

## Appendix 11

### Summary of the responses received and appraisal of views expressed

1. The points of view received as part of the consultation are set out in *italics* below and have been grouped according to the points raised where appropriate.
2. The Council's response to each point can be seen underneath, under the heading "Appraisal of views expressed."
3. Formal responses were received from:
  - Joint response from County Councillors for Gabalfa Ward, Cllrs Rhys Taylor and Ashley Wood
  - County Councillor for Cathays Ward, Cllr Chris Weaver
  - Estyn
  - Julie Morgan, Member of the Senedd for North Cardiff
  - National Education Union (NEU)
  - The Diocese of Llandaff
  - Allensbank Primary School Governing Body
  - Allensbank Primary School Headteacher
  - Allensbank Primary School NEU Union Members
  - Gladstone Primary School Governing Body
  - Gladstone Primary School Headteacher
  - Gladstone Primary School Staff
  - St Monica's Church in Wales Primary School Finance, Premises and Health & Safety Committee of the Governing Body
  - St Monica's Church in Wales Primary School Standards Committee of the Governing Body
  - St Monica's Church in Wales Primary School Vision and Values Committee of the Governing Body
  - St Monica's Church in Wales Primary School Headteacher
  - Ysgol Mynydd Bychan Governing Body and Members of Staff
  - RhAG (Parents for Welsh Education)

### Local Member response - Gabalfa

4. Cllrs Rhys Taylor and Ashley Wood submitted a response which included the following points: (a copy of the full response can be seen at Appendix 10)
  - *We welcome the commitment to expand the provision of Welsh medium education in the community to both meet unmet demand and ensure that all families and children can access a Welsh medium education should they choose.*
  - *We also recognise the urgent need to address the number of surplus places in English medium primary schools and the impact that has on school budgets, and the resources available to support teaching and learning. We recognise these funding pressures are both due to the school funding formula, and ongoing pressures on public sector finances. We strongly*

*believe that this process of re-balancing places must be done in a sustainable way that future-proofs school places and enhances the provision that schools provide to their pupils.*

- *Whilst we acknowledge the outcome of the 2019 consultation and the feedback and solutions brought forward by the community, we remain disappointed that the council has opted to only use a statutory consultation process, rather than informally engaging with schools and their communities at an earlier stage to identify solutions. This has caused significant anxieties among parents at local schools and has again left many, particularly within the Allensbank community, feeling that their school is not valued.*

### **Comments on the Options**

- *We do not support the formal closure of any school. The schools proposed for closure are established, respected schools that provide a distinctive education for their pupils, particularly, from our knowledge, in the case of Allensbank Primary School.*
- *Our preference would be to explore federation of schools, allowing for the individual ethos and approaches to teaching and learning to be retained and shared, whilst still re-allocating and re-balancing school places in the English-medium sector.*
- *In respect to Ysgol Mynydd Bychan, we do share concerns about the budgetary impact of transferring to a significantly larger building. Whilst we recognise data in relation to oversubscription in recent years and data in relation to pupil enrolment in comparison to their catchment area (Table 10) suggests an immediate increase in pupils on roll, there will be a period of growth for the school in reaching 2FE. This will have staffing and therefore resource implications in what is already a challenging financial environment for schools. It is essential that the council actively supports Ysgol Mynydd Bychan to increase the numbers on roll to minimise, insofar as possible, the resource implications of the relocation of the school, as part of its Welsh in Education Strategic Plan.*
- *The consultation document does not outline any capital investment the council proposes to make in the fabric of the affected school buildings. This poses questions particularly in respect of the current Allensbank Primary School building and the constraints of the building as a Grade 2 listed building. More reassurance is needed about the adaptations that would be possible, but also ensuring that enhancements are made to all assets so no school inherits premises that will incur ongoing significant maintenance costs. It is also essential that construction works are completed as quickly as possible as to minimise disruption for all pupils, but particularly those at Allensbank and Gladstone who have faced prolonged maintenance works over recent years.*

