn School has been subject to school reorganisation and will become part of the new 3-16 school in Margam from September 2018. The school will occupy new build premises providing the opportunity to deliver a stimulating teaching and learning environment in state of the art, 21st Century facilities that will aim to improve the learning outcomes for all children across the ability range. With a new school comes more choices and improved opportunities because there is more space and better facilities.

Cymer Afan Comprehensive School is dependent on the support of 14-19 partnerships and works well with other providers to ensure that pupils have the opportunity to study a broad mixture of academic and vocational courses. In larger schools there is more autonomy and less dependency on partnership working and a wider range of options can be made available due to economies of scale.

Dyffryn School was judged by Estyn to have excellent partnership working, and 'has established highly effective partnerships that have had a significant impact on sustaining high standards of pupil attainment and wellbeing'.

Estyn report that in larger schools teaching is good or better in 63% of lessons, while just under 50% of teaching is good or better in smaller schools. Sharing good practice across departments is easier in a larger school with more staff, and gives teachers opportunities to better develop curriculum planning and delivery through closer working with colleagues.

Leadership and Management

Estyn report in 2015 that leadership and management at Cymer Afan Comprehensive School was adequate. They noted that: 'The warm, and caring ethos developed by leaders has resulted in improvements in pupils' behaviour, engagement and attitudes to learning'. However, they also report that leadership has not had enough impact in ensuring good progress in indicators that include English and Maths.

The school has experienced some instability in recent years with a number of changes in key leadership roles. Recruitment of a permanent Headteacher has proven to be difficult and, currently, the school has an acting Headteacher seconded from another secondary school in Neath Port Talbot. The post has recently been advertised nationally on a number of occasions but the school has not been successful in appointing a permanent head teacher.

Leadership and management at Dyffryn School are judged to be good and the school has been successful in sustaining high outcomes for pupils.

Reports of Estyn, the schools' inspectorate, are available on:
<http://www.estyn.gov.uk/english/inspection/inspection-reports>

7. Financial Overview

Revenue costs associated with maintaining a small secondary school are significantly higher than for those schools with greater pupil numbers. This is reflected in the high 'per pupil' funding at Cymer Afan Comprehensive school which is significantly higher than the average for the Council's schools (table 18). This cost has increased annually and since 2015/16 'per pupil' funding at Cymer Afan Comprehensive School has exceeded the average for the Council's schools by nearly 60%.

Table 18

	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Cymer Afan Comp.	£5,613	£6,054	£6,325	£6,344	£6,861	£7,156	£7,156	£7,111
Local Authority Average	£4,179	£4,240	£4,384	£4,441	£4,438	£4,480	£4,484	£4,476

The 'per pupil' costs at the new school at Margam, scheduled to open in 2018, will be at or below the local authority average. Based on the local authority

average alone there will be annual revenue saving of £2,635 per pupil. With 226 pupils currently on roll, this equates to a total annual saving of c.£595k.

Costs associated with compulsory redundancy will not be known until all redeployment opportunities have been fully explored. 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 proven track record for supporting staff in such situations. However, in the highly unlikely event of the compulsory redundancy of all teaching and support staff currently employed at Cymer Afan Comprehensive School then, based on the current staff structure, the estimated total redundancy cost amounts to c.£458k. Redundancy costs incurred as a result of the closure of Cymer Afan Comprehensive school are 'one-off' payments and are not annually recurring charges.

The proposal will result in an additional recurring revenue cost of c.£76k associated with the provision of home to school travel. This figure has been estimated on the basis of all pupils transferring from Cymer Afan Comprehensive School to the new school at Margam and the provision of transport current prices.

Closing Cymer Afan Comprehensive school will remove c.£3m of backlog maintenance and accessibility liabilities.

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, and that recurring revenue costs are both predictable and clearly expressed. The funding formulas for the primary and secondary sectors were last revised in 2011. Consultation is currently underway on a proposed revision to the primary sector formula.

The new school at Margam will be funded according to the Council agreed formula for allocating school budget shares which will reflect the number of pupils on roll including additional pupils as a result of this proposal.

Revenue savings for reinvestment into the education budget will be as a result of efficiencies in terms of cost of delivery through economies of scale; the new school at Margam will be a large school. 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 secondary sector schools.

The cost of the £30m new build investment at the new school at Margam is not dependent on this proposal.

As part of the consultation process consideration will be given to alternative use of the vacated site, including its resale and/or its demolition; estimated values and costs of which have yet to be calculated.

8. Consultation Details

The purpose of this consultation document is to provide information and to invite views on the future of secondary education in the upper Afan Valley which is being brought forward under a proposal to make arrangements for pupils who would otherwise attend Cymer Afan Comprehensive School, to receive their secondary education at the new school at Margam.

