

# 21st Century Schools Consultation Report

TRINITY FIELDS SCHOOL AND RESOURCE CENTRE



Proposal : **Expand the existing Trinity Fields School and Resource Centre, via a new building extension and outdoor play space with an anticipated completion date of September 2023**

Formal Consultation Period : 14<sup>th</sup> September 2020 – 26th October 2020

This report is published in line with the requirements of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and the School Organisation Code 2018.



Ysgolion a Cholegau yr 21ain Ganrif  
21st Century Schools and Colleges



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government



**Richard Edmunds**

Corporate Director for  
Education and Corporate  
Services

# FOREWORD

*“Working together to deliver the best outcomes for all our children”*

Caerphilly County Borough Council has embarked upon an exciting but challenging journey of improvement and change. We have bold ambitions to provide every learner with the best life chances and we are committed to doing this through the provision of high quality teaching, learning and leadership across our school settings as part of our ‘Shared Ambitions’ Strategy.

We have focused on improving young people’s outcomes and this is still a priority area moving forward incorporating a holistic view of education. The Council has adopted ‘Improving education opportunities for all’ as the first of its Wellbeing Objectives and has committed to an ambitious 21st Century Schools investment programme.

In collaboration with Welsh Government, the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools and Colleges Band B Programme is supporting investment in education within the County Borough. Our aspiration is the improvement of the condition of school buildings and maximising community usage.

Our current proposals support our commitment to increase school effectiveness and to narrow inequalities in achievement across groups; to understand the needs of more vulnerable children; promote the Welsh Language, and support those unable to access traditional learning pathways to ensure that all will benefit from the richness of learning and cultural opportunities. These principles help steer our decision making and prioritise projects.

As part of this proposal a consultation exercise has been carried out in line with the requirements of the School Organisation Code 2018. All stakeholders have had the opportunity to participate and make comments.

This Consultation Report has been produced to summarise the issues raised by consultees during the consultation period including Estyn’s feedback. It aims to provide a balanced, transparent document to support Cabinet in deciding whether to progress with the proposal, make changes or not to progress.

I hope you find this document informative as a reflection of the activities undertaken to date and an insight into the journey we are on, shaping delivery and placing learning provision at the heart of our communities.

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# Introduction

## Executive Summary

Schools in Wales need to be in good condition and suitable for the delivery of education. In some cases, schools can be modernised, repaired, refurbished, extended, or partially rebuilt to meet the standards needed for contemporary teaching and learning. However, some existing schools are no longer in the right place and in such cases, we might propose new schools or changes to existing schools.

Caerphilly County Borough Council aspires to continue to raise school standards and improve the quality of the learning environment to create fit-for-purpose 21<sup>st</sup> century schools and give every child in Caerphilly the best possible start in life.

Trinity Fields School and Resource Centre has been identified as one of the first priority projects in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Band B programme.

For proposals relating to schools, the School Organisation Code 2018, provides clear statutory guidance as to the processes that need to be adhered to. Undertaking a consultation exercise is one of the initial stages of progressing any proposal and is subject to Welsh Government scrutiny and Cabinet approval. From the 14<sup>th</sup> September 2020 until the 26<sup>th</sup> October 2020, a consultation exercise was undertaken. The purpose of the consultation was to gain views on the proposal to support and invest in the expansion of Trinity Fields School and Resource Centre.

This Consultation Report is the prescribed method as outlined by the School Organisation Code 2018 for reflection, review and assessment to provide Cabinet with the information to make an informed decision as to whether to proceed with the proposal to the next stage, amend the proposal taking into account further information that has come forward through the consultation process or to close this proposal with no further actions taken.

The Report is divided into several sections with the aim to:

- Outline the consultation processes undertaken
- Provide clarification in relation to the information provided and consultee engagement
- Summarise each of the issues raised by consultees
- Set out Estyn's response to the consultation in full
- Respond to issues raised by means of clarification, amendment to the proposal or rejection of the concerns, with supporting reasons

## Statutory Obligations

This report is published in line with the requirements of the [School Standards and Organisation \(Wales\) Act 2013](#) and the [School Organisation Code 2018](#).

The Consultation report will be published on the Caerphilly 21<sup>st</sup> Century School website with hardcopies available on request. All information is published in Welsh and English. In addition, a child friendly summary has also been produced to ensure information is provided in an accessible format for any children and young people affected by the proposals.

## Purpose of the Consultation Report

The publication of this Consultation Report discharges the Council of its duty under the School Organisation Code 2018.

The consultation period represented an opportunity for people to learn about the proposal, ask questions and make comments. Any negative responses made during the consultation period were not counted as objections to the proposal but as adverse comments.

Objections to a proposal can only be registered after the publication of a statutory notice.

The Consultation Report outlines the processes followed, provides clarity on the issues and comments received from consultees, ensures that the views of children and young people affected by the proposal are expressed and ultimately, provides Cabinet with the necessary information to take one of the following decisions:

- Proceed with the proposal
- Make changes to the proposal
- Not to proceed with the proposal

Full details of the decision making process and the stages of the proposal as outlined in the School Organisation Code 2018 have been published as part of the initial Consultation Document and is publicly available via the Council's website with hardcopies made available on request.


## What is the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools and Colleges Programme?

The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools and Colleges programme is a major, long-term, strategic capital investment programme. It is jointly funded by the Welsh Government and local authorities and aims to create a generation of 21<sup>st</sup> century schools in Wales.

The first part of the programme (Band A) ran from 2014 to March 2019.

Caerphilly has benefited greatly from investments in the initial "Band A" 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools programme with approximately £56.5 million invested in schools for both educational and community use.

Band A funding in Caerphilly was used to deliver :

	Project Name	Band A Investment
Image of Islwyn High School	✓ Islwyn High School	£22.6m
	✓ Ysgol Gymraeg Cwm Rhymni, Y Gwyndy Campus	£19.2m
	✓ Idris Davies School 3-18	£8m
	✓ Newbridge School extension	£2.6m
	✓ Blackwood Comprehensive improvements	£2m
	✓ Blackwood Comprehensive 3G pitch	£865k
	✓ Trinity Fields School improvements	£1.3m

The second part of this funding (Band B) started in April 2019, with the priority areas being:

- Reduce the number of poor condition schools
- Ensure that we have the right size schools in the right location
- Provide enough places to deliver Welsh and English medium education
- Ensure the effective and efficient use of the educational estate

Further information is available on the [21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools webpages](#)



### **What are we proposing to do?**

We are proposing to:

- **Expand the existing Trinity Fields School and Resource Centre, via a new building extension and outdoor play space with an anticipated completion date of September 2023.**
  - The proposed new building will provide additional facilities to accommodate growing demand for places and provide additional classrooms, specialist intervention areas and outdoor play space
  - It is proposed the additional facility will also house a new flexible hall, hydrotherapy pool and soft play facilities to increase provision on site which will also be considered for community use at suitable times in keeping with the curriculum timetable.
- To ensure that it can cater for the changing and more complex needs of pupils with Additional Learning Needs (ALN) across the Council, both now and in the future and ensure compliance with the new Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act.

### **What is Driving this proposal?**

Proposals have been prioritised based on a number of factors including building condition, pupil projection and local and national drivers, however, the delivery of the curriculum and the Educational agenda remains at the core.

In accordance with the ALN and Tribunal Act 2018 schools and local authorities have a statutory duty to identify ALN and appropriate provision to meet that need. As identified in the ALN Act and draft ALN Code the Council and schools have a responsibility to review provision available to meet need within the Borough on a regular basis

Additional Learning Needs can take a wide variety of forms and can relate to one or more different areas of learning, such as communication and cognition. There is a wide spectrum

of Additional Learning Needs that a child or young person may have, and these may change and develop over time.

All pupils across the Borough are entitled to receive high quality provision that meets their needs, no matter where they live. The Council is committed to inclusion and the principles that the majority of children will have their needs met in mainstream. Central to the identification of additional learning provision is child centred practice. However, there are circumstances where complex additional learning needs are best met, as identified through robust assessment and engagement with children and families within specialist provision with the appropriate specialist teaching, support and facilities that enables them to meet their potential. Trinity Fields is a Special school that cater for those pupils who have the most complex need.

We have identified a need to invest in improving our school building at Trinity Fields School, in meeting the demand for specialist education and building upon the excellent practice as identified by Estyn. It is this aspiration that is driving this proposal.



## Options Appraisal

The planning and development of effective school organisation proposals is crucial to the Welsh Government's goal of transforming education in Wales and providing better educational outcomes with a commitment to increase school effectiveness, and narrow inequalities in achievement between advantaged and disadvantaged areas, groups and individuals.

An options appraisal provides the opportunity to help councils make an informed and evidence based decision on how to deliver services. It does this by considering the relative advantages and disadvantages of a number of different delivery model options (including the current way in which the service is delivered).

The methodology helps decision makers to consider the relative:

- Desirability - the degree to which each option meets the strategic objectives and priorities of stakeholders
- Viability - the degree to which each option is financially viable and sustainable
- Feasibility - the degree to which each option can be implemented

As part of outlining the current proposal, an options appraisal was undertaken.

The options appraisal stage allowed for a number of different delivery model options to be explored and evaluated against a set of agreed criteria, leading to the selection of the preferred option.

The following options were considered and scored: -

Option	Description
<b>Option 1</b>	Do Nothing
<b>Option 2</b>	Further reconfiguration of the existing school
<b>Option 3</b>	Build a new primary school provision on another site
<b>Option 4</b>	Build a new extension onto the existing school to accommodate an additional 80 places (increasing the capacity to 263)
<b>Option 5</b>	Build a new school on another site to accommodate all identified provision and full cohort of 260 pupils (existing plus additional)

The process utilised was outlined in detail in the Consultation Document and resulted in

**Option 4** being the preferred option, namely, **build a new extension onto the existing school to accommodate an additional 80 places.**

This would provide 263 places in total on the existing school site, factoring in the current pupil cohort of 183 pupils and an additional 80 places to future proof the site for a number of years to come.

Through the appraisal process a final recommendation about the preferred delivery model was carried forward to the Consultation period with the view to engage with key stakeholders and identify priorities from their perspective. This stage was an important part of the process, to raise important questions at an early stage, and assist in developing proposals in greater detail to consider:

- are there better ways to achieve your objectives?
- are there better ways to use the resources available?
- is this the best way to achieve the desired outcomes?



## Benefits and Disbenefits

There are common challenges faced by all Local Authorities when adopting new proposals. The vast majority of Council policies are delivered through projects and programmes of various forms. It is therefore vital that projects are delivered successfully in order to realise their intended benefits for citizens.

Evidence shows that the best way to ensure successful delivery is by setting up projects correctly in the first place. The most common causes of failure, among others are a lack of clear objectives, insufficient resources, and over-ambitious cost and schedule that impact on the level and amount of benefit that can be realised and can be avoided if tackled in a project's early stages.

As part of the development of the proposal, a number of benefits and disbenefits were identified as outlined in the Consultation Document. The consultation process was an opportunity to consult with relevant stakeholders to understand what they see as positive outcomes and what negative consequences may be delivered.

An [Equality and Welsh Language Impact Assessment](#) and a Community Impact Assessment were carried out to initiate discussion and invite comments as to whether the principles for the proposal are supported.

All comments have been recorded and will be made available for Cabinet as a separate annex to this Consultation Report.



## The Consultation Process

### Consultation Process

The consultation process has followed the Welsh Government guidelines as set out in the School Organisation Code 2018.

As the proposal relates to a 'regulated alteration' to a Special school under Section 44 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013, the proposals have been published on the Council's website.

### Implications of COVID19

Due to the implications of COVID-19 at the time this consultation was due to take place and after taking advice from Welsh Government, this consultation process refrained from undertaking any face-to-face consultation sessions to support social distancing and maintain safe working practices for all.

It should be noted that there is no obligation to consult face-to-face and therefore a written paper consultation exercise was undertaken to discharge the Council of its duty under the School Organisation Code 2018.

