

To the parents, carers and guardians of pupils attending Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Ogwr; headteacher, staff and governing body of Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Ogwr, prescribed consultees

Uned Cymorth Cyfarwyddiaeth Addysg a Chymorth i Deuluoedd (UCCACD)
Education and Family Support Directorate – Directorate Support Unit (EDSU)
Deialu uniongyrchol / Direct line: (01656) 643643

Ein cyf / Our ref: Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Ogwr
Eich cyf / Your ref: Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Ogwr

Dyddiad / Date: 19 October 2022

Dear consultee

Proposal to make a regulated alteration to enlarge Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Ogwr to a 2.5 form-entry school, with a 90-place full-time-equivalent nursery plus an 8-place observation and assessment class on land off Ffordd Cadfan, Bridgend, with effect from the beginning of autumn term 2025

In line with the requirements of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and the School Organisation Code 2018 (the Code), a consultation exercise with prescribed consultees and other interested parties was undertaken from 7 February to 21 March 2022. The aim of the consultation was to inform consultees about the above proposal and solicit views.

On 14 June 2022, the outcome of the consultation was reported to Cabinet and a Consultation Report was subsequently published on the Council's website. The report provided an overview of feedback received during the consultation period and outlined the local authority's response to the issues raised.

Also on 14 June, having conscientiously considered the outcome of the consultation process, Cabinet gave approval to publish a statutory notice in respect of the proposal. The statutory notice was published on 30 June 2022 for 28 days and consultees were advised of its availability.

The Code 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 or by email and sent to the proposer before the end of 28 days, beginning with the day on which the notice was published ("the objection period"). The statutory notice closed on 27 July 2022. One piece of correspondence was received during this period which sought clarification of the proximity of the existing site to the proposed new site at Ffordd Cadfan and the active and learner travel routes. No objections were received in respect of the proposal.

On 18 October 2022, the outcome of the statutory notice was reported to Cabinet who determined to approve the proposal as published.

Hard copies and alternative formats of the cabinet report are available on request from:

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The proposal will result in Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Ogwr transferring to a new school building on land off Ffordd Cadfan, Bridgend. The new building will be designed for 525 pupils aged 4 to 11 years of age, with a 90-place full-time equivalent nursery, plus an 8-place observation and assessment class. The new school will have a Published Admission Number of 75, thereby creating additional opportunities for more pupils to access a Welsh-medium education. The proposal will come into effect at the beginning of autumn term 2025.

In determining the proposal, Cabinet were satisfied that the proposal will:

- enable the Council to comply with the legislative requirements in meeting its duty to secure efficient education in the area;
- increase the number of Welsh-medium places in order to support Welsh Government's Cymraeg 2050 strategy and the local authority's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP);
- provide a new school building which will support the delivery of the National Curriculum and align with Welsh Government's Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme;
- address overcrowding and building condition issues; and
- provide innovative and creative learning environments which are adaptable to change and will support the pupils to reach their full potential.

The reasons for the decision in respect of the factors outlined in the Code are as follows:

Quality and standards in education

It is Estyn's view that the proposal is likely to, at least, maintain the standard of education provision in the area.

Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Ogwr will benefit from a new school building which is specifically designed and built for 21st century teaching and learning. This should greatly improve the ability of the school to deliver the full curriculum at the foundation phase and at Key Stage 2, and positively impact on wellbeing and attitudes to learning.

The physical environment will positively impact on pupil wellbeing, care support and guidance by providing areas suitable for small group teaching. External spaces will be designed to enhance teaching and learning opportunities.

Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Ogwr's distributed model of leadership is well embedded in the school's structure. Leaders have an excellent understanding of the challenges in their own area and the school in general. Leaders, staff and governors have a shared vision and a clear strategy that is improving outcomes for learners. There is a clear emphasis on raising standards and the school has high expectations for the achievement of its pupils. It is considered that the ethos and values of Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Ogwr would continue in the replacement school.

Although school organisation proposals can cause some disruption and uncertainty, experience shows that this can be kept to a minimum by working closely with residents, the contractor, the headteacher, governing body and staff. The transition to the new building will be worked through in collaboration with the school.

The new sustainable, innovative school building and site will provide greater opportunities for linking the project (that is, the design development and construction) with the National Curriculum. It will also provide staff, pupils, parents and the wider community with an opportunity to positively engage in the development process and ensure that it meets the future needs of the school and the community it will serve.

Need for places and the impact in accessibility of schools

Currently the school has 378 Welsh-medium places for pupils aged 4 to 11 years of age, this will increase to 525 places. Early years provision will be enhanced with accommodation provided for 90 full-time-equivalent nursery places (currently there are 55 full-time-equivalent places). In addition, the new school building will have space to accommodate an 8-place observation and assessment class.

The school has been extended since its original build and includes two temporary mobile classrooms to the rear of the school. The current pupil admission number (PAN) is 54, this would increase to 75 at the proposed new school. Certain classrooms are under the recommended m² for classes of 30, which has resulted in some areas being overcrowded.

