



Caerphilly County Borough Council - Integrated Impact Assessment

This integrated impact assessment (IIA) has been designed to help support the Council in making informed and effective decisions whilst ensuring compliance with a range of relevant legislation, including:

- Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011
- Socio-economic Duty – Sections 1 to 3 of the Equality Act 2010
- Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011
- Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015
- Statutory Consultation v Doctrine of Legitimate Expectation and Gunning Principles

PLEASE NOTE: Section 3 *Socio-economic Duty* only needs to be completed if proposals are of a strategic nature or when reviewing previous strategic decisions.

See page 6 of the Preparing for the Commencement of the Socio-economic Duty Welsh Government Guidance.

1. Proposal Details

Lead Officers:- Andrea West / Lisa Thomas

Head of Service:- Sue Richards

Service Area and Department:- Sustainable Communities for Learning

Date:- April 2024

This document is available in Welsh and English. Information can also be made available in other formats, languages and in hard copy on request. Please contact us on 01443 864817 / 21stCenturySchools@caerphilly.gov.uk to arrange this.

What is the proposal to be assessed? *Provide brief details of the proposal and provide a link to any relevant report or documents.*

Post 16, Single Sex and Surplus Places Review Lewis Girls School and Lewis School Pengam



Caerphilly's Cabinet established a Board in 2019 to develop recommendations for change in relation to Post 16, Single Sex and Surplus Places across Caerphilly. The Board consisted of a wide range of stakeholders including Head Teachers, College Representatives, Scrutiny Members, Governor Representatives, TU Representatives, EAS representatives and Local Education Authority Officers. The Board acknowledged that Lewis School Pengam and Lewis Girls School are the last remaining local authority maintained single sex schools in Wales. Moving away from single sex toward co-education has been under consideration by the Local Authority and the Schools over many years.

Board Members also received information in relation to the levels of surplus places at the Lewis Schools with Lewis Girls School at circa 38% and Lewis School Pengam at circa 42%, as at January 2024. At its last LEA Inspection in 2012 Estyn concluded that the authority had not made enough progress in respect of the removal of surplus capacity from its secondary schools. The Board, at its meeting of February 6th 2024, resolved unanimously to support the proposal to formally consult stakeholders with a view to:

- (1) moving from Single Sex provision to co-education in the Upper Rhymney Valley
- (2) locating Lewis catchment pupils at the Lewis School Pengam site, while retaining the Lewis Girls School site to manage the transition over a number of years (minimising impact on exam pupils and enabling staff and pupils to be integrated over an appropriate timeframe).

The Council's Education and Social Services Scrutiny Committee then met to consider the report and the proposals on the 20th March 2024. The Committee noted



the unanimous support from the Post 16, Single Sex and Surplus Places Board and then commented and scrutinised proposals ahead of their onward consideration at Cabinet. Cabinet, at its meeting on the 3rd April, then agreed the recommendation to move to consultation.

Proposal:

The Council wishes to make a 'regulated alteration' to a maintained school in line with the requirements of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and the School Organisation Code 2018.

We are proposing to:

- Close Lewis Girls school and make a regulated alteration to Lewis Pengam to change from single sex to co-education with effect from September 2025.

The Lewis Girls School site would be retained as a provision to Lewis School Pengam to manage the transition over a number of years. (minimising impact on exam pupils and enabling staff and pupils to be integrated over an appropriate timeframe).

The proposed pupil transition will be phased as follows:

September 2025 pupils would attend settings as follows

Year 7 - all pupils (Girls and Boys) Lewis Girls School site

Year 8 - all pupils (Girls and Boys) Lewis Girls School site

Year 9 - all pupils (Girls and Boys) Lewis School Pengam site

Year 10 - all pupils (Girls and Boys) Lewis School Pengam site

Year 11 - retain single sex, pupils to remain either at Lewis Girls School or Lewis School Pengam

Year 12 - As now, pupils to attend Upper Rhymney Valley consortia lessons where they are offered

Year 13 - As now, pupils to attend Upper Rhymney Valley consortia lessons where they are offered

September 2026 pupils would attend settings as follows

Year 7 - all pupils (Girls and Boys) Lewis Girls School site

Year 8 - all pupils (Girls and Boys) Lewis Girls School site

Year 9 - all pupils (Girls and Boys) Lewis School Pengam site

Year 10 - all pupils (Girls and Boys) Lewis School Pengam site

Year 11 - all pupils (Girls and Boys) Lewis School Pengam site

Year 12 - As now, pupils to attend Upper Rhymney Valley consortia lessons where they are offered



Year 13 - As now, pupils to attend Upper Rhymney Valley consortia lessons where they are offered

September 2027 pupils would attend settings as follows

All pupils (Girls and Boys) 7-13 Lewis School Pengam site

This phased approach is intended to minimise disruption and any potentially negative impact on exam pupils, whilst enabling staff and pupils to be prepared for integration over an appropriate timeframe.

2. Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011

*(The Public Sector Equality Duty requires the Council to have “due regard” to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advance equality of opportunity between different groups; and foster good relations between different groups). Please note that an individual may have more than one **protected characteristics**.*

2a Age (people of all ages)

(i) Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts on the protected characteristics and how?

Neutral - No anticipated change

(ii) If there are negative impacts how will these be mitigated?

Not applicable because the facility is accessible to pupils and the wider community regardless of other specific protected characteristics.

(iii) What evidence has been used to support this view?

Not applicable



2b Disability (*people with disabilities/ long term conditions*)

(i) Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts on the protected characteristics and how?

Positive – The current Lewis Girls School site operates over a number of buildings within the curtilage of the school grounds. Whilst all mitigations have been put into place, the move for pupils to Lewis School Pengam is anticipated to have a positive impact.

(ii) If there are negative impacts how will these be mitigated?

The Lewis School Pengam building operates over multiple floors, however lift access is in place.

(iii) What evidence has been used to support this view?

Condition Surveys and investment portfolio for both schools.

2c Gender Reassignment (*anybody who's gender identity or gender expression is different to the sex they were assigned at birth*)

(i) Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts on the protected characteristics and how?

Positive – The proposal will remove the need for any individual who's gender identity or gender expression which is different to the sex they were assigned at birth, needing to choose as which of the schools they wish to attend.

Lewis Girls School and Lewis School Pengam are the only remaining schools in Wales operating on a Single Sex educational basis. The move to co-education in addition to all pupils eventually being taught on the same campus will promote equality for all and support the formation of healthy friendships.

(ii) If there are negative impacts how will these be mitigated?

With a proposal of this nature, it is recognised that there will be a period of adjustment for pupils and the Council will work closely with the schools, through the proposed phased approach to address any issues as they arise.

(iii) What evidence has been used to support this view?

Research undertaken into the benefits of Co-Education.



2d Marriage or Civil Partnership (*people who are married or in a civil partnership*)

- (i) **Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts on the protected characteristics and how?**

Neutral - No impact

- (ii) **If there are negative impacts how will these be mitigated?**

Not applicable because the facility is accessible to pupils and the wider community regardless of other specific characteristics.

- (iii) **What evidence has been used to support this view?**

Not applicable

2e Pregnancy and Maternity (*women who are pregnant and/or on maternity leave*)

- (i) **Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts on the protected characteristics and how?**

Neutral - No anticipated change

- (ii) **If there are negative impacts how will these be mitigated?**

Not applicable because the facility is accessible to pupils and the wider community regardless of other specific protected characteristics.

- (iii) **What evidence has been used to support this view?**

Not applicable

2f Race (*people from black, Asian and minority ethnic communities and different racial backgrounds*)

- (i) **Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts on the protected characteristics and how?**

Neutral - No anticipated change

- (ii) **If there are negative impacts how will these be mitigated?**

Not applicable because the facility is accessible to pupils and the wider community regardless of other specific protected characteristics.

- (iii) **What evidence has been used to support this view?**

Not applicable



2g Religion or Belief (*people with different religions and beliefs including people with no beliefs*)

(i) Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts on the protected characteristics and how?

Neutral – No anticipated change

(ii) If there are negative impacts how will these be mitigated?

Not applicable because the facility is accessible to pupils and the wider community regardless of other specific protected characteristics.

(iii) What evidence has been used to support this view?

Not applicable

2h Sex (*women and men, girls and boys and those who self-identify their gender*)

(i) Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts on the protected characteristics and how?

Positive - Lewis Girls School and Lewis School Pengam are the only remaining schools in Wales operating on a Single Sex educational basis. The move to co-education in addition to all pupils eventually being taught on the same campus will promote equality for all and support the formation of healthy friendships.

(ii) If there are negative impacts how will these be mitigated?