- *We support the intention of increasing nursery places and providing continuity for pupils in both Welsh medium and English medium settings as part of the re-balancing of school places in the area.*
- *We share the frustration felt within the community that the council has ruled out, or failed to fully explore, the option of new-build accommodation in creating a sustainable, flexible solution for future growth. We are also disappointed that no capital investment has been indicated as part of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century schools programme to deliver excellence in our school buildings.*
- *Some residents have advocated for the re-location of Mynydd Bychan on the Gladstone site and the re-location of Gladstone Primary School to the Allensbank site. They feel this would allow substantial growth for Mynydd Bychan without the same resource implications as transferring to the Allensbank site. We do however recognise that this would limit the future growth of Welsh medium education, if the current configuration of the current Gladstone building were to be maintained. It is frustrating however that the reasons for this option being discounted are not outlined in the consultation document.*
- *The consultation focusses on built assets but does not appear to engage with any urgency the wider question and role of school catchments in re-balancing places prior to the re-allocation of places.*
- *Page 80 of the consultation document suggests a phased expansion, and we would welcome clarity that means phased expansion of Ysgol Mynydd Bychan as the sole user of the current Allensbank School site, and not that schools will be split across sites as posed in the 2021 consultation. As with the 2019 consultation, we do not feel that operating schools over multiple sites is beneficial for any school.*

### **Appraisal of views expressed**

5. The Council welcomes the support of Local Members for the expansion of Welsh-medium provision and the acknowledgement of the need to address the number of surplus places in English medium primary schools and the impact that has on school budgets, and the resources available to support teaching and learning.
6. The Council consulted in 2021 on proposals to provide an appropriate balance of Welsh-medium and English-medium primary school places to serve Cathays and parts of Gabalfa, Heath, Llandaff North and Plasnewydd which were not taken forward.
7. The Council also sought views at the time on long term changes to school provision to provide an appropriate balance of Welsh-medium and English-medium school places to serve the area with any solution seeking to:
  - Reduce English-medium surplus places to serve the combined catchment areas of Allensbank, Albany and Gladstone

- Expand Welsh-medium provision serving the existing catchment area of Ysgol Mynydd Bychan to 2 Forms of entry
  - Provide greater certainty and stability of leadership, management, teaching and support staff, to support continued focus on teaching standards and improved outcomes for pupils
  - Enable investment in school buildings to improve the learning environment.
8. The recent proposals address the issues that informed the earlier proposals and take account of the issues raised during this engagement process.
  9. The Council values all schools noting that one of the positive aspects of the consultation being the expressions of support from the parents for the schools included in the proposed changes and their appreciation of the standard and quality of education and support provided by each school.
  10. The Council is committed to supporting Cardiff's most vulnerable learners, including children in care, those educated other than at school and children from the most deprived communities and that every child receives a great education through their chosen language medium.
  11. Ensuring funding for education is targeted towards learning experiences and opportunities alongside support for families is critical. The Council is investing in schools and must also support each school to continue to improve education for all of their learners.
  12. To achieve this, the Council must ensure that there is an appropriate balance in the number and different types of school places serving each area, with a sustainable level of surplus places. Each school provision offered must meet the diverse needs of the communities they serve. The Council must maximise the potential of its teaching and learning staff to ensure best use of their talent, thereby securing the greatest impact on learner opportunities and outcomes for all.
  13. Intake to Reception classes in primary schools city-wide peaked at approximately 4,370 pupils in 2015/16 and 2016/17. This corresponds with peak birth rates recorded five years earlier. At the time of the peak intakes, Cardiff retained approximately 8% surplus places.
  14. Since 2017/18, there has been a sustained fall in the birth rate and changes to migration patterns in the city. This means that city-wide intakes to primary education are projected to reduce significantly until at least September 2025. However, changes to populations are not the same in all parts of the city.
  15. As parents are able to state a preference for schools, some schools would continue to have high intakes. For other schools the impact on pupil numbers will be far greater than the city-wide average.