However, a number of alternative methods were utilised for engagement including use of social media, face-time technology and the opportunity to pose questions to form part of a '[Frequently Asked Questions](#)' Document.

## **Stakeholder Engagement**

Consultees were advised of the proposal and availability of the consultation documentation when it went live on the 14<sup>th</sup> September 2020 via letter/email and were therefore invited to take part in the statutory consultation:

The School Organisation Code 2018, prescribes those individuals/groups considered key consultees in the consultation process. The list below presents the consultees engaged with relevant to proposals of this nature for the Caerphilly Borough.

- Parents, prospective parents, guardians and carers of all pupils of schools directly affected by the proposal
- Headteacher, staff and governors of schools directly affected by the proposal
- Pupils/Pupil Councils of schools directly affected by the proposal
- Directors of Education of all bordering LAs – Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Cardiff, Merthyr Tydfil, Newport, Powys, Rhondda Cynon Taf, Torfaen
- Catholic Diocesan Board of Education
- Church in Wales Diocesan Board
- Local Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE)
- Governing body of other schools which the proposer considers are likely to be affected by the proposal
- Local CCBC Members
- All Assembly Members and Members of Parliament representing the area served by the schools directly affected by the proposal
- Welsh Ministers
- ESTYN
- Teaching Associations
- Support Staff Associations
- South East Wales Consortium (EAS)
- South East Wales Transport Alliance (SEWTA)
- Gwent and South Wales Police and Crime Commissioners
- Local Town and Community Councils
- Menter Iaith
- Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership
- Parent Network
- Welsh Education Forum

This proposal does not affect Welsh Language provision, therefore there was no obligation on the Council to consult with the Welsh Language Commissioner in this instance.

Consideration of the potential impact on other schools in the area was considered, however, Trinity Fields School is the only Special school in the County Borough and also falls outside of the standard admissions arrangements for schools. The catchment area for the school covers the entire Borough.

The consultation process acknowledged that Trinity Fields acts as a hub and is intrinsic to the 'hub and spoke' model, supporting the most complex children within resource bases and mainstream schools. This includes the development of satellite provision for children.

Therefore, whilst no individual school could be identified as ‘affected’ under the remit of the School Organisation Code 2018, all schools were contacted and advised that a consultation on the proposal for Trinity Fields was active and that they could provide any responses via the prescribed methods.

The Council was aware that the proposal and preferred delivery option as outlined in the Consultation Documentation would result in the repurposing of a pay-to-use rugby pitch and would work closely with interested parties to ensure mitigation could take place should the proposal receive Cabinet approval. Therefore, in addition to advising those we were obliged to under the stakeholder criteria, the following were also contacted and advised of our proposals in writing:

- Sports Wales
- Penallta RFC

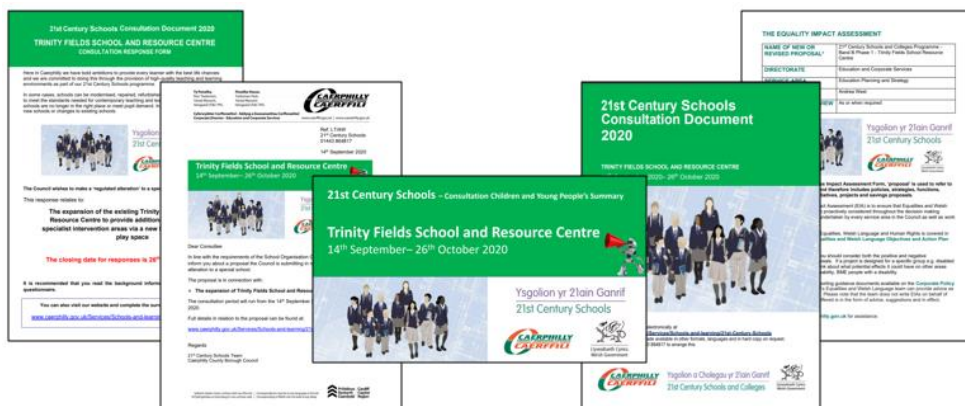
## Consultation Information

The School Organisation Code 2018 states that when undertaking a consultation process in connection with a school proposal, the Council must publish information to enable transparent, balanced and open decision making.

The consultation document must be published on a school day and consultees must be given at least 42 days to respond to the document, with at least 20 of these being school days as defined by Section 579 of the Education Act 1996. The consultation period opened on Monday 14<sup>th</sup> September 2020 (a school day) and concluded at midnight on Monday 26<sup>th</sup> October 2020.

As part of this proposal, the following documentation was produced:

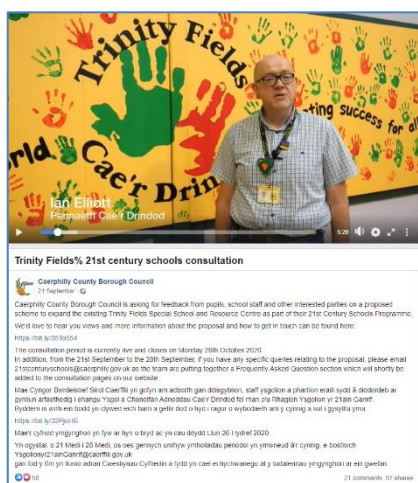
- Consultation Notification Letter
- Consultation Document
- Child Friendly Consultation Summary
- Consultation Video
- Artist’s Impression of proposed new school
- Consultation Response Form (Online)
- Consultation Response Form (Printable PDF)
- Equalities and Welsh Language Impact Assessment



A child friendly consultation summary and video was produced to support the consultation process with pupils of the affected schools and present information in a manner relevant to their likely understanding, allowing them to participate in the consultation process and reach an informed opinion. In addition to this documentation, the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Team and local teaching staff provided assistance to children and young people who wished to submit a consultation response, especially relevant as the children and young people attending Trinity Fields are some of the most vulnerable within the Borough and have a variety of additional learning needs.

All documentation was published in Welsh and English, complying with the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards. Information was also available in other languages and formats on request, however, no such requests were received as part of this process.

Hardcopies of the documentation were issued to the schools directly affected by the proposal including the child friendly summary for discussion with the pupils.



In addition to notifying the consultees in writing of the proposal, distribution of information was supported via the school text messaging service direct to parents and staff.

The Council's Social media channels were also utilised. Messages relating to the consultation were released in phases over the first 3 weeks of the consultation to maintain public awareness and provide as far a 'social media reach' as possible.

Social media reach is a media analytics metric that refers to the number of users who have come across a particular content on a social platform such as Facebook, YouTube or Twitter.

Week 1	YouTube Video Released	CaerphillyCBCTV	684 subscribers
Week 2	Facebook Message	@CaerphillyCBC	28,188 followers
Week 3	Twitter Message	@CaerphillyCBC	19.3k followers

## Response Methods

As outlined in the Consultation Document, anyone wishing to comment in relation to the proposal could do so in writing by:

- Completing the online response form on the Council's website
- Completing a response pro forma and posting it to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century School Team at Caerphilly
- Emailing comments to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Team at Caerphilly

The response forms were designed in such a way as to capture the relevant information required to discharge the Council's obligations required under the School Organisation Code for undertaking a consultation linked to the regulated alteration of a special school.

This consultation was undertaken to capture the views of consultees in relation to the proposal to expand the school. These views have been incorporated into this document, which will be published and considered by Cabinet when determining whether to proceed to Statutory notice stage. A separate Planning Application Process will be undertaken in respect of this proposal. The separate statutory processes were outlined in the consultation document and any adverse comments received as part of this process have been recorded as such.



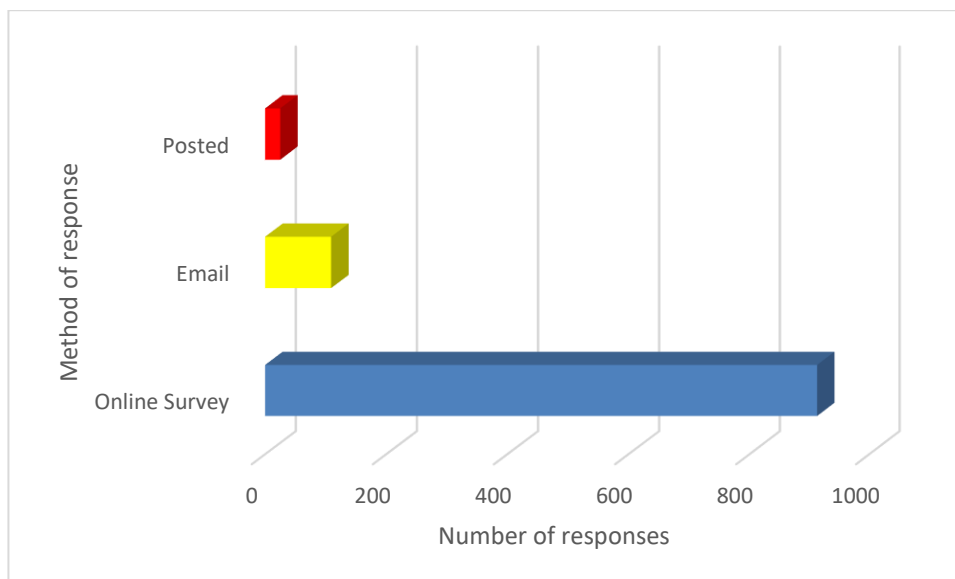
## Consultation Responses

### Consultation Responses

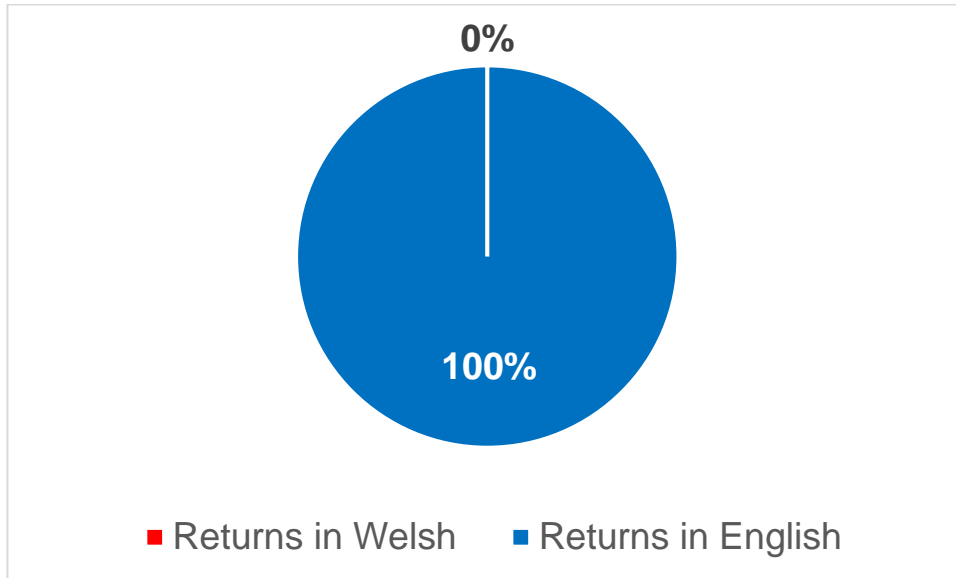
Overall a total of 1048 responses were received during the consultation process.