The Council recognises that there will be a transition period for existing pupils, some of which have not mixed within their school day since primary school. However, a phased approach has been suggested to minimise and impact, not only on curriculum delivery for exams, but also to support schools, pupils and their communities in coming together. This will be closely monitored and working closely with the schools, the Council will look to address any issues early to enable a smooth transition for all.

It should be noted that the schools currently share the same catchment area and there are times where family members, i.e siblings have been made to attend separate locations for their education.

In addition it should be noted that both schools are currently delivering their post-16 education jointly, where pupils of different sexes already mix for classes.

(iii) What evidence has been used to support this view?

Research undertaken into the benefits of Co-Education.



2i Sexual Orientation (*lesbian, gay, bisexual, heterosexual, other*)

- (i) **Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts on the protected characteristics and how?**

Neutral - No anticipated change

- (ii) **If there are negative impacts how will these be mitigated?**

Not applicable because the facility is accessible to pupils and the wider community regardless of other specific protected characteristics.

- (iii) **What evidence has been used to support this view?**

Not applicable



3. **Socio-economic Duty** (*Strategic Decisions Only*)

*(The Socio-economic Duty gives us an opportunity to do things differently and put tackling inequality genuinely at the heart of key decision making. **Socio-economic disadvantage** means living on a low income compared to others in Wales, with little or no accumulated wealth, leading to greater material deprivation, restricting the ability to access basic goods and services)*

Please consider these additional vulnerable group and the impact your proposal may or may not have on them:

- Single parents and vulnerable families
- People with low literacy/numeracy
- Pensioners
- Looked after children
- Homeless people
- Carers
- Armed Forces Community
- Students
- Single adult households
- People misusing substances
- People who have experienced the asylum system
- People of all ages leaving a care setting
- People living in the most deprived areas in Wales (WIMD)
- People involved in the criminal justice system

3a **Low Income / Income Poverty** (*cannot afford to maintain regular payments such as bills, food, clothing, transport etc.*)

(i) **Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts on the following and how?**

Neutral – Both schools share a catchment area and have the same feeder schools at primary level, these being Coedybrain Primary, Derwendeg Primary, Glyngaer Primary, Greenhill Primary, Hengoed Primary, Llancaeath Junior Junior School, Llanfabon Infant School, Maesycwmmmer Primary, Tiryberth Primary, Ystrad Mynach Primary

Neutral - It is always the intention of the Council to provide a system of transport that seeks to ensure pupils can safely and comfortably access their education. A number of 'Safe Travel' routes, as far as reasonably practicable, are already established such as lighting and designated footpaths.

Neutral – Lewis Girls School and Lewis School Pengam are currently operating over two separate sites within 3 miles distance of each other within the Ystrad Mynach belt. It is anticipated that the likely effect of different travelling arrangements as a result of the proposal will be minimal, although it is acknowledged that some pupils may find themselves living closer to the new school site and conversely others finding themselves further away.



Neutral - Existing Community Groups at Lewis Girls School will be encouraged to relocate to Lewis School Pengam or will be supported in finding alternative provision within the localised area, for example Ystrad Mynach Library. A data gathering exercise will be undertaken and any groups identified will be engaged with as part of this proposal.

This proposal relates to the school provision only and no impact on the adjacent leisure facilities is anticipated.

(ii) If there are negative impacts how will these be mitigated?

The Lewis Girls School site would be retained as a provision to Lewis School Pengam to manage the transition over a number of years. (minimising impact on exam pupils and enabling staff and pupils to be integrated over an appropriate timeframe).

Caerphilly complies with the requirements of the Learner Travel Measure (Wales) 2008 through providing transport for pupils of statutory school age in accordance with our individual transport policy.

(iii) What evidence has been used to support this view?

[Is Wales Fairer? – The state of equality and human rights](#)

[Caerphilly - Census 2011 ward profiles](#)

[Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation \(WIMD\)](#)

3b Low and/or No Wealth (*enough money to meet basic living costs and pay bills but have no savings to deal with any unexpected spends and no provisions for the future*)

(i) Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts on the following and how?

Neutral – Both schools share a catchment area and have the same feeder schools at primary level, these being Coedybrain Primary, Derwendeg Primary, Glyngaer Primary, Greenhill Primary, Hengoed Primary, Llancaeath Junior Junior School, Llanfabon Infant School, Maesycwmmmer Primary, Tiryberth Primary, Ystrad Mynach Primary

Neutral - It is always the intention of the Council to provide a system of transport that seeks to ensure pupils can safely and comfortably access their education. A number of 'Safe Travel' routes, as far as reasonably practicable, are already established such as lighting and designated footpaths.

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(ii) If there are negative impacts how will these be mitigated?

The Lewis Girls School site would be retained as a provision to Lewis School Pengam to manage the transition over a number of years. (minimising impact on exam pupils and enabling staff and pupils to be integrated over an appropriate timeframe).

Caerphilly complies with the requirements of the Learner Travel Measure (Wales) 2008 through providing transport for pupils of statutory school age in accordance with our individual transport policy.

(iii) What evidence has been used to support this view?

[Equality Act 2010](#)

[Wales Act 2017 - Public sector duty regarding socio-economic inequalities](#)

[Equality Act 2010 - Public sector duty regarding socio-economic inequalities](#)

[Is Wales Fairer? – The state of equality and human rights](#)

[Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation \(WIMD\)](#)

3c Material Deprivation (*unable to access basic goods and services i.e. financial products like life insurance, repair/replace broken electrical goods, warm home, hobbies etc.*)

(i) Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts on the following and how?

Neutral - No anticipated change



(ii) **If there are negative impacts how will these be mitigated?**
Not applicable

(iii) **What evidence has been used to support this view?**
Not applicable

3d Area Deprivation (*where you live (rural areas), where you work (accessibility of public transport) Impact on the environment?*)

(i) **Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts on the following and how?**
Neutral – Both schools share a catchment area and have the same feeder schools at primary level, these being Coedybrain Primary, Derwendeg Primary, Glyngaer Primary, Greenhill Primary, Hengoed Primary, Llancaeath Junior Junior School, Llanfabon Infant School, Maesycwmmmer Primary, Tiryberth Primary, Ystrad Mynach Primary

Neutral– Lewis Girls School and Lewis School Pengam are currently operating over two separate sites within 3 miles distance of each other within the Ystrad Mynach belt. It is anticipated that the likely effect of different travelling arrangements as a result of the proposal will be minimal, although it is acknowledged that some pupils may find themselves living closer to the new school site and conversely others finding themselves further away.

(ii) **If there are negative impacts how will these be mitigated?**
The Lewis Girls School site would be retained as a provision to Lewis School Pengam to manage the transition over a number of years. (minimising impact on exam pupils and enabling staff and pupils to be integrated over an appropriate timeframe).

(iii) **What evidence has been used to support this view?**
[Equality Act 2010](#)

[Wales Act 2017 - Public sector duty regarding socio-economic inequalities](#)

[Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation \(WIMD\)](#)

3e Socio-economic Background (*social class i.e. parents education, employment and income*)

(i) **Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts on the following and how?**
Neutral– Lewis School Pengam is accessible to pupils and the wider community regardless of any specific socio-economic disadvantage.



Existing Community Groups at Lewis Girls School will be encouraged to relocate to Lewis School Pengam or will be supported in finding alternative provision within the localised area, for example Ystrad Mynach Library. A data gathering exercise will be undertaken and any groups identified will be engaged with as part of this proposal.

This proposal relates to the school provision only and no impact on the adjacent leisure facilities is anticipated.

(ii) **If there are negative impacts how will these be mitigated?**

Not applicable

(iii) **What evidence has been used to support this view?**

[Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation \(WIMD\)](#)

[Electoral Ward Profile](#)

3f Socio-economic Disadvantage (*What cumulative impact will the proposal have on people or groups because of their protected characteristic(s) or vulnerability or because they are already disadvantaged*)

(i) **Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts on the following and how?**

Neutral– Lewis School Pengam is accessible to pupils and the wider community regardless of any specific socio-economic disadvantage.

Existing Community Groups at Lewis Girls School will be encouraged to relocate to Lewis School Pengam or will be supported in finding alternative provision within the localised area, for example Ystrad Mynach Library. A data gathering exercise will be undertaken and any groups identified will be engaged with as part of this proposal.

This proposal relates to the school provision only and no impact on the adjacent leisure facilities is anticipated.