The site of the new school is located within the same geographical area as the existing Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Ogwr site, on land off Ffordd Cadfan, Bridgend. Pupils will be provided with free school transport in accordance with Bridgend County Borough Council's current Home-to-School/College Transport Policy. Free school transport is currently provided in the county borough for walking distances greater than 1.5 miles by available walking routes for nursery-aged pupils and for walking distances greater than 2 miles by available walking routes for primary pupils.

The existing school site and replacement school site are 0.2 miles apart. This is within both the 2 mile and 1.5-mile threshold for school transport. Therefore, it is anticipated those currently living directly surrounding the schools could still walk to school.

The Home-to-School/College Transport Policy (which details how it effects part-time nursery pupils) is available to view on the Council website:

<https://www.bridgend.gov.uk/media/5632/home-to-school-or-college-transport-policy-v2.pdf>

Opportunities will be created to link active travel routes with the wider area.

The local authority is committed to taking forward plans to strategically grow the Welsh language and with effective strategic planning and significant investment, aims to significantly

contribute to achieving Welsh Government's 'Cymraeg 2050' vision of one million Welsh speakers across Wales. In order to contribute to this there will be opportunity for Welsh language groups to meet or receive training at the school in the evenings and offer courses in the medium of Welsh.

The local authority's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) can be viewed via the following link:

Welsh Version:

<https://www.bridgend.gov.uk/cy/fy-nghyngor/cydraddoldeb-ac-ymgysylltu/y-gymraeg/>

English Version:

<https://www.bridgend.gov.uk/my-council/equalities-and-engagement/welsh-language>

As a result of the replacement school, additional Welsh-medium primary places will be available. This will positively contribute to the local authority's WESP and Welsh Government's Cymraeg 2050 agenda.

The school building and external spaces will be suitably designed to ensure compliance with the Equalities Act 2010.

Resourcing of education and other financial implications

The provision of additional Welsh-medium places for Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Ogwr is part of Council's wider strategy to increase Welsh language provision, as detailed in the WESP.

It is not expected that the new school will have a significant impact on any other school in terms of reducing pupil numbers. It is expected that the school will draw pupils from a much wider catchment area and is unlikely to compete for pupils in nearby schools. Therefore, the number of pupils who may move from English-medium schools to this new school is likely to be very small.

Funding is provided through the school funding formula which allocates the majority of funding for schools based on pupil numbers. Revenue implications, including additional transport costs due to the enlargement of the school will not be known until the scheme is developed further. The staffing structure that would align to the additional school population, which is likely to increase over a period. The governing body would be responsible for the staffing structure which would be determined primarily by the educational needs of the school and the budget available.

This scheme results in a significant capital investment in Welsh-medium education. The estimated total project cost is currently £15.1m. This will be part-funded by Welsh Government under Band B of the Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme at a 65% intervention rate and the remainder of the capital funding would be contributed by the Council. The cost of the scheme will continue to be reviewed regularly throughout the course of the project and any changes will be reported back to Cabinet and Council as appropriate.

Any capital receipts for the old site are not ringfenced for the new site, but are to be made available to fund future capital schemes (as yet undetermined) for the Council.

Other general factors

An initial Equality Impact Assessment screening has identified that there would be no negative impact on those with one or more of the protected characteristics, on socio-economic disadvantage or the use of the Welsh language. Positive impacts have been identified, including disability and gender.

As Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Ogwr will be constructed on the Ffordd Cadfan site, which is located in the same geographical area as the existing school site, a negative impact on the community is not anticipated. Pupils would be attending a new 21st century school which will be designed with community use in mind. This could benefit families, pupils and local clubs. A positive impact is anticipated as a result of the provision of modern, accessible facilities.

A Welsh Impact Assessment has been undertaken and concluded that there would be a positive impact on the Welsh language provision as more pupil places would be available for learners seeking a Welsh-medium education.

Nursery classes

The nursery provision at the school will increase from 55 full-time-equivalent places to 90 full-time-equivalent places. This will allow the school to offer full-time and part-time places. The Childcare Sufficiency Assessments highlights this area as requiring Welsh-medium early years childcare provision. The increased nursery provision will help meet the demands of families requiring this.

Additional learning needs provision

There would be a positive impact on pupils with additional learning needs, as it will provide additional places required. A dedicated 8-place class would be provided for pupils who require a period of observation and assessment in order to meet their individual needs. As a result, pupils would be able to receive their education through their chosen language as near to their home as is possible and there would be more equity of provision.

Transport would be provided as in line with transport policy for Welsh-medium pupils and those who attend a learning resource centre (LRC).

The Cabinet decision of 18 October 2022 is subject to the call-in procedures as set out in Part 4 Rules of Procedure in the Council's Constitution which allows decisions taken by Cabinet but yet to be implemented to be reviewed. Should a valid call-in notice from an Overview and Scrutiny Committee be received, all stakeholders would be informed.

Yours sincerely



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Bridgend County Borough Council