Of the prescribed methods for providing a response during the consultation period:

- 913 responses received via Online Survey
- 109 responses received via email
- 26 responses received via post



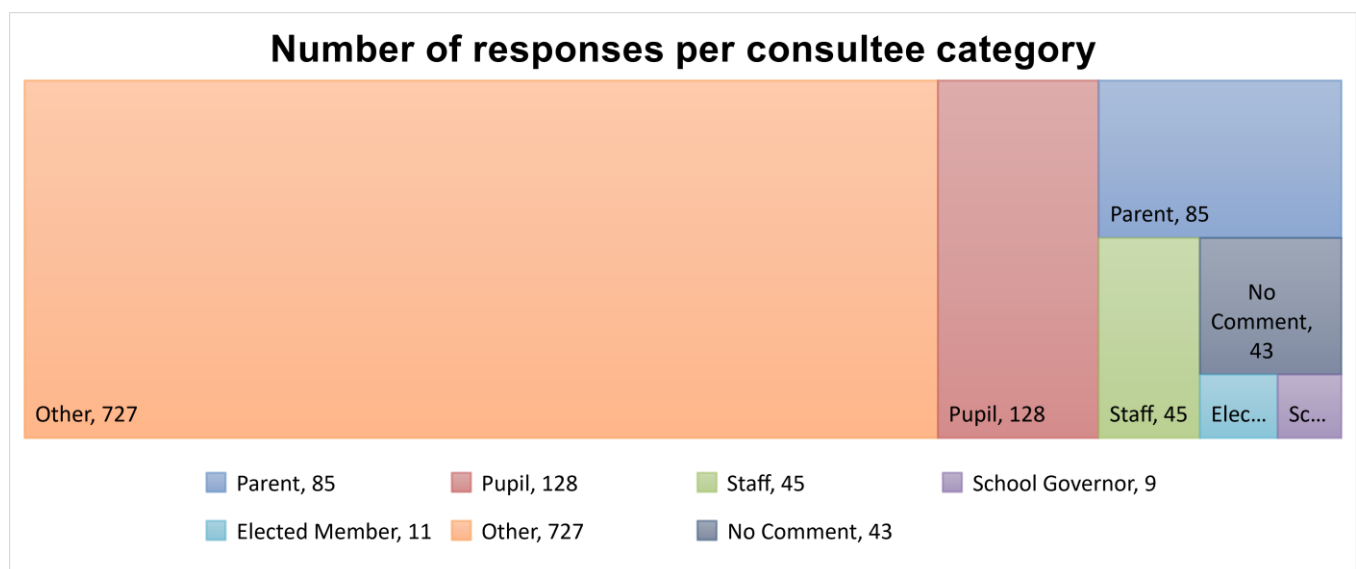
0 responses (0%) were returned in the medium of Welsh with the remaining 1048 responses (100%) in English.



The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Team received no requests for the documentation to be provided in any other format or language.

**QUESTION 1**

The consultees were asked to identify a category that best described them in relation to the proposal for the school affected. The options provided were selected to demonstrate that the key consultee groups as outlined in the School Organisation Code had been engaged with.





12% Pupils	8% Parents	4% Staff Members	1% School Governors	1% Elected Members	74% Other & No Comment
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For those selecting 'other', the opportunity was given to elaborate further as they felt appropriate.

### **QUESTION 2**

As part of the consultation process, consultees were asked to provide basic contact information, including their name, address and email. This psychographic data was collected in order to help paint a picture of the consultee and enable the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools team to understand trends in response data and response groupings that would assist in compiling this Consultation Report.

As information can be collected for many purposes, the Caerphilly County Borough Council's privacy notice for consultations/surveys was referenced, which outlined the purpose and legal basis for collecting the information, data usage and data retention periods.

For the purposes of this Consultation Report, Cabinet will be provided with a separate digest of the consultation comments received. Please note that comments that are considered to be offensive or compromise anonymity have been edited or removed.

### **QUESTION 3**

As part of our duty under the School Organisation Code 2018, consultees must be given the option to request notification as to the publication of this Consultation Report. Contact information has been collected to this end and the preferred method for communication will be notification via email if this information has been made available by the respondent.



541 out of the 1048 respondents have requested notification. These individuals have been added to the notification list and will be contacted concurrently with stakeholders when this document is made publicly available through the Council's website. Hardcopies of the documentation will be made available on request.

## QUESTION 4

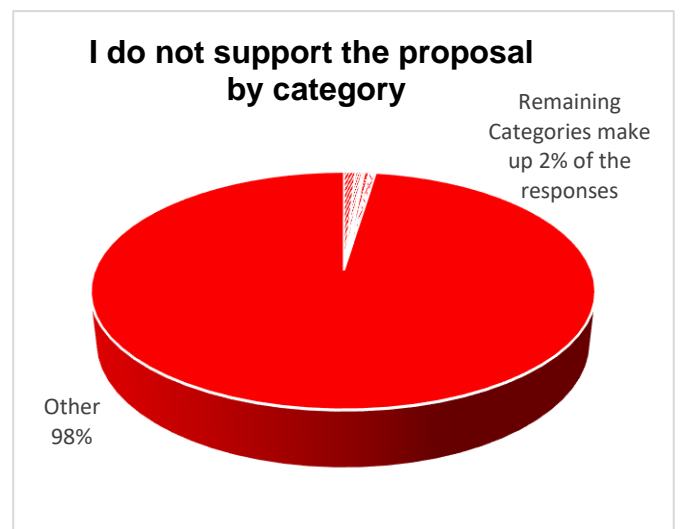
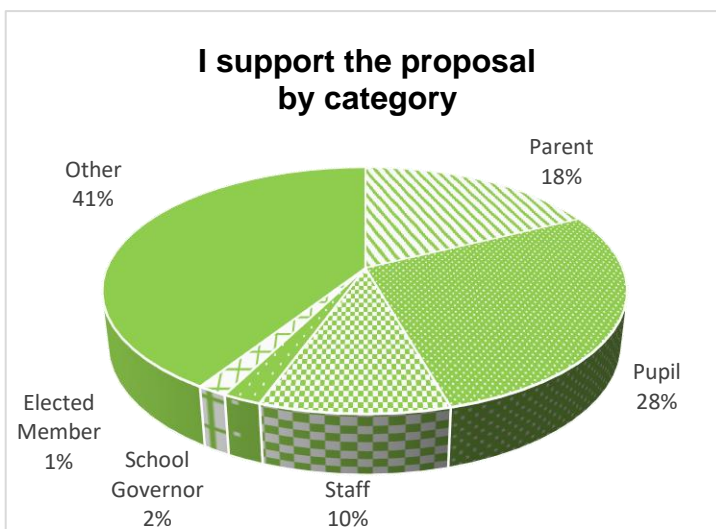
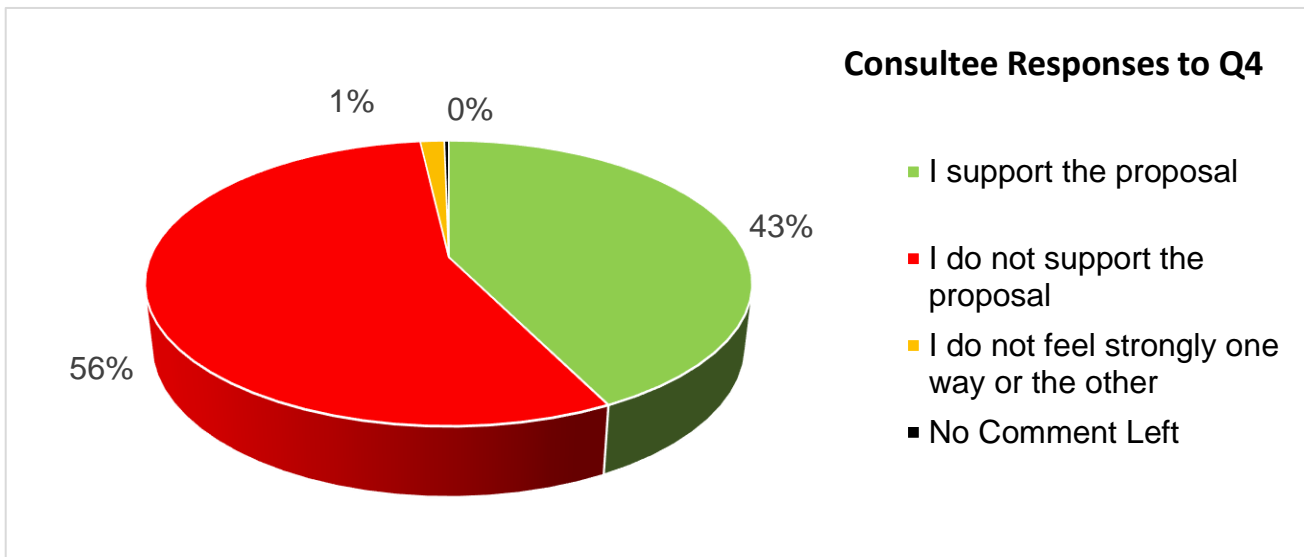
Consultees can submit their views either in favour of or against the proposals.

Consultees were asked to indicate which of the following statements most accurately reflected their views about the proposal. Consultees were reminded to read the consultation documentation prior to providing any responses during this consultation exercise and that unfavourable comments made during the consultation period will not be treated as objections at this stage.

The options available were:

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

Of the responses returned, 447 support the proposal, 582 do not support it, 16 didn't feel strongly either way and 3 failed to select an option. That equates to 43% in support, 56% opposed with the remaining 1% either providing a neutral response or no comment.





It is prudent to bring to the attention of Cabinet that the commentary provided as part of Question 5 may offer additional insight into the views of the consultees and that the response provided to Question 4 should not be considered in isolation.

## Question 5

This was a free text box, enabling consultees to provide additional comments on the proposal. All comments received have been read and analysed.

General themes that emerged from the consultation:

- Acknowledgement that the current Trinity Fields School and Resource Centre provides a high standard of support and specialist intervention
- The proposal supports the increasing demand for additional learning needs provision
- Concerns over proposed use of the pitch for education not recreation
- Concerns over the impact on Penallta RFC both through loss of income and mitigation discussions to date
- Concerns over loss of green space and impact on local community
- Concerns over the loss of the green flag status for Ystrad Mynach Park
- Concerns over flooding in the local area and the impact the proposal will have
- Comments about:
  - The expansion of the site, why outwards and not upwards?
  - The impact on traffic flow in the area
  - Whether a new build at an alternative site would be a better option
  - The consultation process being followed

## Question 6

In line with the Caerphilly County Borough Council's Strategic Equality Plan 2016-2020 and the Consultation and Monitoring Guidance 2016 document, a reduced version of the Equalities and Monitoring questionnaire was included as part of the consultation response to support effective planning and to ensure that a representative sample was achieved to identify any equality issues.

The option to include information relating to the consultees Gender, Age, Disability Status, Welsh Language Skills and any influencing factors relating to their response were included but not mandatory.

From the responses received, of those that completed the Equalities monitoring section:

<b>Are you ...</b>			
Male	418	Other	133
Female	494	Unwilling to declare	3

<b>Age</b>			
Under 16	25	40-65	351
16-25	135	Over 65	60
26-39	303	Unwilling to declare	174

<b>Disability</b>			
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I am not Disabled	701	Learning Difficulties	30
Physical / Mobility Impaired	41	Visually Impaired	1
Hearing Impaired	13	Speech Impaired	2
Unwilling to declare	226		
Other	17		

Welsh Language Skills				
	A Little	Moderately	Quite Well	Fluently
Speak	391	62	30	57
Understand	364	79	30	56
Read	333	62	37	56
Write	332	54	28	51
No Welsh Language Skills	639	Unwilling to Declare	47	

## Question 7

In relation to equalities implications that respondents highlighted, 37 responses indicated that their decision was influenced as per the list outlined in the consultation response form, for example:

- 'I have a grandson who has a learning disability and understand the importance of these schools and the continuing care until these children become young adults. My grandson and my other grandchildren also use the green spaces.'
- 'I'm not sure this has any relevance to the survey?'
- 'My response has been influenced on the direct impact of community.'

## Education Scrutiny Response

The Council's Education Scrutiny Committee is a consultee for any policy or service developments in relation to Education within the Borough.

A digital meeting via Microsoft teams took place on Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2020 at 5.30pm. 13 out of 15 Councilors were in attendance.

As part of this meeting, the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools and Colleges Band B Programme and consultation in respect of Trinity Fields School and Resource Centre was discussed. All consultation documentation was made available to members as part of the agenda reports pack and officers linked to the proposal were available to take questions.