(ii) **If there are negative impacts how will these be mitigated?**

Not applicable

(iii) **What evidence has been used to support this view?**

[Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation \(WIMD\)](#)

[Electoral Ward Profile](#)



4. Corporate Plan – Council’s Well-being Objectives

(How does your proposal deliver against any/all of the Council’s Well-being Objectives? Which in turn support the national well-being goals for Wales as outlined in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. Are there any impacts (positive, negative or neutral? If there are negative impacts how have these been mitigated?) Well-being Objectives

Objective 1 - Improve education opportunities for all

Information from inspection reports indicate that the quality of education in the Upper Rhymney Valley is good.

Lewis School Pengam was removed from Estyn Review in November 2019 and outcomes for pupils have continued to improve since then. In 2022-23 attendance was 88.7%.

Lewis Girls school had a successful inspection in October 2022 and was invited to present case studies on the “Impact of professional learning on teaching and learning, curriculum development and leadership” and another on “Broadening pupils’ horizons and developing a culture of belonging”. In 2022-23 attendance was 88.4%.

Both schools have sound improvement plans that are resourced well.

The strengths in the two schools complement each other and there is effective collaboration in regard to post 16 provision and the sharing of professional learning.

As part of this proposal, staff will have greater opportunity to extend their own professional learning and to share their expertise in a wider context. Both senior leadership teams are committed to maximising best practice and talent.

Transition experiences within the cluster will inevitably be streamlined and enhanced. This will impact positively on all involved, with schools and families having single points of contact.

Within the proposal all pupils will be ultimately educated on one site which is in an excellent condition. The other significant part of this proposal is to support a new secondary school in Bargoed. This would mean that all pupils in the Upper Rhymney Valley would access provision within schools that are in excellent condition and have a range of facilities.

Overall, this proposal will enhance transition experiences, maximise resources and further develop expertise which will empower all involved to build upon the quality of current provision, creating a high quality co-educational experience for every secondary aged pupil in the Upper Rhymney Valley.



Objective 2 - Enabling employment

As part of this proposal, staff will have greater opportunity to extend their own professional learning and to share their expertise in a wider context. Both senior leadership teams are committed to maximising best practice and talent.

School staff play an important role in ensuring pupils are learning in a safe and supportive learning environment. They can foster positive, trusting relationships with pupils and improve the school climate by encouraging parent and family involvement in education.

By forging strong relationships, staff can affect virtually every aspect of their pupils' lives, teaching them the important life lessons that will help them succeed beyond just academia.

Subject to the outcome of the consultation and Cabinet approval to progress, Lewis Girls School will close and Lewis School Pengam will accommodate all pupils, subject to parental preference.

The staffing structure at Lewis School Pengam will change and it is anticipated that the staff at Lewis Girls School will be accommodated at Lewis School Pengam where possible and we will also support staff to be employed at other schools where there are vacancies. The Council fully understand that there will be a lot of anxiety but want to give assurance that all staff will be supported through the process.

Objective 3 - Address the availability, condition and sustainability of homes throughout the county borough and provide advice, assistance or support to help improve people's well-being

Not applicable at the proposal is linked to 2 existing school facilities.

Objective 4 - Promote a modern, integrated and sustainable transport system that increases opportunity, promotes prosperity and minimises the adverse impact on the environment

There is a Statutory duty placed upon the Authority to provide pupils with free transport to their nearest suitable school if they reside beyond 'walking distance' to that school. All pupils are assessed in accordance with the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008.

Both schools share a catchment area and have the same feeder schools at primary level, these being Coedybrain Primary, Derwendeg Primary, Glyngaer Primary, Greenhill Primary, Hengoed Primary, Llancaeath Junior Junior School, Llanfabon Infant School, Maesycwmmmer Primary, Tiryberth Primary, Ystrad Mynach Primary



The Lewis Girls School site would be retained as a provision to Lewis School Pengam to manage the transition over a number of years.

Objective 5 - Creating a county borough that supports healthy lifestyle in accordance with the Sustainable Development principle with in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

The Council recognises that children's physical development, enthusiasm and energy for movement should continually be promoted through helping them to use their bodies effectively, by encouraging spatial awareness, balance, control and coordination, and developing motor and manipulative skills across all Areas of Learning, indoors and outdoors.

All educational facilities provide external recreational and educational facilities which in the case of Lewis School Pengam includes a 3G pitch.

Objective 6 - Support citizens to remain independent and improve their well-being

Existing Community Groups at Lewis Girls School will be encouraged to relocate to Lewis School Pengam or will be supported in finding alternative provision within the localised area, for example Ystrad Mynach Library. A data gathering exercise will be undertaken and any groups identified will be engaged with as part of this proposal.

This proposal relates to the school provision only and no impact on the adjacent leisure facilities is anticipated.

4a. Links to any other relevant Council Policy (*How does your proposal deliver against any other relevant Council Policy*)

The proposal contributes the following Strategies:

- **Caerphilly Local Authority Education Strategy (2022 – 2025)**
'Pursuing Excellence Together'

This proposal will deliver upon the Council's ambition to provide every learner with the best life chances through the provision of high quality teaching, learning and leadership across our impressive 21st Century school settings.

- **Post 16, Single Sex and Surplus Places Review**

Caerphilly's Cabinet established a Board in 2019 to develop recommendations for change in relation to Post 16, Single Sex and Surplus Places across Caerphilly.



The Board consisted of a wide range of stakeholders including Head Teachers, College Representatives, Scrutiny Members, Governor Representatives, TU Representatives, EAS representatives and Local Education Authority Officers.

Through previous discussions in 2021, the Post 16, Single Sex and Surplus Places Board had reached an informal consensus that co-education would be the way forward in the Upper Rhymney Valley (URV).

Having gained Board consensus at that time, Local Education Authority (LEA) officers engaged directly with the four URV Secondary Head Teachers as educational experts to consider this position further.

The URV Head Teachers agreed the following wording to reflect their position on Single Sex provision as well as the potential benefit of moving toward co-education across the Lewis Schools:

“We explore ways in which families can be brought together and re-united and avoid the division that some experience when, due to the current arrangement of schools, children from the same family are split apart at age 11”.

The Board acknowledged that Lewis School Pengam and Lewis Girls School are the last remaining local authority maintained single sex schools in Wales. Moving away from single sex toward co-education has been under consideration by the Local Authority and the Schools over many years.

Board Members also received information in relation to the levels of surplus places at the Lewis Schools with Lewis Girls School at 38.8% and Lewis School Pengam at 41.84%, as at January 2024. At its last LEA Inspection in 2012 Estyn concluded that the authority had not made enough progress in respect of the removal of surplus capacity from its secondary schools.

The Board, at its meeting of February 6th 2024, resolved unanimously to support the proposal to formally consult stakeholders with a view to:

- (1) moving from Single Sex provision to co-education in the Upper Rhymney Valley
- (2) locating Lewis catchment pupils at the Lewis School Pengam site, while retaining the Lewis Girls School site to manage the transition over a number of years (minimising impact on exam pupils and enabling staff and pupils to be integrated over an appropriate timeframe).

The Council's Education and Social Services Scrutiny Committee then met to consider the report and the proposals on the 20th March 2024. The Committee noted the unanimous support from the Post 16, Single Sex and Surplus Places Board and then commented and scrutinised proposals ahead of their onward consideration at Cabinet.



Cabinet, at its meeting on the 3rd April, then agreed the recommendation to move to consultation.

- **Integrated Impact Assessment**

The utilisation of this Integrated Impact Assessment design will further help support the Council in making informed and effective decisions whilst ensuring compliance with a range of relevant legislation, including:

- Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011
- Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011
- Socio-economic Duty – Sections 1 to 3 of the Equality Act 2010
- Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015
- Statutory Consultation v Doctrine of Legitimate Expectation and Gunning Principles

5. **Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 – The Five Ways of Working**

(Also known as the sustainable development principles. The Act requires the Council to consider how any proposal improves the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales using the five ways of working as a baseline)

How have you used the Sustainable Development Principles in forming the proposal?

Long Term

The Council must act in a manner that seeks to ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

The proposal seeks to close Lewis Girls school and make a regulated alteration to Lewis Pengam to change to from single sex to co-education with effect from September 2025. The Lewis Girls School site would be retained as a provision to Lewis School Pengam to manage the transition over a number of years.

Within the proposal all pupils will be ultimately educated on one site which is in an excellent condition. The other significant part of this proposal is to support a new secondary school in Bargoed. This would mean that all pupils in the Upper Rhymney Valley would access provision within schools that are in excellent condition and have a range of facilities.

Overall, this proposal will enhance transition experiences, maximise resources and further develop expertise which will empower all involved to build upon the quality of current provision, creating a high quality co-educational experience for every secondary aged pupil in the Upper Rhymney Valley.