Those being consulted are the pupils, parents, governors and staff of the schools directly affected, as well as other interested parties. A copy of this consultation document will be provided to all those required in accordance with the School Organisation Code 2013. A list of interested parties being consulted is provided under Appendix A.

Consultation will take place during the period: 11th December 2017 to 14th February 2018.

Views can be expressed in writing (and additional information sought) either by letter, e-mail or completion of the comment form attached to this document. Responses are to be received no later than Wednesday, 14th February 2018 and should be sent to:

- ***Aled Evans, Director of Education Leisure and Lifelong Learning, Civic Centre, Port Talbot SA13 1PJ (marked for the attention of Debora Holder) or***
- ***e-mail: ssip@npt.gov.uk***

The following consultation events have been arranged which will provide an opportunity to ask questions about the proposal:

Wednesday 17th January 2018	
3.45pm	Staff – Federated Schools of the Upper Afan Valley
5.30pm	Governing Body - Federated Schools of the Upper Afan Valley
Thursday 18th January	
5.00pm	Parents/carers - Federated Schools of the Upper Afan Valley
Monday 29th January	
5.30pm	Governing Body – The new school at Margam
Monday 5th February	
6.00pm	Communities of the upper Afan Valley

Pupils will be consulted during the course of the school day at a time which causes least disruption to teaching and learning.

9. The legal matters

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. 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 it will publish a statutory notice of its proposal, allowing 28 days for the submission of objections. The Council's Cabinet Board will only consider objections submitted during this period.

Please note that only written objections submitted during the statutory notice period will be considered. Comments submitted as part of this consultation will need to be re-submitted in writing during the statutory notice period if they are to be considered as objections.

If there are no objections then, subject to Education, Skills and Culture Cabinet Board approval, the proposal will be implemented on 1st September 2019. 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 a response.

If objections have been raised, the Council is required to determine the proposal and the matter will go before the Council's Cabinet Board for decision. In its decision taking, the Council's Cabinet Board 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 2013.

Process timetable

The main activities and actions, and the dates/periods that they are scheduled to take place is set out below.

What	When
Consultation period	11 th December 2017 – 14 th February 2018
Consultation report published	Within 13 weeks of end of consultation, i.e. before 16 th May 2018
Publication of proposal	Within 26 weeks of end of consultation, i.e. before 15 th August 2018
Period for submitting objections	28 days from date of publication of the proposal
Determination	Within 16 weeks of the end of the objection period
Objection report published & decision notification	At the same time as the determination decision is published and within 7 days
Proposed implementation date	1 st September 2019

Consultees

Cymer Afan Comprehensive School,
together with the other federated
schools of the upper Afan Valley

Pupils
Parents
Federated school staff
Federated governing body
School community groups/users

Other schools

NPT schools
Maesteg School

Trade Unions

Regional Organisers

Secondary Head Teachers' Group
Primary Head Teachers' Group

NAASH
LLAN

NPT Schools Forum

NPT Elected Members

All

Town/Community Council

Pelenna

AM for Aberafan
AM for Neath

David Rees
Jeremy Miles

Regional AMs (South Wales West)

Suzy Davies
Bethan Jenkins
Caroline Jones
Dai Lloyd

MP for Aberafan
MP for Neath

Stephen Kinnock
Christina Rees

Bordering Authorities

Swansea
Bridgend
Carmarthenshire
Powys
Rhondda Cynon Taf

Faith school education authorities

The Diocese of Menevia
The Diocese of Llandaff

Regional Education Consortium

ERW

Estyn

Children & Young Person Partnership
(incl. Early Years Development and Childcare)

Communities First Partnership

NPTC Group

Neath Port Talbot 14-19 Network

SEN Partners

Action for Children
Child & Adult Mental Health
Services (CAMHS)
Consultant Community
Paediatrician
The Children's Centre NPT Hospital
(Physiotherapy)

NPTCBC Integrated Transport Unit

Police & Crime Commissioner

Alun Michael

WG Schools Management Division

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Comment Form

Please provide your comments on the future of secondary education in the upper Afan Valley under a proposal being brought forward to make provision at the new school at Margam for pupils who would otherwise receive their secondary education at Cymer Afan Comprehensive School and to close Cymer Afan Comprehensive School.

Your comments/suggestion (incl. alternative proposals)

Alternatively, you may wish to indicate which of the following reflects your views:

	Please tick
I do not feel strongly one way or the other	
I support the proposal	
I do not support the proposal	

Please confirm that you are:

School Staff name of school
Governor name of school
Parent name of school

Other (please state) _____

Please tick the box if you wish to be informed that
the consultation report is available

Name _____ Date _____

Address _____

Please detach this form and return to:

***Director of Education Leisure and Lifelong Learning, Civic Centre, Port Talbot
SA13 1PJ (marked for the attention of Debora Holder) or you can e-mail your
comments to: ssip@npt.gov.uk***

All comments must be received by **no later than 14th February 2018**

Additional comments/suggestions