It was agreed that a vote in respect of the proposal would be taken and be officially recorded for inclusion in this Consultation Report. The Committee members voted 12 in favour of the proposal for Trinity Fields Special School and Resource Centre, 1 against and 0 abstention.



A recording of the session is available on YouTube:

[Education Scrutiny Committee Meeting](#)

The agenda item linked to this proposal starts 18 minutes and 50 seconds in to the recording.

The [Notice of the Decisions](#) document is also available to view on the Council's website

## Estyn's Response

Under the terms of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and the School Organisation Code 2018, the Council, as the proposers, is required to send a notification with regards to the consultation to Estyn.

Estyn is the education and training inspectorate for Wales and their vision is to improve the quality of education and training and outcomes for all learners in Wales. However, Estyn is not a body which is required to act in accordance with the Code and the Act places no statutory requirements on Estyn in respect of school organisation matters. Therefore as a body being consulted, Estyn will provide their opinion only on the overall merits of school organisation proposals.

Estyn has considered the educational aspects of the proposal. The full response from Estyn is included at Annex 2 to this report. However, in summary:

*“The proposal seeks to address identified need for additional facilities to accommodate growing demand for places and provide additional classrooms, specialist intervention areas and outdoor play space for pupils with special educational needs. It is proposed the additional facility will house a new and flexible hall, hydrotherapy pool and soft play facilities to increase provision on site and enhance the lives of the pupils with provision that cannot be accommodated within the current building. This new provision would also be available for community use at suitable times.*

*The proposer has clearly defined the benefits of establishing these additional facilities and provision for pupils and young people who have special educational needs. The proposal has been developed in line with the local authority's programme to improve its educational provision and meet the needs of children and young people with SEN. This proposal offers pupils and young people with SEN the opportunity for specialist educational experiences in a setting within their county borough.*

*Funding has already been allocated for the council's share of the capital costs of the project and will be jointly funded by Welsh Government as part of their 21st century schools remit.*

*It is Estyn's opinion that the proposal is likely to improve the current educational provision for children and young people with SEN”.*

The Council welcomes Estyn's statements confirming that the proposal will have a positive impact on the educational provision for children and young people with special educational needs. The Council acknowledges Estyn's response and would like to provide the following clarification statement in relation to Estyn's observations relating to *'the risk assessment does not identify any educational considerations.'* and *'it is not clear whether the teaching and learning experiences would be fully equitable with that of English medium provision'.* The proposal for Trinity Fields School and Resource Centre is to expand the existing provision and provide additional classrooms, facilities and specialist intervention areas for use by the pupils and the wider community. We recognise that the section relating to the risk assessment in the Consultation document focused mainly on structural considerations, although educational considerations were present throughout the document and a more prominent section will be included in future project documentation based on this recommendation. There is provision to provide education through the medium of Welsh as highlighted as part of the Equality and Welsh Language Impact Assessment.

## Consultation Clarification

When analysing the consultation response comments received as part of the consultation period, a number of recurring areas of concern and those where there was a level of agreement with the proposals became evident.

To assist Cabinet in the decision making process, the following information is provided by means of response for clarification with supporting reasons.

### ➤ Areas of widest concern

Area of concern:	Consultee Responses included:
<b>Loss of green space</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Historical development</li> <li>• Ystrad Mynach Park</li> <li>• Green Flag Status</li> <li>• Community Impact</li> <li>• Rugby Pitch</li> </ul>
Number of mentions	199

### Council's Response

The Council acknowledges that the 'loss of green space' has been a key factor of concern for a number of consultees in relation to the proposal. It is important to stress at this stage that even though the consultees have highlighted concerns in this regard, the majority recognised the need to develop Trinity Fields School, but not in the manner outlined as Option 4 in the Consultation document.

#### Historical development

A number of consultees made reference to the historical development on 'greenfield' land in the Ystrad Mynach area, with particular focus on facilities built in close proximity to the proposed site.

Planning Policy Wales, the Welsh Government's national policy outlining guidance for making planning decisions, provides the distinction between greenfield and brownfield land:

Greenfield	<i>'land in built-up areas which has not been developed previously, for example parks, recreation ground and allotments'</i>
Brownfield	<i>'previously developed land that is or was occupied by a permanent structure and associated fixed surface infrastructure.'</i>

The Council wishes to clarify the following:

- The current site for Trinity Fields School and Resource Centre was occupied over 22 years ago and officially opened September 1998.
- Ysbyty Ystrad Fawr officially opened in March 2012 and was constructed on an area that consisted primarily of previously developed land classified as 'brownfield' with limited 'greenfield' land that was a recreation ground.

- The Centre of Sporting Excellence officially opened May 2014 and was constructed on the area formally occupied by a permanent structure (Ystrad Mynach Hospital) and as such was designated brownfield land.

The images below show an aerial view of Trinity Fields School, Ystrad Mynach Park and surrounding area, demonstrating the level of development over a 14 year timeframe.

2006



2020



### Ystrad Mynach Park and Green Flag Status

Ystrad Mynach Park is located to the south of Ystrad Mynach off Caerphilly Road, CF83 7EP.



The Park covers approximately 11 hectares of open green spaces with a variety of facilities including rugby and football pitches, tennis court, a bowling green and a children's playground. In addition, the Centre of Sporting Excellence also falls within the boundary of the park.

The Green Flag Award is all about connecting people with the very best parks and green spaces and the Council appreciates a good quality environment can have a big impact on our communities, health and well-being, and economy.

Keep Wales Tidy judge Green Flag status against 27 different criteria divided into 8 sections:

Section	Criteria	Section	Criteria
Section 1: A welcoming Place	Welcome Good and Safe Access Signage Equal Access for All	Section 5: Biodiversity, Landscape and Heritage	Management of Natural Features, Wild Fauna and Flora Conservation of Landscape Features Conservation of Buildings and Structures
Section 2: Healthy, Safe and Secure	Appropriate Provision of Quality Facilities and Activities Safe Equipment and Facilities Personal Security Control of Dogs/Dog Fouling	Section 6: Community Involvement	Community Involvement in Management and Development Appropriate Provision for Community
Section 3: Well Maintained and Clean	Litter and Waste Management Horticultural Maintenance Arboricultural Maintenance Building and Infrastructure Maintenance Equipment Maintenance	Section 7: Marketing and Communication	Marketing and Promotion Appropriate Information Channels Appropriate Educational and Interpretational Information
Section 4: Environmental Management	Managing Environmental Impact Waste Minimisation Chemical Use Peat Use Climate Change Adaption Strategies	Section 8: Management	Implementation of Management Plan

This year, 224 parks and green spaces across the country have received the prestigious Green Flag Award and Green Flag Community Award from country parks and formal gardens, to allotments, woodlands and churchyards. 7 green spaces in Caerphilly have been awarded green flag status, namely Penallta Park, Cwmcarn Forest, Morgan Jones Park, Parc Cwm Darren, Waunfawr Park, Ystrad Mynach Park and Brithdir Cemetery.

Whilst the land identified for development as part of this proposal falls within the park boundary, it equates to 6% of the entire area and repurposing of this land will have a minimal impact on the variety of amenities available. Keep Wales Tidy have been contacted as part of the pre-planning process and have indicated this proposal will not impact on the Green Flag status for Ystrad Mynach Park.

### Community Impact

Consultees have also indicated the wider usage of the proposed site for recreational activities such as dog walking, socialising, play and picnics will no longer be available. This has been a consideration of this proposal.

The Council is supportive of investing in resources that can help get people active and participating in activities to enhance education and wellbeing. This is evidenced by significant investment in 3G pitches within a 5 mile radius of Ystrad Mynach and in primary education within the Ystrad Mynach Area (2 classroom extension on Ystrad Mynach Primary and development of a 4 classroom extension at Ysgol Bro Allta).

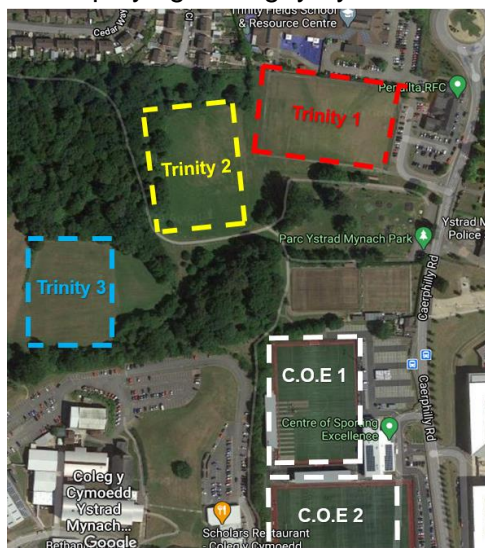
The proposal to expand Trinity Fields School incorporates facilities which will be available for wider community use for example a hall and hydrotherapy pool.

The proposal relates to 6% of the wider park area and the range of facilities available in the park will remain unaffected for activities such as dog walking, picnics and play, therefore this is a minimal reduction and impact in the space available to undertake such activities on the local community.

## Rugby Pitch

There are 116 football and rugby pitches provided by the Council and over 2,200 individual matches played on them last year. The Council recognises the importance of providing safe and stimulating locations throughout the borough and seeks opportunities to improve existing facilities and develop new provision where need is identified.

The Councils acknowledges that this proposal will impact on the removal of one Council owned pay-as-you-use sports pitch, primarily used for the playing of Rugby by Penallta RFC, locally referred to as Trinity 1.



This is one of five pay-as-you-use sports pitches available on site within the boundaries of the park.

The council is fully aware of the Planning Policy Wales guidelines relating to the protection of playing fields from development except where:

- *facilities can best be retained and enhanced through the redevelopment of a small part of the site;*
- *alternative provision of equivalent community benefit is made available locally, avoiding any temporary loss of provision; or*
- *there is an excess of such provision in the area.*

The requirements of Planning Policy Wales are echoed in Council's Local Development Plan Policy CW82, and the Council is currently working with Penallta RFC to provide an alternative replacement pay-as-you-use facility, off site and within convenient access by foot (0.4 miles / 10 minute walk) consisting of 1 enhanced existing pitch and an additional pitch to mitigate the loss of Trinity 1.

The Council has also recently invested in a number of all weather 3G pitches within a 5 mile radius of Trinity 1.

Location of 3G facility	Distance from Trinity Fields (T1)
Centre of Sporting Excellence	0.2 miles
Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni (Gelli Haf)	2.2 miles
Lewis School Pengam	2.8 miles
Blackwood Comprehensive	3.3 miles
Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni (Y Gwyndy)	4.2 miles
St Cenydd Community School	4.7 miles
Islwyn High School	5.2 miles

The facilities provide local sports clubs with the opportunity to play and train all year around. The multi-use pitches can be used in all weather and are utilised by a number of different sports including football and rugby. Penallta RFC who will be impacted by this proposal has regular bookings in operation and utilises a number of locations for matches and training.

Area of concern:	Consultee Responses included:
<b>Alternative Location for the school</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expand on other pitch on site</li> <li>• Build upwards</li> <li>• New build at other location</li> </ul>
Number of mentions	188

### Council's Response

The Council acknowledges that a number of alternative options have been brought forward by consultees as solutions to the increasing demand for specialist support at Trinity Fields but without expanding onto the pitch as the preferred option.

#### Expand on other pitch on site

The consultees refer to expanding the school onto another pitch. For ease of reference, this is identified as Trinity 2.



Trinity 2 also falls within the boundary of Ystrad Mynach Park. As part of the project planning due diligence, expansion onto Trinity 2 was considered. The Council considers this is not a viable option for a number of reasons. Firstly, the Trinity 2 pitch does not adjoin the school site as demonstrated in the image above and so it would not be possible to create the desired homogeneous 3-18 school and there would also be access and parking difficulties.