Prevention

Our guiding principles during this process are outlined below.

- ✓ A need to explore ways in which families can be brought together and re-united
- ✓ Minimising disruption to learners undertaking examinations
- ✓ Maximising the opportunity for additional resource as the Lewis Girls School site remains open for some time
- ✓ Maximising the opportunities for the effective transition of pupils moving from year 6 to 7 to better support pupil wellbeing

The proposal seeks to employ the following approaches to mitigate disruption to pupils in order to support a smooth transition:

- A transition plan will be created that outlines how specialist facilities and resources from both schools will be integrated and optimised to meet the needs of the combined pupil population. This plan will consider factors such as geographical location, accessibility, and capacity and will ensure that children with additional learning needs (ALN) continue to have their needs met in line with the Additional Learning Needs and Tribunal Act and that there is appropriate additional learning provision (ALP) in place.
- Pupils will be kept informed about the process, including why it's happening, what changes to expect, and how it will benefit them in the long run.
- A transition program will be implemented to familiarise pupils with the new school environment, routines, and expectations. This could include orientation days, guided tours, and buddy systems pairing incoming pupils with existing ones.
- Pupils will be involved in decision-making processes where appropriate, to help them feel ownership and pride in their new school community.
- Staff members will be equipped to support pupils emotionally and academically during the transition through the provision of guidance from the LA on how to address concerns, provide reassurance, and facilitate adjustment.
- The use of consistent policies and procedures, such as rules for behavior, uniform codes, and disciplinary measures across the amalgamated schools will help to minimise confusion and maintain stability for pupils.
- Support services, such as mentoring and school-based counselling can be made available to pupils who may need extra assistance coping with the transition.
- We will seek to reserve important relationships between pupils and staff members by retaining key personnel from both schools whenever possible. Familiar faces can provide continuity and comfort during a period of change.
- We will keep a close eye on pupils' well-being and academic progress following the amalgamation by monitoring indicators such as attendance, behaviour, and achievement levels to identify any emerging issues that need to be addressed.



- We will establish channels for pupils to voice their concerns, suggestions, and feedback about the process and will actively listen to their input and incorporate it into decision-making when appropriate and feasible to do so.

Integration

The intention is that the merging of schools will bring a range of educational benefits to all learners, regardless of pupils' individual starting points in year seven. This will positively impact on the progress of learners, provision and, as a result, improvements in standards across all year groups.

Examples of how this will be achieved includes:

- Greater opportunities for collaboration within and across subject departments, sharing expertise, providing support for inexperienced teachers etc.
- Increased opportunities to widen the curriculum offer to all learners. This could include increasing the volume of vocational subjects, or providing more specialist subjects such as computer science qualifications.
- Improved ability to provide quality teaching in subjects where recruitment can be a challenge; e.g. Welsh, physics
- Fewer non-specialists teaching non-core subjects.
- Shared development of 'Curriculum for Wales' building on collaborative work across the cluster.
- Improved assessment arrangements through a consistent approach to feedback and tracking of progress of learners.
- Greater opportunities for professional learning within school. This would include opportunities to mentor or learn alongside peers, engage in practice-based research relevant to the local setting, and undertake whole school INSET training to address school priorities
- Shared approaches to self-evaluation and strategic planning, sharing best practice across departments. This would increase the capacity of senior and middle leaders to effectively manage and support teams.
- Improved equity in the quality of resources across curriculum departments. This would also include a more effective sustainability plan for digital resources.

Existing Community Groups at Lewis Girls School will be encouraged to relocate to Lewis School Pengam or will be supported in finding alternative provision within the localised area, for example Ystrad Mynach Library. A data gathering exercise will be undertaken and any groups identified will be engaged with as part of this proposal.

This proposal relates to the school provision only and no impact on the adjacent leisure facilities is anticipated.

Collaboration

The Council has worked with the Head Teachers in both schools and across a range of departments to shape the proposal to this initial stage for approval. Through following the consultation processes as prescribed by the School Organisation Code



2018 this will include engagement with the learners and wider stakeholders to ensure their voice is heard in the development process.

This proposal supports the Council's collaborative approach to maximising the full potential of all Council assets. Subject to approval to progress, the Council has an agreed Asset Disposal Workflow which enables a consistent and stringent approach to be taken when land and / or buildings become surplus to operational requirements.

In the first instance, the service that occupies the land and/or building in question would move to declare it surplus, which would be the case for the Lewis Girls School site in this instance. From this point, the Council's Property Services Team would then engage with services internally against set criteria to see if other service areas would wish to take up ownership or occupation of the land or building. Thereafter, should no such interest be forthcoming Property Services would explore opportunities for the site to be marketed externally with specific consideration included for Welsh, Health or Community provision.

Involvement

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.

Through [TeamCaerphilly - Better Together](#), the Council is committed to ensuring high quality, citizen focused services for the communities that comprise our county borough. In future-proofing public services, we recognise the need to ensure effective engagement which is central to our decision making - [Read more about our approach to Consultation and Engagement here](#)

For this proposal, our consultation process must follow the Welsh Government Statutory guidance as set out in the School Organisation Code 2018.

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 process represents an opportunity for people to learn about the proposal, ask questions and make comments that will be recorded and summarised in a consultation report. This report will be published on the Council's website and will be considered when Cabinet decides on the way forward.



6. Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

Does the proposal maximise our contribution to the Well-being Goals and how?

A Prosperous Wales

An innovative, productive and low carbon society which recognises the limits of the global environment and therefore uses resources efficiently and proportionately (including acting on climate change); and which develops a skilled and well-educated population in an economy which generates wealth and provides employment opportunities, allowing people to take advantage of the wealth generated through securing decent work

The principal benefits of the scheme are as follows:

- ✓ Moving away from single sex toward co-education bringing Caerphilly in line with the rest of Wales
- ✓ Families can be brought together and re-united and avoid the division that some experience when, due to the current arrangement of schools, children from the same family are split apart at age 11
- ✓ Greater consistency in what we provide to young people
- ✓ Minimising impact on exam pupils and enabling staff and pupils to be integrated over an appropriate timeframe
- ✓ Reducing surplus places at Lewis School Pengam
- ✓ Better value for money and a more sustainable model of delivery
- ✓ Reducing the number of maintained buildings, with associated backlog maintenance

This proposal supports the Council's collaborative approach to maximising the full potential of all Council assets. Subject to approval to progress, the Council has an agreed Asset Disposal Workflow which enables a consistent and stringent approach to be taken when land and / or buildings become surplus to operational requirements.

In the first instance, the service that occupies the land and/or building in question would move to declare it surplus, which would be the case for the Lewis Girls School site in this instance.. From this point, the Council's Property Services Team would then engage with services internally against set criteria to see if other service areas would wish to take up ownership or occupation of the land or building. Thereafter, should no such interest be forthcoming Property Services would explore opportunities for the site to be marketed externally with specific consideration included for Welsh, Health or Community provision.



A Resilient Wales

A nation which maintains and enhances a biodiverse natural environment healthy functioning ecosystems that support social, economic and ecological resilience and the capacity to adapt to change (for climate change)

On the 4th of June 2019, the Council declared a climate emergency a Notice of Motion, with full support from all political parties. As a result, Caerphilly County Borough Council has committed to being net carbon neutral by 2030.

In line with the latest investment objectives and Welsh Government targets, it remains our commitment that any school reorganisation proposals take into consideration the impact on achieving Net Zero Carbon and as part of the formation of this recommendation, consideration has been given to the impact on operational carbon as well as sustainable build and transport principles.

A Healthier Wales

A society in which people's physical and mental well-being is maximised and in which choices and behaviours that benefit future health are understood

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.

The principal benefits of the scheme are as follows:

- ✓ Moving away from single sex toward co-education bringing Caerphilly in line with the rest of Wales
- ✓ Families can be brought together and re-united and avoid the division that some experience when, due to the current arrangement of schools, children from the same family are split apart at age 11
- ✓ Greater consistency in what we provide to young people
- ✓ Minimising impact on exam pupils and enabling staff and pupils to be integrated over an appropriate timeframe
- ✓ Reducing surplus places at Lewis School Pengam
- ✓ Better value for money and a more sustainable model of delivery
- ✓ Reducing the number of maintained buildings, with associated backlog maintenance

Existing Community Groups at Lewis Girls School will be encouraged to relocate to Lewis School Pengam or will be supported in finding alternative provision within the localised area, for example Ystrad Mynach Library. A data gathering exercise will be undertaken and any groups identified will be engaged with as part of this proposal.