In formulating this proposal, attention was given to the Local Development Plan policy. The current Local Development Plan (LDP) was adopted on the 23 November 2010 and identifies where new developments such as housing, employment, community facilities, and roads, will go. It provides a framework for local decision-making and brings together both development and conservation interests to ensure that any changes in the use of land are coherent and provides maximum benefits to the community.

The LDP sets out the council's land use policies and proposals to control development in the county borough up to 2021 and provides the basis by which planning applications will be determined consistently and appropriately. The plan gives a clear indication of where development will be encouraged and where it will be resisted.

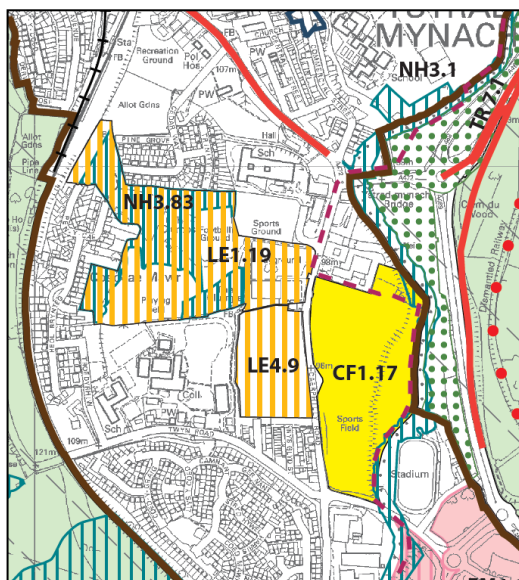


Image courtesy of the [LDP Interactive Proposal/Constraints Map](#)

The proposed site as identified as 'sports ground' on the Local Development Plan map does not have any controls indicated. However, the areas adjacent to the proposed site, including Trinity 2 is within the remit of LE1.19 and NH 3.83. These are the Formal Leisure facility (Ystrad Mynach Park) and Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (Coedcae Mawr) respectively. Therefore, approval to develop this area is likely to be denied.

### **Build upwards**

Unfortunately, this is not a viable option for a number of reasons. Firstly, the school was not designed to support a first floor so a new support structure would be required. Furthermore, the school would need to close for more than a year to allow the construction to take place and the existing school building would be significantly disrupted and damaged by the process. Extending the school upwards would also not provide the access to additional external play areas that is essential for the wellbeing of pupils.

### **New build at other location**

The option to build a new school at another location was considered as part of formulating this proposal and was identified as Option 5 in the Options Appraisal undertaken.

A number of consultees have expressed concerns that the number of children and young people requiring the levels of support provided by Trinity Fields may exceed the figure outlined in the consultation document and therefore expansion would not be sufficient. In addition, the Council is aware that the BBC has recently aired a 3-part documentary celebrating the lives of those who attend Ysgol Y Deri in Penarth which is a multi-floored facility, the biggest special education needs school in Wales and this may have reflected in the support for a new facility. The Council welcomes the support received by consultees who have recognised the needs of our most vulnerable pupils must be met and would like to provide the

additional clarification as to why a new build facility was not carried forward as the preferred option in addition to the information provided as part of the options appraisal.

The Council has a responsibility to develop provision to meet need and must review this regularly in line with the requirements of the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act. The Council promotes inclusion and supports the principle that the majority of children can have their needs met in mainstream settings. The Council works with schools, families and other partners to identify appropriate provision and for a small number of children this may be at a special school.

We have a well established approach to meeting complex needs with a high level of expertise. Caerphilly has a continuum of provision that includes supporting pupils with less significant needs in mainstream classes, through to Special Resource Bases, satellite classes and of course Trinity Fields School.

The needs of children who attend Trinity Fields are significant and complex and through rigorous assessment it is identified that the most suitable provision can be delivered through a special school. Understandably the needs (cognitive, behavioural and medical) of pupils on the main school site are the most complex in the county borough and are well supported by a team that includes staff from education and health (physiotherapists, Occupational Therapists, speech and language therapists, dieticians, special nurses from Child and Adolescent Learning Disabilities Service (CALDS) and Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) etc.

The aim of the proposal is to ensure that we continue to build on the mature leadership and expertise at the existing site, and develop this even further in ensuring collaboration with health and social care colleagues. In further expanding this model we are able to develop the outreach support to other settings without compromising Trinity Fields School. This option is highlighted in the proposal as the preferred way forward. Additionally, Trinity Fields School is at a central, accessible location and close to the hospital.

Critically this model will allow us to successfully respond to our legal duties in accordance with the ALN Act.

Area of concern:	Consultee Responses included:
<b>Flooding</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Current situation</li> <li>• Impact of proposal</li> </ul>
Number of mentions	105

### Council's Response

The Council recognises that protecting life and property from the risk of flooding is an emotive subject for many. The major flooding events we have seen across the UK over the last few years serve to remind us of the devastating affects flooding can have.

During February 2020, Wales experienced four noteworthy rainfall events on the back of a very wet winter period:

- **Storm Ciara:** 8 – 9 February 2020
- **Storm Dennis:** 15 – 17 February 2020
- **Unnamed Storm:** 21 – 24 February 2020
- **Storm Jorge:** 28 February – 1 March 2020

Wales has not seen a wetter February since records began in 1862. It was also the fifth wettest month on record, resulting in some of the most significant flooding Wales has seen since the 1970s.

While it was a period that challenged and stretched the resilience of everybody involved in the response, it was also a period that galvanised communities and brought the fortitude of residents and emergency responders right to the fore.

### Current situation

The Caerphilly county borough is no different from the rest of the UK and almost every location can be prone to flooding, even if you don't live near a river.

Both Trinity 1 (the proposed site) and Trinity 2 are within Zone B on the current Natural Resources Wales Developer Advice Maps for main river flood risk.

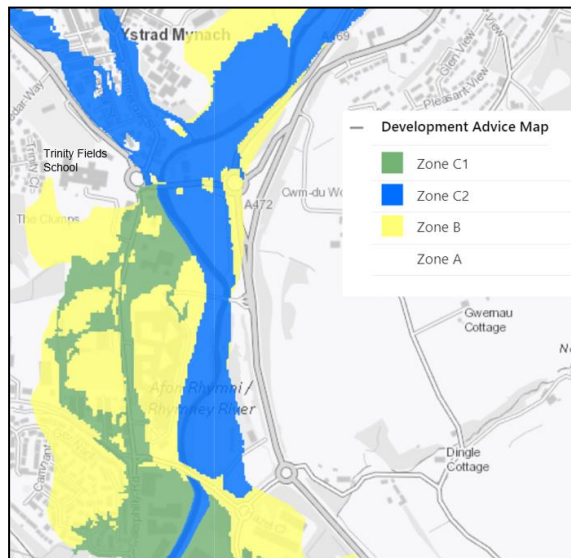


Image courtesy of [Natural Resources Wales Development Advice Map](#)

However, whereas Trinity 1 is at low risk of flooding from surface water and small watercourses. Trinity 2 is at high risk of flooding from surface water and small watercourses. This accords with the flooding history of the pitches.

The Trinity 2 pitch currently forms part of the functional flood plain for both the Rhymney River and the tributaries that run through Parc Ystrad Mynach and is at a lower level than Trinity 1. The Council upgraded the Pitch drainage in 2013 to discharge into a small watercourse (stream) that then flows into the Rhymney River. When river levels are high, it may not be possible for rainwater to leave the pitch drainage system resulting in flooding to the pitch. This reinforces why the development of Trinity 2 would not be a viable alternative as it may constitute a significant risk of exacerbating off-site flooding issues.

### Impact of proposal

The proposed extension will be designed to the current Welsh Government Sustainable Drainage Statutory Guidance (SuDS) which was introduced in January 2019. The key aims of the SuDS include *reducing damage by flooding* and *protecting and improving the environment*. In practice this means the rainwater falling on the developed area will be attenuated and off site discharge flow rates slowed down. The proposed drainage will be reviewed and will need to be approved by the SuDS Approving Body before any construction work begins. The proposed development will also require a Flood Consequences Assessment that will be reviewed by the Local Planning Authority and Natural Resources Wales prior to construction commencing to ensure the development will not exacerbate flooding on adjacent roads.

Area of concern:	Consultee Responses included:
<b>Rugby Club</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Historical Impact</li> <li>• Loss of income</li> <li>• Impact on players</li> <li>• Use of pitches and Centre of Excellence</li> <li>• Mitigation options</li> <li>• Sue Noakes / Walking Routes</li> </ul>
Number of mentions	185

**Council's Response**

The Council appreciates that the proposal to develop has implications for the local sporting club, Penallta RFC. A number of consultees, 185 who have identified themselves as members or linked to players of the club, have expressed their reservations.

The Council has included the club as one of the consultees for the proposal, and has engaged in discussions with the club since November 2019, looking at options to mitigate the impact as outlined later in this document.

The Council wishes to provide the following areas of comment in relation to the specific areas raised by consultees:

**Historical Impact**

The Council recognises that through previous investment in the local area, Penallta RFC was relocated. Working closely with the club, an enhanced and modern club house was provided for lease to Penallta RFC and a number of pitches were made available.

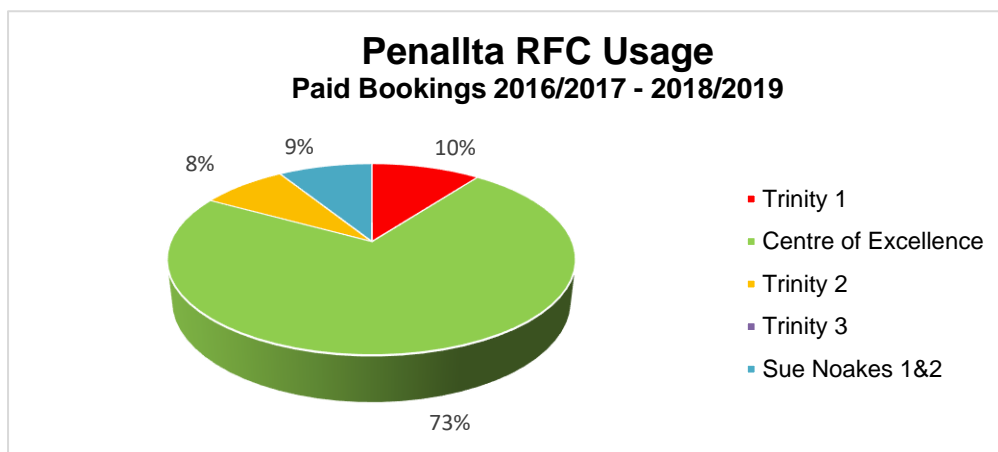


Image of Penallta RFC Clubhouse

**Loss of income**

Concerns have been raised by consultees in relation to the potential for lost income as a result of this proposal through reduced hospitality sales at the club house should matches be played elsewhere.

The removal of the proposed pitch for the expansion of Trinity Fields School should not have a significant impact on Penallta Rugby Club as the level of provision available to them is in excess of other clubs and they currently utilise a range of local facilities. Over the last 3 years, the usage of Trinity 1 has equated to 10% of recorded paid usage.



Penallta RFC believe the usage on Trinity 1 is in excess of that outlined by the Council. However, the figures quoted below have been calculated based upon records maintained by Parks Services of booked and paid usage. The bookings figures shown include a mix of training and matches.