This proposal relates to the school provision only and no impact on the adjacent leisure facilities is anticipated.

A More Equal Wales

A society that enables people to fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances (including their socio-economic background and circumstances)

The Council recognises that people have different needs, requirements and goals and we will work actively against all forms of discrimination by promoting good relations and mutual respect within and between our communities.

Impact assessments help us to show that the council has due regard in the exercise of its equality duty under the Equality Act 2010. They are a tool we use to ensure the policies, practices, projects and activities which shape our work are ensuring equal access to all our services.

Impact assessments look at whether changes to how we do things (like working practices or ways we deliver services) are likely to have a positive or negative impact on the people we serve and on those who deliver our services. They help us to plan to reduce or remove negative impact – for example by making reasonable changes to how a group receives a service (perhaps providing information in a different format or providing ramped access into a building etc.).

Our schools are accessible to pupils and the wider community regardless of any specific socio-economic disadvantage.

A Wales of Cohesive Communities

Attractive, viable, safe and well-connected communities

The proposal seeks to close Lewis Girls school and make a regulated alteration to Lewis Pengam to change to from single sex to co-education with effect from September 2025. The Lewis Girls School site would be retained as a provision to Lewis School Pengam to manage the transition over a number of years. (minimising impact on exam pupils and enabling staff and pupils to be integrated over an appropriate timeframe).

Lewis Girls School and Lewis School Pengam are currently operating over two separate sites within 3 miles distance of each other within the Ystrad Mynach belt. It is anticipated that the likely effect of different travelling arrangements as a result of the proposal will be minimal, although it is acknowledged that some pupils may find themselves living closer to the new school site and conversely others finding themselves further away.

Both schools share a catchment area and have the same feeder schools at primary level, these being Coedybrain Primary, Derwendeg Primary, Glyngaer Primary,



Greenhill Primary, Hengoed Primary, Llancaeath Junior Junior School, Llanfabon Infant School, Maesycwmmmer Primary, Tiryberth Primary, Ystrad Mynach Primary

There are no proposed changes to the existing catchment or feeder arrangements.

A Wales of Vibrant Culture and Thriving Welsh Language

A society that promotes and protects culture, heritage and the Welsh language, and which encourages people to participate in the arts, and sports and recreation

The Welsh Language Profile analysis of the census data was completed by Menter Iaith and is published on the Caerphilly CBC website supporting the Welsh Language Strategy. In the catchment areas for the schools, there are 6 community areas that have a higher percentage of Welsh speakers than the average for Caerphilly borough. The average percentage of Welsh speakers in Caerphilly borough in 2011 was 11.2%. Ystrad Mynach, Pengam, Nelson, St Cattwg, Llanbradach and Maesycwmmmer all have percentages above this. Maesycwmmmer, Nelson, Pengam, and Gelligaer have all had an increase in the percentage of Welsh speakers between the 2001 and 2011 census data.

As set out in its Welsh in Education Strategic Plan where Caerphilly County Borough Council's commitment to the promotion of Welsh language and the provision of quality, attractive educational facilities is evident. The Council is committed to developing opportunities for provision to be delivered in the medium of Welsh where possible. There are various actions in the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2022-2032 that would be relevant to the proposal and the development in the Secondary provision including increasing the number of pupils continuing to develop their Welsh language skills and studying qualifications in Welsh, which will also need to develop the confidence and skills in our teaching workforce to deliver Welsh language lessons and qualifications. [Caerphilly - Welsh In Education Strategic Plan](#)

A Globally Responsible Wales

A nation which, when doing anything to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales, takes account of whether doing such a thing may make a positive contribution to global well-being

The principal benefits of the scheme are as follows:

- ✓ Moving away from single sex toward co-education bringing Caerphilly in line with the rest of Wales
- ✓ Families can be brought together and re-united and avoid the division that some experience when, due to the current arrangement of schools, children from the same family are split apart at age 11
- ✓ Greater consistency in what we provide to young people
- ✓ Minimising impact on exam pupils and enabling staff and pupils to be integrated over an appropriate timeframe
- ✓ Reducing surplus places at Lewis School Pengam
- ✓ Better value for money and a more sustainable model of delivery



- ✓ Reducing the number of maintained buildings, with associated backlog maintenance

The principal disbenefits of the scheme are as follows:

- Travel times may change for a minority of pupils dependent on their proximity to Lewis School Pengam, but this can also be conversely applicable for those who find themselves closer who were previously attending Lewis Girls School
 - Community usage and accessibility of alternative provision for groups using the existing Lewis Girls School site needs to be supported and encouraged to transition to the Lewis School Pengam site or other suitable alternatives
 - There will be a period of transition for the pupils and appropriate support for 'Settling in' will require consideration
 - The current Lewis Girls School site will need to be decommissioned and disposed of in line with appropriate guidelines once the phased transition period is complete
 - It is anticipated there will be minimal impact on other schools through a managed and phased capacity increase
-



7. Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 and Welsh Language Standards

(The Welsh Language Measure 2011 and the Welsh Language Standards require the Council to have 'due regard' for the positive or negative impact a proposal may have on opportunities to use the Welsh language and ensuring the Welsh language is treated no less favourably than the English language) Policy Making Standards - Good Practice Advice Document

7a. Links with Welsh Government's Cymraeg 2050 Strategy and CCBC's Five Year Welsh Language Strategy 2022-2027 and the Language Profile

- (i) Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts on the following and how?

As set out in its Welsh in Education Strategic Plan where Caerphilly County Borough Council's commitment to the promotion of Welsh language and the provision of quality, attractive educational facilities is evident. The Council is committed to developing opportunities for provision to be delivered in the medium of Welsh where possible. There are various actions in the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2022-2032 that would be relevant to the proposal and the development in the Secondary provision including increasing the number of pupils continuing to develop their Welsh language skills and studying qualifications in Welsh, which will also need to develop the confidence and skills in our teaching workforce to deliver Welsh language lessons and qualifications.

Engagement with Caerphilly's Welsh Language Forum will be undertaken as part of the implementation of this proposal to ensure that all the relevant organisations are involved in the promotion of the Welsh language.

- (ii) If there are negative impacts how will these be mitigated?

Not applicable

- (iii) What evidence has been used to support this view? *e.g. the WESP, TAN20, LDP, Pupil Level Annual School Census*

The Welsh Language Profile analysis of the census data was completed by Menter Iaith and is published on the Caerphilly CBC website supporting the Welsh Language Strategy. In the catchment areas for the schools, there are 6 community areas that have a higher percentage of Welsh speakers than the average for Caerphilly borough. The average percentage of Welsh speakers in Caerphilly borough in 2011 was 11.2%. Ystrad Mynach, Pengam, Nelson, St Cattwg, Llanbradach and Maesycwmmmer all have percentages above this. Maesycwmmmer, Nelson, Pengam, and Gelligaer have all had an increase in the percentage of Welsh speakers between the 2001 and 2011 census data.



7b. Compliance with the Welsh Language Standards. *Specifically Standards 88–93*

- (i) **Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts on the following and how?**

All documentation including the website relating to the proposal is produced in Welsh and English, further supporting use the Welsh language and treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language.

The Consultation period will ensure that key consultees are targeted as outlined in the CCBC Consultation and Engagement Framework; the process will provide opportunities to respond in the language of choice – Welsh or English. In addition, the views of children and young people affected by this proposal will be consulted upon through targeted information and feedback sessions and the production of child friendly versions of the documentation also available in either Welsh or English.

- (ii) **If there are negative impacts how will these be mitigated?**

Not applicable

- (iii) **What evidence has been used to support this view?** *e.g. the WESP, TAN20, LDP, Pupil Level Historical Consultation Processes involving Welsh and English*

7c. Opportunities to promote the Welsh language *e.g. status, use of Welsh language services, use of Welsh in everyday life in work / community*

- (i) **Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts on the following and how?**

As set out in its Welsh in Education Strategic Plan where Caerphilly County Borough Council's commitment to the promotion of Welsh language and the provision of quality, attractive educational facilities is evident. The Council is committed to developing opportunities for provision to be delivered in the medium of Welsh where possible. There are various actions in the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2022-2032 that would be relevant to the proposal and the development in the Secondary provision including increasing the number of pupils continuing to develop their Welsh language skills and studying qualifications in Welsh, which will also need to develop the confidence and skills in our teaching workforce to deliver Welsh language lessons and qualifications.

Consultation will be undertaken bilingually and targeted to specific people and groups because of their vested interest in the field.



All documentation published on the CCBC Sustainable Communities for Learning website relating to the proposal will be translated through the Council's Equalities and Welsh Language Team.

(ii) If there are negative impacts how will these be mitigated?

Not applicable

(iii) What evidence has been used to support this view? e.g. the WESP, TAN20, LDP, Pupil Level Annual School Census

Historical Consultation Processes involving Schools.
Initial Engagement with School Heads.

7d. Opportunities for persons to use the Welsh language e.g. staff, residents and visitors

(i) Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts on the following and how?

Consultation will be undertaken bilingually and targeted to specific people and groups because of their vested interest in the field.

All documentation published on the CCBC Sustainable Communities for Learning website relating to the proposal will be translated through the Council's Equalities and Welsh Language Team.

The staffing structure at Lewis School Pengam will change and it is anticipated that the staff at Lewis Girls School will be accommodated at Lewis School Pengam where possible and we will also support staff to be employed at other schools where there are vacancies. The Council fully understand that there will be a lot of anxiety but want to give assurance that all staff will be supported through the process.



(ii) If there are negative impacts how will these be mitigated?

Not applicable

(iii) What evidence has been used to support this view? e.g. the WESP, TAN20, LDP, Pupil Level Annual School Census

Best practice in supporting and promoting the Welsh Language across schools in Wales

Engagement with the Council's Policy Officer for Equalities and Welsh Language

7e. Treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language

(i) Does the proposal have any positive, negative or neutral impacts on the following and how?

Any meetings with the school to discuss provision of education through the child / family's preferred language and the right that they have to this under the Welsh Language Measure can be accommodated at present.

All documentation including the website relating to the proposal is produced in Welsh and English

It will be possible to send and receive all consultation and objection responses in Welsh and English ensuring that the Welsh language is treated no less favourably than the English language.

(ii) If there are negative impacts how will these be mitigated?

Not applicable

(iii) What evidence has been used to support this view? e.g. the WESP, TAN20, LDP, Pupil Level Annual School Census

Historical Engagement Activities undertaken through the School Organisation Code and the Council's Consultation and Engagement Strategy

7f. Having considered the impacts above, how has the proposal been developed so that there are positive effects, or increased positive effects on (a) opportunities for persons to use the Welsh language, and (b) treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language.

Need and demand

We are proposing to:

- Close Lewis Girls school and make a regulated alteration to Lewis Pengam to change from single sex to co-education with effect from September 2025.



The Lewis Girls School site would be retained as a provision to Lewis School Pengam to manage the transition over a number of years. (minimising impact on exam pupils and enabling staff and pupils to be integrated over an appropriate timeframe).

Both Secondary Schools provide their primary education through the medium of English.

The strengths in the two schools complement each other and there is effective collaboration in regard to post 16 provision and the sharing of professional learning. As part of this proposal, staff will have greater opportunity to extend their own professional learning and to share their expertise in a wider context. Both senior leadership teams are committed to maximising best practice and talent.

The Council is committed to developing opportunities for provision to be delivered in the medium of Welsh where possible. There are various actions in the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2022-2032 that would be relevant to the proposal and the development in the Secondary provision including increasing the number of pupils continuing to develop their Welsh language skills and studying qualifications in Welsh, which will also need to develop the confidence and skills in our teaching workforce to deliver Welsh language lessons and qualifications.

Consideration will also be given to setting targets in line with the Welsh Language Education: White Paper to enhance Welsh language provision in maintained schools that are not already designated Welsh-medium schools. Further discussions and support with both schools will be undertaken as the proposal progresses to investigate the options available to support this aspiration.

Overall, this proposal will enhance transition experiences, maximise resources and further develop expertise which will empower all involved to build upon the quality of current provision, creating a high quality co-educational experience for every secondary aged pupil in the Upper Rhymney Valley.

Location

Lewis Girls School and Lewis School Pengam are currently operating over two separate sites within 3 miles distance of each other within the Ystrad Mynach belt.

Both schools share a catchment area and have the same feeder schools at primary level, these being Coedybrain Primary, Derwendeg Primary, Glyngaer Primary, Greenhill Primary, Hengoed Primary, Llancaeath Junior Junior School, Llanfabon Infant School, Maesycwmmmer Primary, Tiryberth Primary, Ystrad Mynach Primary

There are no proposed changes to this arrangement.

Method and process



We are proposing to:

- Close Lewis Girls school and make a regulated alteration to Lewis Pengam to change from single sex to co-education with effect from September 2025.

The Lewis Girls School site would be retained as a provision to Lewis School Pengam to manage the transition over a number of years. (minimising impact on exam pupils and enabling staff and pupils to be integrated over an appropriate timeframe).

For this proposal, our consultation process must follow the Welsh Government Statutory guidance as set out in the School Organisation Code 2018.

We are obligated to advise the following of our proposals by letter or email:

| <i>Consultee List</i> | |
|--|---|
| Pupils and Pupil Councils* | Welsh Ministers |
| Parents, prospective parents, guardians and carers* | Assembly Members and Members of Parliament representing the area served * |
| Headteacher, Staff and Governing bodies* | Local CCBC Members |
| Directors of Education for Neighbouring Authorities | Local Town and Community Councils |
| Teaching and Support Staff Associations | Estyn |
| Parent Network | Welsh Education Forum |
| Diocesan Directors / Boards of Education | South East Wales Consortium (EAS) |
| Gwent and South Wales Police and Crime Commissioners | South East Wales Transport Alliance (SEWTA) |
| Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership | Mudiad Meithrin, Menter Iaith and voluntary nursery providers |

**of schools directly or likely to be affected by the proposal only*

As part of this proposal, the following documentation has been produced:

- A Consultation Document outlining the proposal (available in a number of formats)



- An Integrated Impact Assessment

Information is made available on the Council's website and all documentation is published in Welsh and English and available in other languages or formats on request.

8. Data and Information

(What data or other evidence has been used to inform the development of the proposal? Evidence may include the outcome of previous consultations, existing databases, pilot projects, review of customer complaints and compliments and or other service user feedback, national and regional data, academic publications and consultants' reports etc.)

Data/evidence *(Please provide link to report if appropriate)*

- **2021 Census Data**
[2011 Census - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://www.ons.gov.uk)
- **Welsh Language Use Survey 2019-2020**
[Social use of the Welsh language: July 2019 to March 2020 | GOV.WALES](https://gov.wales)
- **Position of the Welsh Language – Commissioner's Report**
<http://www.comisiynyddygydraeg.cymru/English/ReportsGuides/Publications/Pages/PublicationDetails.aspx?PublicationId=83ce0864-3b93-4f73-a52f-baf61b6eca20>
- **Annual Population Survey**
<https://www.gov.wales/welsh-language-data-annual-population-survey>
- **Welsh Language Commissioner's Assurance Reports**
[Assurance reports \(welshlanguagecommissioner.wales\)](https://welshlanguagecommissioner.wales)
- **National Survey for Wales**
[National Survey for Wales: culture and Welsh language | GOV.WALES](https://gov.wales)
- **Cymraeg 2050: Annual Reports**
[Cymraeg 2050: annual reports | GOV.WALES](https://gov.wales)
- **Technical Advice Note (TAN20)**
[TAN20: Planning and the Welsh Language \(gov.wales\)](https://gov.wales)
- **Health and Welsh Language Data**
[General practitioners Welsh language ability by local health board and year \(gov.wales\)](https://gov.wales)
- **Data relating to the Welsh Language and the economy**
[Welsh Language Task and Finish Cover English \(gov.wales\)](https://gov.wales)

Key relevant findings

- The number of people who could speak Welsh in the County Borough was 42,700 or 24.3%
- 19.9% of the population could read Welsh, 18.4% could write Welsh, and 27.2% could understand spoken Welsh



- The frequency of the number of people speaking Welsh in Caerphilly county borough on a daily basis was 10.2%
- Over the past five years the number of children transferring from Welsh medium early years settings has varied from 72.29% to 99.43%.
- Of the whole primary school population 17.22% attend Welsh medium education with approximately 97.75% of these transferring to Welsh medium secondary education.

Current Position (Schools):

Lewis Girls School

- English Medium
- Community Secondary school
- The site currently has a capacity for 1103 pupils
- The published admission number is 180
- There are currently 38.35% surplus places
- 83.86% of current pupils on roll are from within catchment.
- The main school building was originally constructed in 1959, however Lewis Girls Comprehensive School was formed in 1973 after the amalgamation with Lewis Girls' Grammar School.
- The school occupies a total site area of circa 7.7 Hectares (approx.) which accommodates 24 buildings of which 7 are demountable

Lewis School Pengam

- English Medium
- Community Secondary school
- The site currently has a capacity for 1140 pupils, however, through reconfiguration of the usage of rooms, would have capacity to accommodate pupils from both schools
- The current published admission number is 191
- There are currently 42.63% surplus places
- 84.22% of current pupils on roll are from within catchment.
- Originally constructed and opened in 2002, the school was funded through the Welsh Government's Private Funded Initiative (PFI) programme.
- The school occupies a total site area of circa 7.8 Hectares (approx.) which accommodates 2 buildings and outdoor areas.