Within the last 3 years, Penallta RFC has paid the Council to play on Trinity 1 (the proposed site):

- 2016 / 2017 = 25 bookings (2 Senior, 23 Youth, 0 Mini)
- 2017 / 2018 = 31 bookings (3 Senior, 28 Youth, 0 Mini)
- 2018 / 2019 = 17 bookings (1 Senior, 16 Youth, 0 Mini)

The Council has on record, the following bookings at alternative locations:

The Centre of excellence:

- 2016 / 2017 = 192 bookings (90 Senior, 31 Youth, 71 Mini)
- 2017 / 2018 = 222 bookings (70 Senior, 71 Youth, 81 Mini)
- 2018 / 2019 = 153 bookings (70 Senior, 13 Youth, 70 Mini)

Trinity 2:

- 2016 / 2017 = 21 bookings (1 Senior, 20 Youth, 0 Mini)
- 2017 / 2018 = 26 bookings (0 Senior, 26 Youth, 0 Mini)
- 2018 / 2019 = 15 bookings (0 Senior, 15 Youth, 0 Mini)

Trinity 3:

- No bookings have been registered

Sue Noakes 1 & 2:

- 2016 / 2017 = 9 bookings (0 Senior, 9 Youth, 0 Mini)
- 2017 / 2018 = 16 bookings (0 Senior, 16 Youth, 0 Mini)
- 2018 / 2019 = 48 bookings (0 Senior, 48 Youth, 0 Mini)

In addition, as indicated previously and through the Sports and Leisure Departments booking system, we can confirm that the club also has regular slots booked on other 3G pitches in the Borough.

### Impact on players

There are lots of ways the Council are supporting community and grassroots sport from providing grant support to clubs, investing in resources that can help get people active and measuring the latest rates of participation. As evidenced above there has been significant investment in state of the art all-weather 3G provision in the area which is being utilised by the club and the wider community.

The Council recognises the importance of keeping people of all ages active and as mentioned, is working with the club to provide enhanced facilities to ensure that the impact is mitigated.

### Use of pitches and Centre of Excellence

The Centre of Sporting Excellence is a modern all-weather facility catering for a range of sports. Opened in 2014 it is an important regional sporting asset. The Centre's facilities include an IRB 22 ratified 3G rugby pitch, a FIFA 2 star 3G football pitch, conference rooms, a strength and conditioning room and medical & first aid rooms. As evidenced by the Council in the usage graph outlined previously, the usage of the Centre of Sporting Excellence equated to hosting 73% of Penallta RFC's matches and training between 2016/17 to 2018/19.

### Mitigation options

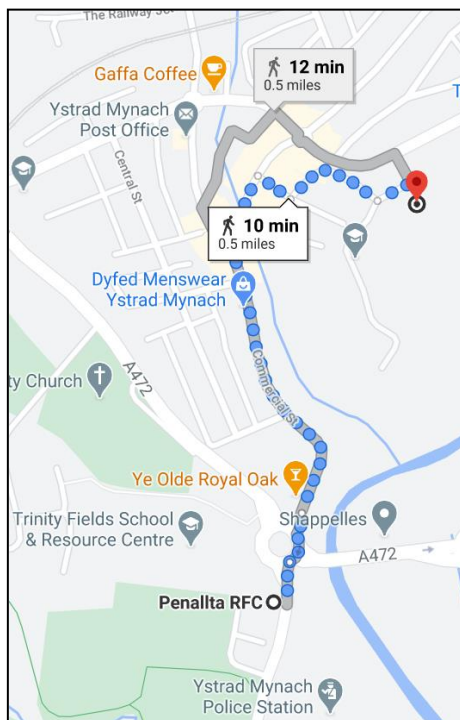
The Council has been working with the club and other stakeholders to explore physical measures to mitigate the loss of Trinity 1. Specifically, it is currently proposed that:

- Trinity 2 is fenced as is and consideration be given to adding training lighting subject to meeting statutory obligations.
- Trinity 3 is marked out as a pitch and posts erected.
- An improved senior pitch is created at Sue Noakes with spectator areas, barriers and enhanced training lighting, together with a second pitch.
- Subject to Cabinet approval, consideration will be given to establishing the viability, benefits and drawbacks of progressing Fields in Trust protection in perpetuity to the retained pitches.

### Sue Noakes / Walking Routes

As outlined above, an enhanced facility at Sue Noakes is one of the mitigating options being investigated. Consultees have raised the conflict between Rugby relocation and current football usage on the site. At present the Sue Noakes site does not have any designated football posts or markings to utilise this area in this manner and is therefore open for development.

The Council acknowledges that the proposed mitigation site at Sue Noakes is not directly adjacent to the clubhouse, however it is within 0.5 miles and closer than some of the 3G facilities the club is currently accessing. The route outlined on the map below, is accessible via pedestrian footpaths and has parking on site.



Area of concern:	Consultee Responses included:
<b>Traffic Management</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access and parking</li> <li>• Increased traffic flow at proposed site</li> <li>• Transportation of pupils and Out of catchment</li> </ul>
Number of mentions	17

### Council's Response

As part of any development, the Council is committed to providing safe, efficient and effective traffic management. As a highway authority, we have a duty to manage the road network to ensure, as far as possible, the safe and convenient movement of traffic, which includes pedestrians and other vulnerable road users. Consideration will be given to this as part of the planning process.

**Access and parking**

The site identified for the expansion of Trinity Fields School is directly adjacent to the existing premises, so existing learner travel arrangements will still be in place should the proposal be taken forward

In addition, as part of the planning and design of the extension facility, safer routes will be established with a newly designated pick up and drop off point.

**Increased traffic flow at proposed site**

Traffic management involves the use of a range of measures to help keep traffic moving safely. These measures are provided in accordance with our policy.

This proposal will be subject to a full planning application process and a wide range of consultees will be invited to comment, including the Highways Department.

**Transportation of pupils and 'Out of catchment'**

As outlined in the Consultation Document, the catchment area for Trinity Fields School is the County Borough and this will remain unchanged as part of this proposal. Due to the specialist learning needs, all pupils are transported to site at present, 98% of which reside within the catchment area of the school.

### ➤ Areas of widest Agreement

Area of Agreement:	Consultee Responses included:
<b>Growing Demands</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Projections</li> <li>• Specialist intervention</li> <li>• Standards of support</li> </ul>
Number of mentions	227

### Council's Response

The Council appreciates the level of support shown from consultees in relation to this proposal and the general consensus that there is growing demand for specialist provision.

All Councils in Wales must make sure they provide enough school spaces for pupils of all ages in order to provide the best quality of education which includes places that meet the needs of the pupils with any additional learning needs. The Council works closely with schools, families and other partners to promote inclusion and support the principle that the majority of children can have their needs met in mainstream settings.

However, with increasingly sophisticated medical interventions children are surviving longer and are coming into school at 3 with increasingly complex learning and medical needs. The needs of vulnerable children with the most significant and complex needs are likely to be best met through specialist provision that is not available through mainstream.

The Council works closely with multiagency professionals in the field as well as with the school, Flying Start and Health Visitors. Utilising data from the Integrated Service for Children with Additional Needs (ISCAN), a fortnightly placement panel convenes to calculate the number of places that are required on site.

Reviewing historic data linked to Statutory processes, growth has been identified as an area requiring action. There is a similar picture across Wales in terms of increasing numbers of pupils accessing special schools.

In addition, admissions are decided via a Specialist Placement Panel, where a statutory process is followed to discuss pupils' individual needs. This applies to all pupils. The panel gives consideration to recommendations for placement taking into account the following criteria:

- Availability of places
- Pupils' needs
- Parents/carers view on the placement

This information has supported the proposal for expansion and indicates that the additional 80 places will be filled over a number of years and sufficient to future proof the school for years to come.

The proposal to expand Trinity Fields builds upon the school's exceptional experience and commitment in supporting a spectrum of needs and developing a highly inclusive and supportive ethos for all. This is reflected in the 2019 Estyn inspection report whereby Trinity Fields received an 'Excellent' rating across all 5 inspection areas.

Area of Agreement:	Consultee Responses included:
<b>Additional Facilities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need for more facilities</li> <li>• One location</li> <li>• Multiple Services</li> </ul>
Number of mentions	69
<b>Council's Response</b>	



The Council is committed to ensuring that all learners have equality of opportunity no matter where that education may be delivered (as set out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Article 28)).

The Council is committed to focusing on what is important for the individual, and what will work best for them. This proposal recognises that there is a need to ensure facilities are provided that can support and deliver high quality education for these most vulnerable pupils. The proposed expansion will provide facilities that can be utilised by the school, partners in health and social care and the community.



*Note: The image above is used for illustrative purposes and the design is draft at this stage and subject to project approval, planning and site investigations.*

Facilities will include a new entrance, classrooms, multi-function rooms that could be used by colleagues from Health and Social Care together with a small number of hot desks, new Family Room, Rebound, Soft Play and new Hydrotherapy Pool and Hall.

In addition, in order to ensure that all children at Trinity Fields School can access the widest range of educational opportunities available the Council works in partnership with Health Services and Social Care to provide a range of services that support the development of wellbeing (physical and emotional) in a holistic manner from a single, centralised location in the Borough.

Area of Agreement:	Consultee Responses included:
<b>Community Use</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to facilities for families</li> <li>• Wider Community use</li> </ul>
Number of mentions	40

### Council's Response

The Council acknowledges that consultees recognise the importance of access to facilities for families and wider community use.

#### **Access to facilities for families**

The school is open 51 weeks of the year, 6 days a week. As part of the proposal, the Council has demonstrated the need to integrate external agencies and promote wider usage of a selection of facilities at Trinity Fields school. The school currently supports the respite and youth leisure holiday scheme, water baby sessions and a spondylitis group.

Families do not stand in isolation but are connected to schools. Families are the foundation of communities and play a critical role in the wellbeing of all family members.

Many families with children with intellectual disability find it hard to get the life others take for granted.

This proposal will further enhance and build relationships with families, to provide them with a sense of wellbeing and better equip them to lead happy and healthy lives. To illustrate this point further, one consultee stated:

*'As a parent I would be able to access the pool and rebound therapy rooms out of school hours which would be fantastic! I am limited where I can take my son as places which have proper disability equipment are few and far between. This would be such a bonus and enrich our whole family's life.'*

### **Wider Community use**

One of the key aims of the Welsh Government's 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools and Colleges Band B programme and a pre-requisite for investment is the need to *'ensure the effective and efficient use of the educational estate for use by both schools and the wider community'*.

The Consultation document highlighted that at present, community usage is limited due to the current design and the need for appropriate safeguards and security to be in place.

The proposed project will take into account the desire to encourage and facilitate community use of the asset. To this end the design process will seek to include measures to enable safe 'zoning' of parts of the new school building, including the hall and a multi-functional classroom compliant space which could be adapted for use. It will also strengthen and safeguard the promotion of inclusivity and wellbeing within the Community.

### **Reasonable Alternatives Identified**

As outlined in the Consultation Document, the proposal under consideration is to expand the current provision at Trinity Fields School. This was the preferred option as identified through the options appraisal process and scored against the critical success factors of Strategic fit, Educational fit, Accessibility, Financial fit and Environmental impact.

Through the consultation process and the comments returned, there has been an acknowledgement of the need to invest in the school.

Following the consultation period, the Council is required to carry out a further assessment for the proposal. The purpose of this further assessment is to take account of any further information that has come forward through the consultation or otherwise.

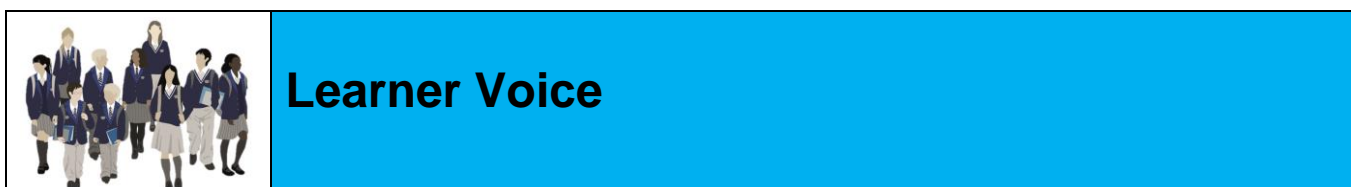
In its consultation report, the Council is required to explain its assessment of the proposal and the reasonable alternatives identified, how this assessment differs from their earlier assessment (if at all) and its assessment of any further reasonable alternatives. Finally, the Council is required to confirm whether it considers the implementation of the proposal, (wholly or partly) to be the most appropriate response to the reasons it identified for the proposal and give reasons for its conclusion including an assessment of the likely impact on Quality and Standards in Education, the community and effect on different travelling arrangements.