Both schools share a catchment area and have the same feeder schools at primary level, these being Coedybrain Primary, Derwendeg Primary, Glyngaer Primary, Greenhill Primary, Hengoed Primary, Llancaeath Junior Junior School, Llanfabon Infant School, Maesycwmmmer Primary, Tiryberth Primary, Ystrad Mynach Primary



How has the data/evidence informed this proposal?

Caerphilly's Cabinet established a Board in 2019 to develop recommendations for change in relation to Post 16, Single Sex and Surplus Places across Caerphilly.

The Board consisted of a wide range of stakeholders including Head Teachers, College Representatives, Scrutiny Members, Governor Representatives, TU Representatives, EAS representatives and Local Education Authority Officers.

Through previous discussions in 2021, the Post 16, Single Sex and Surplus Places Board had reached an informal consensus that co-education would be the way forward in the Upper Rhymney Valley (URV).

Having gained Board consensus at that time, Local Education Authority (LEA) officers engaged directly with the four URV Secondary Head Teachers as educational experts to consider this position further.

The URV Head Teachers agreed the following wording to reflect their position on Single Sex provision as well as the potential benefit of moving toward co-education across the Lewis Schools:

"We explore ways in which families can be brought together and re-united and avoid the division that some experience when, due to the current arrangement of schools, children from the same family are split apart at age 11".

The Board acknowledged that Lewis School Pengam and Lewis Girls School are the last remaining local authority maintained single sex schools in Wales. Moving away from single sex toward co-education has been under consideration by the Local Authority and the Schools over many years.

Board Members also received information in relation to the levels of surplus places at the Lewis Schools with Lewis Girls School at circa 38% and Lewis School Pengam at circa 42%, as at January 2024. At its last LEA Inspection in 2012 Estyn concluded that the authority had not made enough progress in respect of the removal of surplus capacity from its secondary schools.

Were there any gaps identified in the evidence and data used to develop this proposal and how will these gaps be filled? *Details of further consultation can be included in Section 9.*

At this stage in the process, no gaps have been identified. However, this Integrated Impact Assessment will be reviewed to include any additional elements highlighted through the statutory consultation process.



The purpose of this further assessment is to take account of any further information or alternative options that has come forward through the consultation or otherwise.

9. Consultation

*(In some instances, there is a legal requirement to consult. In others, even where there is no legal obligation, there may be a legitimate expectation from people that a consultation will take place. Where it has been determined that consultation is required, **The Gunning Principles** must be adhered to. Consider the **Consultation and Engagement Framework**. Please note that this may need to be updated as the proposal develops and to strengthen the assessment.*

Briefly describe any recent or planned consultations paying particular attention to evidencing the Gunning Principles.

Who was consulted?

The Post 16, Single Sex and Surplus Places Board, at its meeting of February 6th 2024, resolved unanimously to support the proposal to formally consult stakeholders with a view to:

- (1) moving from Single Sex provision to co-education in the Upper Rhymney Valley
- (2) locating Lewis catchment pupils at the Lewis School Pengam site, while retaining the Lewis Girls School site to manage the transition over a number of years (minimising impact on exam pupils and enabling staff and pupils to be integrated over an appropriate timeframe).

The Council's Education and Social Services Scrutiny Committee then met to consider the report and the proposals on the 20th March 2024. The Committee noted the unanimous support from the Post 16, Single Sex and Surplus Places Board and then commented and scrutinised proposals ahead of their onward consideration at Cabinet.

Cabinet, at its meeting on the 3rd April, then agreed the recommendation to move to consultation.

Through [TeamCaerphilly - Better Together](#), the Council is committed to ensuring high quality, citizen focused services for the communities that comprise our county borough. In future-proofing public services, we recognise the need to ensure effective engagement which is central to our decision making - [Read more about our approach to Consultation and Engagement here](#)



For this proposal, our consultation process must follow the Welsh Government Statutory guidance as set out in the School Organisation Code 2018.

The formal consultation process begins on Monday 3rd June 2024

The consultation pack is available electronically on the Council website. Further information is available on the [Sustainable Communities for Learning webpage](#)

If you would like this information in any other format, for example large print, or help with interpretation in a different language, please contact us on 01443 864817 / 21stCenturySchools@caerphilly.gov.uk so that the necessary arrangements can be made to provide this service.

The closing date for responses to this consultation is midnight on 15th July 2024

Unfortunately, we will not be able to consider any responses received after this date.

When bringing forward any proposal, suitable arrangements are made to consult and involve pupils throughout the process and post occupancy. A child friendly version of the Consultation Document has been produced and any feedback from pupils and School Council's for those schools directly affected by the proposals will be included in the documentation forwarded to Cabinet for consideration once the consultation period has ended.

When they were consulted did the consultation take place at the formative stage and was adequate time given for consultees to consider and respond?

It is currently anticipated that the consultation process would be undertaken as per the following timeline based on approval at each stage of the process:

| Lewis Girls School and Lewis School Pengam Proposal | |
|---|---------------------------------|
| Consultation Opens | 3 rd June 2024 |
| Scrutiny (as consultee) | 4 th June 2024 |
| Consultation Ends | 15 th July 2024 |
| Scrutiny (to consider Consultation Report & endorse publication of Statutory Notice) | 3 rd September 2024 |
| Cabinet (to consider Consultation Report & agree publication of Statutory Notice) | 18 th September 2024 |
| Statutory Notice / Objection Period Opens | 26 th September 2024 |
| Statutory Notice / Objection Period End | 24 th October 2024 |
| Scrutiny (to consider Objection Report) | 26 th November 2024 |



Cabinet (to make final determination)

11th December 2024

The timelines have been identified to comply with the Welsh Government's Consultation guidance allowing for adequate time for consultees to consider and respond.

Was sufficient information provided to consultees to allow them to make an informed decision on the proposal?

Education Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet Members were provided with a report outlining the proposal and recommended way forward which is publically available:

Scrutiny Report – [Link to Document](#)

Cabinet Report – [Link to Document](#)

For this proposal, our consultation process must follow the Welsh Government Statutory guidance as set out in the School Organisation Code 2018.

The formal consultation process begins on Monday 3rd June 2024

What were the key findings?

To date:

- The Scrutiny Committee noted the unanimous support from the Post 16, Single Sex and Surplus Places Board (the Board) on the proposals set out within 5.7(1), 5.7(2) and 5.18(1) of the report, and commented on and scrutinised the content of the report and the stated proposals ahead of their consideration at Cabinet.
- Considered by the Education and Social Services Scrutiny Committee on Tuesday 20th March 2024.
 1. The unanimous support from the Post 16, Single Sex and Surplus Places Board (the Board) on the proposals set out in within 5.7(1), 5.7(2) and 5.18(1) of this report be noted.
 2. Proceed to consultation as outlined in the report be approved. (Unanimous)
- Initial engagement sessions have been held with the Head Teachers for both schools.

How have the consultation findings been taken into account?



Further analysis will be undertaken post consultation when the wider stakeholder cohort as prescribed in the Code, Estyn and Pupil Engagement activities have been undertaken.

The consultation process represents an opportunity for people to learn about the proposal, ask questions and make comments that will be recorded and summarised in a consultation report.

This Consultation report will be published on the Council's website and will be considered when Cabinet decides on the way forward.



10. Monitoring and Review

How will the implementation and the impact of the proposal be monitored, including implementation of any amendments?

The programme will be managed by a School Strategy Board comprising of representation from the Director of Corporate and Education Services, Head of Education Planning and Strategy, Head of Corporate Finance, Chief Education Officer, Cabinet Member for Education and Communities, Head of Property Services, Education Finance Manager, the Place Shaping and Sustainable Communities for Learning Service Manager and Place Shaping and Sustainable Communities for Learning Manager.

Key personnel have received Equality and Welsh Language Awareness and Integrated Impact Assessment Training. In addition, the Place Shaping and Sustainable Communities Team are in constant dialogue with the Senior Policy Officer for Equalities and Welsh Language to take guidance where required.

What are the practical arrangements for monitoring?

Our guiding principles during this process are outlined below.

- ✓ A need to explore ways in which families can be brought together and re-united
- ✓ Minimising disruption to learners undertaking examinations
- ✓ Maximising the opportunity for additional resource as the Lewis Girls School site remains open for some time
- ✓ Maximising the opportunities for the effective transition of pupils moving from year 6 to 7 to better support pupil wellbeing

The proposal seeks to employ the following approaches to mitigate disruption to pupils in order to support a smooth transition:

- A transition plan will be created that outlines how specialist facilities and resources from both schools will be integrated and optimised to meet the needs of the combined pupil population. This plan will consider factors such as geographical location, accessibility, and capacity and will ensure that children with additional learning needs (ALN) continue to have their needs met in line with the Additional Learning Needs and Tribunal Act and that there is appropriate additional learning provision (ALP) in place.
- Pupils will be kept informed about the process, including why it's happening, what changes to expect, and how it will benefit them in the long run.
- A transition program will be implemented to familiarise pupils with the new school environment, routines, and expectations. This could include orientation days, guided tours, and buddy systems pairing incoming pupils with existing ones.
- Pupils will be involved in decision-making processes where appropriate, to help them feel ownership and pride in their new school community.



- Staff members will be equipped to support pupils emotionally and academically during the transition through the provision of guidance from the LA on how to address concerns, provide reassurance, and facilitate adjustment.
- The use of consistent policies and procedures, such as rules for behavior, uniform codes, and disciplinary measures across the amalgamated schools will help to minimise confusion and maintain stability for pupils.
- Support services, such as mentoring and school-based counselling can be made available to pupils who may need extra assistance coping with the transition.
- We will seek to reserve important relationships between pupils and staff members by retaining key personnel from both schools whenever possible. Familiar faces can provide continuity and comfort during a period of change.
- We will keep a close eye on pupils' well-being and academic progress following the amalgamation by monitoring indicators such as attendance, behavior, and achievement levels to identify any emerging issues that need to be addressed.
- We will establish channels for pupils to voice their concerns, suggestions, and feedback about the process and will actively listen to their input and incorporate it into decision-making when appropriate and feasible to do so.

How will the results of the monitoring be used to develop future proposals?

Lewis Girls School and Lewis School Pengam are the only remaining schools in Wales operating on a Single Sex educational basis.

The intention is that the merging of schools will bring a range of educational benefits to all learners, regardless of pupils' individual starting points in year seven. This will positively impact on the progress of learners, provision and, as a result, improvements in standards across all year groups.

Examples of how this will be achieved includes:

- Greater opportunities for collaboration within and across subject departments, sharing expertise, providing support for inexperienced teachers etc.
- Increased opportunities to widen the curriculum offer to all learners. This could include increasing the volume of vocational subjects, or providing more specialist subjects such as computer science qualifications.
- Improved ability to provide quality teaching in subjects where recruitment can be a challenge; e.g. Welsh, physics
- Fewer non-specialists teaching non-core subjects.
- Shared development of 'Curriculum for Wales' building on collaborative work across the cluster.
- Improved assessment arrangements through a consistent approach to feedback and tracking of progress of learners.
- Greater opportunities for professional learning within school. This would include opportunities to mentor or learn alongside peers, engage in practice-



based research relevant to the local setting, and undertake whole school INSET training to address school priorities

- Shared approaches to self-evaluation and strategic planning, sharing best practice across departments. This would increase the capacity of senior and middle leaders to effectively manage and support teams.
- Improved equity in the quality of resources across curriculum departments. This would also include a more effective sustainability plan for digital resources.

When is the proposal due to be reviewed?

It is currently anticipated that the internal decision making process would be undertaken as per the following timeline based on approval at each stage of the process:

| Lewis Girls School and Lewis School Pengam Proposal | |
|---|---------------------------------|
| Consultation Opens | 3 rd June 2024 |
| Scrutiny (as consultee) | 4 th June 2024 |
| Consultation Ends | 15 th July 2024 |
| Scrutiny (to consider Consultation Report & endorse publication of Statutory Notice) | 3 rd September 2024 |
| Cabinet (to consider Consultation Report & agree publication of Statutory Notice) | 18 th September 2024 |
| Statutory Notice / Objection Period Opens | 26 th September 2024 |
| Statutory Notice / Objection Period End | 24 th October 2024 |
| Scrutiny (to consider Objection Report) | 26 th November 2024 |
| Cabinet (to make final determination) | 11 th December 2024 |

This Integrated Impact Assessment will be updated at the end of the Consultation / Objection Period stage to reflect any additional information gained or any options that may be a viable alternative to the preferred option being proposed.

Who is responsible for ensuring this happens?

The Programme Board provides the overall direction, management and control for the Programme, being accountable for the success of the Programme.

Scrutiny Members and Cabinet Members will be asked to review the proposal and endorse / make the final determination as to whether to implement the proposal

If approved, it will be the responsibility of the Author(s) of this report (or nominated officer within their section) to ensure the Integrated Impact Assessment and proposal is reviewed and any mitigating actions followed up on and actioned.

11. Recommendation and Reasoning

- Implement proposal taking account of the mitigating actions outlined

Have you contacted relevant officers for advice and guidance?

- Yes

12. Reason(s) for Recommendations

(Provide below a summary of the Integrated Impact Assessment. This summary should be included in the "Summary of Integrated Impact Assessment" section of the Corporate Report Template. The Integrated Impact Assessment should be published alongside the Report proposal).

The Council recognises that people have different needs, requirements and goals and we will work actively against all forms of discrimination by promoting good relations and mutual respect within and between our communities.

Impact assessments help us to show that the council has due regard in the exercise of its equality duty under the Equality Act 2010. They are a tool we use to ensure the policies, practices, projects and activities which shape our work are ensuring equal access to all our services.

It is the recommendation of this Integrated Impact Assessment and in line with the processes outlined in the School Organisation Code 2018 that Members endorse/approve the proposal to:

- Close Lewis Girls school and make a regulated alteration to Lewis Pengam to change from single sex to co-education with effect from September 2025.

The Lewis Girls School site would be retained as a provision to Lewis School Pengam to manage the transition over a number of years. (minimising impact on exam pupils and enabling staff and pupils to be integrated over an appropriate timeframe).

The proposed pupil transition will be phased as follows:

September 2025 pupils would attend settings as follows

Year 7 - all pupils (Girls and Boys) Lewis Girls School site
Year 8 - all pupils (Girls and Boys) Lewis Girls School site
Year 9 - all pupils (Girls and Boys) Lewis School Pengam site
Year 10 - all pupils (Girls and Boys) Lewis School Pengam site



Year 11 - retain single sex, pupils to remain either at Lewis Girls School or Lewis School Pengam

Year 12 - As now, pupils to attend Upper Rhymney Valley consortia lessons where they are offered

Year 13 - As now, pupils to attend Upper Rhymney Valley consortia lessons where they are offered

September 2026 pupils would attend settings as follows

Year 7 - all pupils (Girls and Boys) Lewis Girls School site

Year 8 - all pupils (Girls and Boys) Lewis Girls School site

Year 9 - all pupils (Girls and Boys) Lewis School Pengam site

Year 10 - all pupils (Girls and Boys) Lewis School Pengam site

Year 11 - all pupils (Girls and Boys) Lewis School Pengam site

Year 12 - As now, pupils to attend Upper Rhymney Valley consortia lessons where they are offered

Year 13 - As now, pupils to attend Upper Rhymney Valley consortia lessons where they are offered

September 2027 pupils would attend settings as follows

All pupils (Girls and Boys) 7-13 Lewis School Pengam site

This phased approach is intended to minimise disruption and any potentially negative impact on exam pupils, whilst enabling staff and pupils to be prepared for integration over an appropriate timeframe.



13. Version Control

(The IIA should be used in the early stages of the proposal development process. The IIA can be strengthened as time progresses to help shape the proposal. The Version Control section will act as an audit trail to evidence how the IIA has been developed over time) (Add or delete versions as applicable)

➤ Version 1

Author:- Andrea West / Lisa Thomas

Brief description of the amendments/update:-

This Integrated Impact Assessment has been undertaken to ensure compliance with the socio-economic duty set out in section 1 of the Equality Act 2010. Consideration of the impact on Welsh Language provision has undertaken and the Council's Senior Policy Officer for Equalities and Welsh Language has informed the process through constant dialogue to date.

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Integrated Impact Assessment Author(s)

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Date:- April 2024

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Job Title:- Place Shaping and Sustainable Communities for Learning Service Manager

Date:- April 2024

Head of Service Approval

Name:- Sue Richards

Job Title:- Head of Education Planning and Strategy / Head of Transformation

Signature:- *S. Richards*

Date:- April 2024