The following alternative options have been raised via Consultees:

<b>Alternative Option raised by consultees</b>	
<i>Expand the school at the current location but expand upwards instead of outwards making it a multi-story facility</i>	
<b>Council's Response</b>	
<p>The Council welcomes consultee acknowledgement that the existing Trinity Fields School requires investment and that the current building would not be suitable to accommodate the growing demand.</p> <p>The structural reasons outlined previously in this document provide the basis for discounting this as an option.</p> <p>The Council has also considered the impact on quality and standards, community and travel arrangements.</p> <p>Any works undertaken to develop the existing building as suggested would cause disruption to daily school operations, requiring re-location of the existing cohort, this would significantly slow the progress pupils will make in their learning. There is no alternative accommodation within the borough that would be able to cater for the needs of these pupils.</p>	
Council's Assessment of Reasonable Alternative:	Option has been discounted

<b>Alternative Option raised by consultees</b>	
<i>Expand the school onto an alternative pitch at the current location</i>	
<b>Council's Response</b>	
<p>As outlined earlier in this Consultation Report, the Council is dedicated to providing educational facilities that meet the needs of our pupils and local communities.</p> <p>The consultee suggestion to expand onto an alternative pitch (Trinity 2) has been explored. The Council has also considered the impact on quality and standards, community and travel arrangements in relation to this option.</p> <p>As evidenced above, the physical feasibility as to why Trinity 2 is not a viable option is outlined and would be unlikely to gain planning consent.</p>	
Council's Assessment of Reasonable Alternative:	Option has been discounted

<b>Alternative Option raised by consultees</b>	
<i>Build a new Trinity Fields school at an alternative location within the borough</i>	
<b>Council's Response</b>	
<p>A number of consultees have made the suggestion that a new school build would be a preferable option for Trinity Fields School.</p> <p>As part of the options appraisal undertaken for this proposal, a new build facility at an alternative location was considered as Option 5.</p> <p>The following disbenefits have been identified, which include consideration of the impact on standards, community and travel arrangements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disruption to existing cohort identified as vulnerable learners through relocation process</li> <li>• Demolition of a school building that has already received 21<sup>st</sup> Century School investment money and is suitable to deliver education for a number of years to come.</li> <li>• Identifying viable land in the Authority and costs and time associated with purchasing this</li> </ul> <p>A whole new school development is unlikely to be approved by the Welsh Government 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Scrutiny and Investment panel as it would not meet their aims and objectives e.g. duplication of existing provision and financial implications</p> <p>The current proposal has been framed in such a way as to minimise the impact on the existing cohort, build upon the 'excellence' achievement as highlighted through the Estyn inspection, whilst ensuring the identified demand for Specialist education is met.</p> <p>In addition, the existing school has received significant investment to improve the existing site in preparation for the proposed extension and there is no evidence to support that a whole new school build on an alternative site is required.</p> <p>Therefore, this alternative option has already been discounted.</p>	
<b>Council's Assessment of Reasonable Alternative:</b>	Option has been discounted



Young people have a right to act to express their views in all matters affecting them and for their views to be heard and given due weight in accordance with their age and maturity.

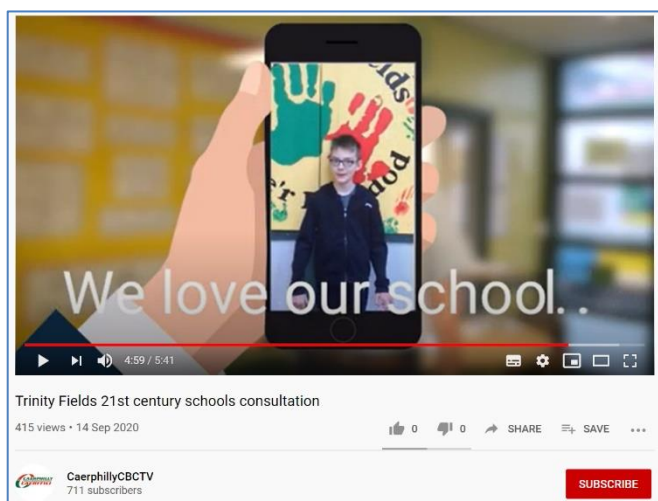
### **Everyday Summary Version – Children and Young People**

The Council acknowledged that the voice of young people is about involving them as active participants in the development, delivery, management and improvement of their educational and student experience and needs to be at the heart of planning, provision and evaluation.

A summary version of the main consultation document was also prepared, published and targeted specifically at children and young people. This summary version was released online as part of the consultation pack and hardcopies were made available on request.

## Consultation Video

The Council recognises the potential of young people to enrich decision-making processes, to share perspectives and to participate as citizens and facilitators of change.



As such, in preparing the Consultation Packs, pupils from the school contributed to the content and participated in the consultation video.

Pupil participation enabled the children to have a chance to make their voice heard and get involved in influencing decisions that affect their learning and well-being.

A recording is available on YouTube:

[Trinity Fields 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Consultation](#)

## School Council / Pupil Engagement

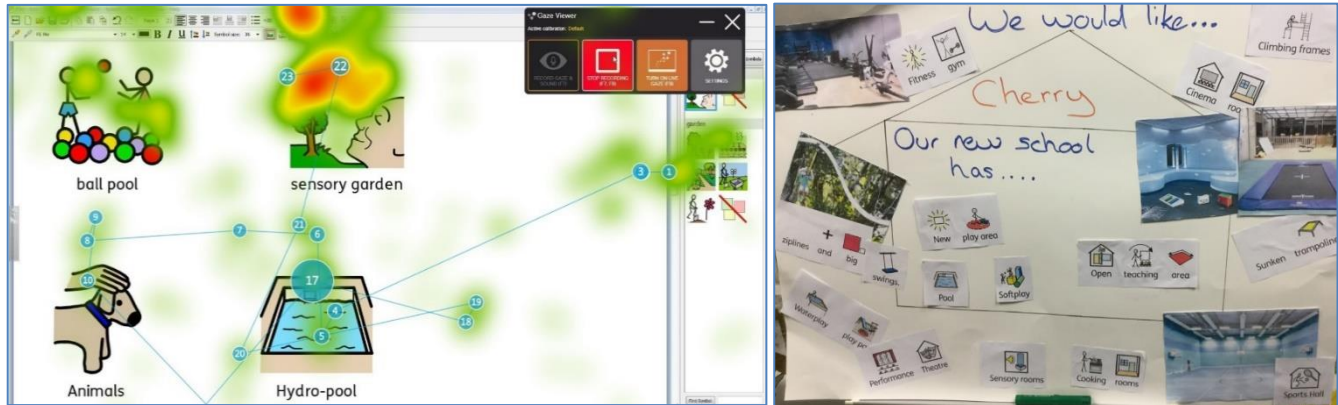
The 21st Century Schools Team in Caerphilly will ensure that when bringing forward any proposal, suitable arrangements are made to consult and involve pupils throughout the process.

As identified in the Consultation Document, nearly all the pupils attending Trinity Fields School have a statement of special educational needs for severe learning difficulties, physical and medical difficulties, profound and multiple learning difficulties or autistic spectrum disorders. Trinity Fields School has a very active school council and is a highly inclusive community where all pupils feel safe and valued. Pupils play an active and influential role in shaping the life and work of the school.

It was acknowledged at an early stage that in order to provide the opportunities for the young people to express their views in relation to this proposal, engaging with staff at the school would be vital. The school's exemplary levels of care, support and guidance and through utilising the child friendly version of the consultation document and the accompanying video, children were

engaged in a familiar environment, at the appropriate comprehension level and in the format of their preference.

Many of the children provided comments on what they would like to see in the future and how they felt about the proposal. Many pupils utilised verbal communication, however, evidence of what the pupils felt they wanted were also captured via heatmaps using eye recognition cursor movement, symbols and braille.



Images above were responses provided as part of the Consultation Sessions with pupils at Trinity Fields School

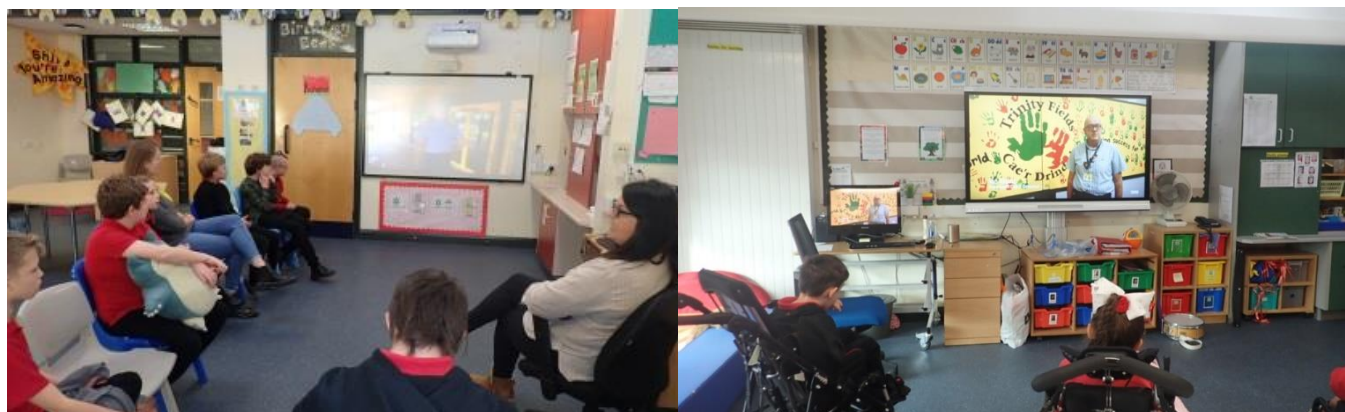
Notes from each session were recorded and have been included as part of the consultation responses which will be made available to Cabinet. Where answers were provided in other formats, these have been transcribed ad-verbatim. Original copies are being retained centrally at the school and electronic copies are available for Cabinet members on request.

The questions raised by pupils during these sessions are outlined below:

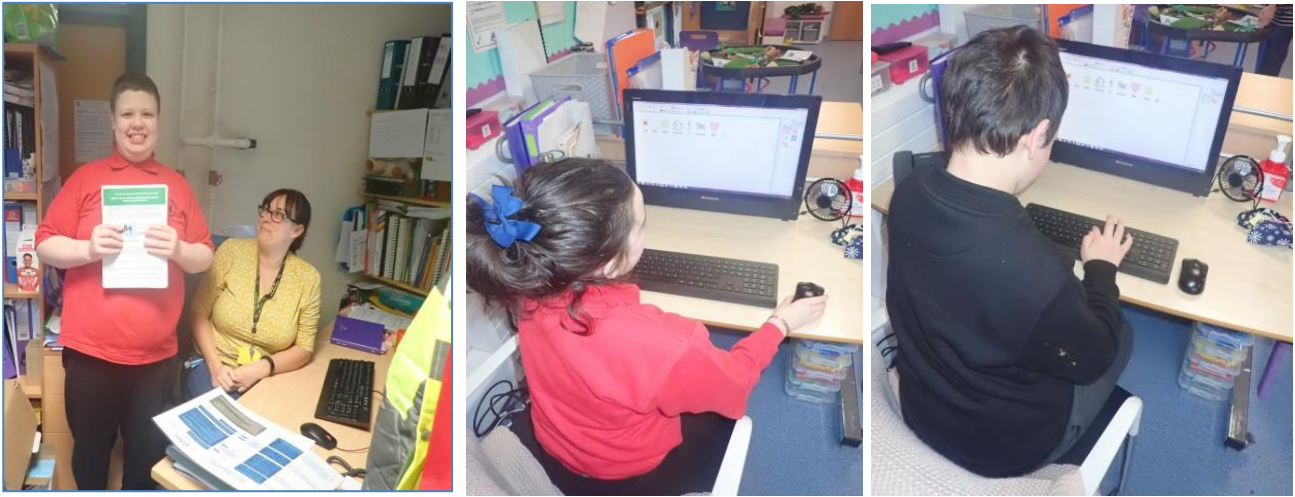
➤ School directly affected by Proposal

Trinity Fields School	
Questions	Council's Response
When will it be ready? How long will it take? When will be able to move in?	The proposal is for the new section of the school to open in September 2023.
Will it be the same as our school?	The proposal is to expand the existing school so the new section will be new.
Where will the new school be?	The proposal is to expand the school out onto the car park area and rugby pitch so the school will still be where it is now, just larger.
Would the new building replace the school that we are in now?	No, the proposal is to expand onto the existing school.
Will it be big?	The new building will make the entire school bigger, almost double what it is now.

How many classes will there be?	Final arrangement in relation to internal design of the new school are still to be finalised. We are working on a figure of 10 at present.
Will there be a library?	Yes, there will be a library
Can we have more computers and laptops?	There will be more IT facilities in the new classrooms.
Can we have a waterbed?	There isn't one planned at present but , the 21 <sup>st</sup> Century Schools Team will feed these comments back to the designers
Will the memorial garden and allotment area be safe?	That will be the head teacher decision
Will we be able to keep the allotments?	That will be the head teacher decision
Will we have more spaces to play and be active?	Yes, there will be a new courtyard area
Where will the rugby pitch be moved to?	An alternative provision is proposed to be provided at the nearby Sue Noakes site.
Will the rugby boys be ok?	We are working with the rugby club to look at how we can find alternative places to play.
Can we visit the new school?	If you want to visit the new school if you have already left, that will be the head teachers decision.



*Images from a Consultation Session undertaken with pupils at Trinity Fields School*



*Images from a Consultation Session undertaken with pupils at Trinity Fields School*

➤ Other schools identified as being affected

Due to the nature of the provision at Trinity Fields, no individual schools were identified as being 'affected' by the proposal. Regardless, the Head Teachers of every school in the borough were contacted during the consultation period whereby the consultation proposal was discussed and the pupils, governing body and staff at the school invited to provide their responses as part of the consultation process. Where information has been submitted, responses are included as part of the separate annex available to Cabinet.





## Other Considerations



"Our national mission is to raise standards, reduce the attainment gap and deliver an education system that is a source of national pride and confidence."

*Kirsty Williams AM  
Cabinet Secretary for Education*

As Wales embarks on a renewed vision of success for all learners, we can reflect on our rich heritage and proud history for promoting access to education in Caerphilly. Our transformational reforms are taking place within a challenging environment. This includes the uncertainties associated with Brexit, the technological transformation and the divergence in the qualification systems across the home nations. These are all challenges and opportunities for the Council.

There are a number of local and national strategies that drive Educational reform and underline the rationale for the proposals being considered as part of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools and Colleges Band B programme in Caerphilly.

- [Welsh Language Act 1993 / Welsh Language \(Wales\) measure 2011](#)
- [Additional Learning Needs and Educational Tribunal \(Wales\) Act 2017](#)
- [The Childcare Act 2006 \(Local Authority Assessment\) \(Wales\) Regulations 2016](#)
- [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#)
- [Welsh Government - Education in Wales: Our National Mission](#)
- [Welsh Government - Cymraeg 2050: Welsh Language Strategy Action Plan 2019- 2021](#)
- [Welsh Government - 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools and Colleges Programme](#)
- [Caerphilly - 'Shared Ambitions' Education Attainment Strategy 2019 - 2022](#)
- [Caerphilly - #Team Caerphilly: Better Together Transformation Strategy](#)
- [Caerphilly - Welsh Education Strategic Plan](#)
- [Caerphilly - Welsh Language Strategy 2017-2022](#)
- [Caerphilly - Corporate Plan \(including Wellbeing Objectives 2018-2023\)](#)
- [Caerphilly – Education Other Than at School \(EOTAS\) Strategy 2020](#)
- [Caerphilly - Strategic Equality Plan 2020-2024](#)
- [Caerphilly - Communication and Engagement Strategy 2019-2022](#)



## Next Steps

### Recommendation

In reviewing the proposal to take account of further information that has come forward through the consultation and in consideration of the likely impact on quality and standards in education, the community and travelling arrangements, it is the recommendation of this report that the proposal is progressed as outlined in the Consultation Document, namely:

**Expand the existing Trinity Fields School and Resource Centre, via a new building extension and outdoor play space with an anticipated completion date of September 2023**

### Decision Making

To deliver our reforms across the entire system, we will need a bold commitment to effective collaboration along with integration of services where appropriate. This will include Welsh Government, the teaching profession and the wider education workforce, our key partners in local authorities, diocesan authorities, regional services, Estyn and others. Successful implementation of any proposal will require effective and honest engagement between all facets of the education system and our local communities and we are committed to providing the conditions to enable this to happen.

Cabinet Members are asked to note the information contained within this Consultation Report and to seek members views as to whether to proceed, make changes or not to proceed with the proposed expansion of the existing Trinity Fields School and Resource Centre.

### Reporting, Notification and Publishing of Information

Should Cabinet decide to proceed with the proposal, a Statutory Notice will be published providing a 28 day notice period for objections. The School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 provides that anyone wishing to make objections to a school organisation proposal has the opportunity to do so. To be considered as statutory objections, objections must be made in writing and sent to the Council within the 28-day period.

Cabinet will then consider the outcome of the Statutory Notice at a future meeting and determine whether to implement the proposal having given due consideration to all the information provided.

In the event of objections, the Council will publish an objection report providing a summary of the objections and Cabinet's response to those objections within 7 days or the day of the determination of the proposal. This report will be available for all persons to view on the Council website and paper copies will be available on request.

Should Cabinet approve the proposal, a full Business Case will be submitted to the Welsh Minister for final approval and the works will commence.



## Supporting Information

### Annex 1 :

[Consultation Response Form](#)

[Consultation Frequently Asked Questions](#)

[Consultation Video](#)

[Equality and Welsh Language Impact Assessment](#)

### Annex 2:



16.09.20 Estyn  
response Trinity Field:

**Estyn response to the proposal by Caerphilly County Borough Council to expand the existing Trinity Fields School and Resource Centre, via a new building extension and outdoor play space with an anticipated completion date of September 2023.**

This report has been prepared by Her Majesty's Inspectors of Education and Training in Wales. Under the terms of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and its associated Code, proposers are required to send consultation documents to Estyn. However, Estyn is not a body which is required to act in accordance with the Code and the Act places no statutory requirements on Estyn in respect of school organisation matters. Therefore as a body being consulted, Estyn will provide their opinion only on the overall merits of school organisation proposals. Estyn has considered the educational aspects of the proposal and has produced the following response to the information provided by the proposer.

#### Introduction

The proposal is by Caerphilly County Borough Council.

The proposal seeks to address identified need for additional facilities to accommodate growing demand for places and provide additional classrooms, specialist intervention areas and outdoor play space for pupils with special educational needs. It is proposed the additional facility will house a new and flexible hall, hydrotherapy pool and soft play facilities to increase provision on site and enhance the lives of the pupils with provision that cannot be accommodated within the current building. This new provision would also be available for community use at suitable times.

#### Summary / Conclusion

The proposer has clearly defined the benefits of establishing these additional facilities and provision for pupils and young people who have special educational needs. The proposal has been developed in line with the local authority's programme to improve its educational provision and meet the needs of children and young people with SEN. This proposal offers pupils and young people with SEN the opportunity for specialist educational experiences in a setting within their county borough. Funding has already been allocated for the council's share of the capital costs of the project and will be jointly funded by Welsh Government as part of their 21<sup>st</sup> century schools remit.

It is Estyn's opinion that the proposal is likely to improve the current educational provision for children and young people with SEN.

### **Description and benefits**

The proposer has given clear rationale for the proposal. The proposer clearly states that the proposal has been made in order to meet the identified changing and more complex needs of SEN pupils living in Caerphilly with the aim of ensuring the best possible outcomes for pupils. The local authority aspires to improve the environment to create fit for purpose 21<sup>st</sup> century schools. The proposal appears to indicate that there is room to accommodate the new buildings. The proposed site for the location of the works is an adjacent piece of land to the current site owned by the local authority and utilised for recreational use. The land in question is currently configured as a rugby/football pitch available on a "pay as you use" basis. The local authority will however, work closely with the club to look at potential options for the remaining 2 pitches on site and any other actions considered appropriate. The design and management of the works will have a minimum impact on the main teaching facilities. The proposer clearly defines what the proposal means in practice and the expected benefits of the proposal. The proposed new building will provide additional facilities to accommodate growing demand for places and will provide specialist indoor intervention and outdoor play spaces. This provision will enhance pupils' provision and experiences.

A risk assessment regarding implementing the proposal has been carried out which lists as potential risks for example, the planning process itself, the impact of any planning on cost and project governance and decision making. However, the risk assessment does not identify any educational considerations.

The proposer has also considered the disadvantages within the proposal when compared with the status quo. Maintaining the status quo would not realise the opportunities of specialist provision within the county neither would it alleviate the current pressure to address demand for places for pupils with complex SEN.

The proposer has provided appropriate evidence to show that it has considered other alternatives to the current proposal and has given good reasons why these have been discounted.

The proposer has duly considered reasonable travelling distances for pupils likely to attend. Trinity Fields School and Resource Centre is the only special school within Caerphilly local authority and therefore the catchment area for the school remains unchanged. Therefore there is no impact to current journey time. Free appropriate transport is provided to all pupils who attend specialist provision within Caerphilly.

The proposer appears to have considered the extent to which the proposal would support the targets in the approved Welsh in Education Strategic Plan. It notes that there is currently no evidence of demand from parents for Welsh medium provision as no requests for such provision have been received by the school. The school understands its responsibility to record the home language of all the pupils and actively offer Welsh provision if the home language is Welsh. The school employs a number of teachers and teaching assistants who are Welsh speakers, and as such the headteacher and the local authority are confident that an effective SEN provision through the medium of Welsh could be provided is necessary. However, it is not clear whether the teaching and learning experiences would be fully equitable with that of English medium provision.

### **Educational aspects of the proposal**

The proposer has considered suitably the impact of the proposal on the quality of the outcomes, provision and leadership and management. The proposer appropriately notes that Trinity Fields School and Resource Centre was last inspected by Estyn in 2019. The school received a judgement of excellent in all inspection areas. The report highlights a very effective setting, with strong leadership, providing excellent learning experiences and provision to all pupils. The proposer suggests that the implementation of this proposal will ensure that the school continues to build on its current excellent practice. The proposer also makes reference to the fact that Trinity Fields School and Resource Centre has consistently been a green school under the Welsh Government school categorisation process. Due to the current Covid-19 pandemic, national categorisation has been suspended.

The proposed provision will ensure specialist continuity for pupils from 3 -19 years old that have severe learning difficulties, physical and medical difficulties, profound and multiple learning difficulties or autistic spectrum disorders and will further complement and support SEN mainstream provision within

the county borough. In turn, this will develop expertise and capacity of staff working with children with SEN and will benefit their standards and provision.

The design and management of the work should ensure that there is minimal disruption to pupils and provision.

It is envisaged that the provision will also provide greater opportunities for working with and providing support for parents and carers. The proposed project will also facilitate community use of the building. It appears that this provision will safeguard the promotion of inclusivity within the community.

It seems that staff at Trinity Fields School and Resource base will not be adversely affected by this proposal. Increased number of pupils would appear to secure staff employment. This proposal supports the potential to expand provision and support further professional learning and development.

### **Annex 3:**

#### Consultation Responses

A separate Annex to this report will be made available to Cabinet which will include the full details of the commentary provided by consultees during the consultation process. Any identifying information will be removed as detailed earlier in this document.