16. Schools receive most of their funding based on the number of pupils on roll at the school. Falling pupil numbers will greatly impact on some schools' budgets. This affects the teaching and learning opportunities those schools can offer.
17. The number of primary school places available in existing communities in Cardiff is sufficient to accommodate all pupils, but the level of surplus is projected to increase.
18. Proposals to better balance capacities of schools with the forecast take up of places would therefore provide a more effective use of the schools' financial resources. This would allow schools to allocate a greater proportion of their budget to teaching and learning.
19. As set out in the consultation document there are significant numbers of surplus places overall in the English medium schools which are forecast to continue over the next few years.
20. The existing number of English-medium primary school places at Albany, Allensbank and Gladstone Primary Schools is sufficient to accommodate the projected demand for places at schools. It also allows for a high margin of surplus to respond to any potential fluctuation or sustained increase in demand, and the high levels of pupil mobility in the area.
21. The options identified would allow for:
  - a consolidation of English-medium community primary school provision at an equivalent level, or a marginal reduction to the existing arrangements.
  - an expansion of Ysgol Mynydd Bychan.
  - no change in the number of places for primary school pupils at St Monica's Church in Wales Primary School.
22. There is insufficient space on the existing Ysgol Mynydd Bychan site to allow for expansion. There is no suitable vacant site available in the area local to the school that could accommodate an enlarged Ysgol Mynydd Bychan.
23. There is also sufficient capacity within existing schools serving the area to enable the reorganisation of existing provision. Reorganisation of provision would present an appropriate means of balancing the availability and take up of both English-medium and Welsh-medium provision in the area. It would also allow for a more effective and efficient use of resources. This would retain flexibility in the school estate to respond to any future population changes affecting the area.
24. The options presented support a more effective and efficient use of resources.
25. The proposals also aim to increase school effectiveness and narrow inequalities in achievement between advantaged and disadvantaged areas, groups, and individuals.

26. Any proposals to increase the take up of places in Welsh-medium provision, whilst intakes to schools are reducing, would mean that the take up of places in English-medium schools would further reduce.
27. Option 1 would provide a more economically sustainable patterns of school provision over the long term and support schools to be financially sustainable in an improved patters of provision through amalgamation. This option would allow for schools to allocate a greater proportion of budget to teaching and learning, thereby retaining and increasing opportunities for learners, provide an improved balance between the availability and take up of both English-medium and Welsh-medium primary school places and maintain the current number of English-medium school places serving the area.
28. When compared with smaller schools, two form entry schools would support teaching and learning by allowing for:
  - greater flexibility and opportunity for pupils due to an extended, more enhanced and secure financial resource base
  - a greater degree of stability at all levels of leadership including maintaining a full and stable complement of school governors
  - the ability to employ more teaching and support staff would allow the two form entry school to cover a wider range of curriculum expertise
  - a greater number of teachers to share workload and expertise
  - greater opportunities to professionally develop staff e.g., newly qualified teachers who can observe their parallel teacher
  - opportunities for staff to teach to their strengths ensuring learners have the best education experience possible
  - a greater number of teachers to lead on Areas of Learning, plus Religious Education, Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) and Digital Competency
  - greater opportunities to offer a broader range of extra-curricular activities
  - greater opportunities for distributed leadership
29. The school budget formula saving from amalgamating Allensbank Primary School and Gladstone Primary School by closing each school and creating a single two form entry primary school as set out in Option 1 would be approximately £98,000 per year. This is based on the removal of one of the lump sum allowances provided to schools city-wide.
30. Amalgamating Allensbank and Gladstone and combining their budget, would therefore allow for a redistribution of financial resources to schools city-wide through the reduction in the number of lump sum allocations to individual schools.
31. Should Option 1 be progressed, it is proposed that the equivalent sum would be ringfenced for the newly established two form entry English-medium for three years. This would support the school to further develop provision and/or invest in resources to benefit its pupils. Beyond this period, this sum would be available for redistribution to primary schools city-wide.

32. Option 2 and Option 3 would provide the opportunities for the schools to work in partnership to maximise the opportunities for all pupils either through collaboration or federation.
33. Any formal collaboration or federation would be led by the Governing Bodies and supported by the Council.
34. If progressed, formal collaboration or federation could:
  - support raising standards by sharing curriculum delivery, school leadership and joint action to tackle key issues such as inclusion
  - allow for the sharing of good practice, preparation materials and resources
  - enhance opportunities for pupil activities leading to improvements to the quality of learning for staff and pupils
  - enhance opportunities for staff professional development
  - increase opportunities for middle management development
  - provide School Council and pupil development opportunities
  - improved social opportunities for pupils
  - allow for cross phase arrangements
  - allow for streamlining of policies and structures
  - support school improvement by enabling schools to draw on the resources of other schools to tackle problems, share expertise, raise expectations and address the needs of particular groups of pupils.
  - provide opportunities to exploit economies of scale and sharing services across the schools
  - allow for the possible easier recruitment of governors with fewer governor vacancies.
  - allow for sharing of expertise and resources
  - facilitate the organisation of professional development
  - ease arrangement of joint pupil activities
35. However, compared to Option 1, the number of benefits realised for pupils in English-medium community education through Option 2 or Option 3 could be reduced as there would be a less efficient use of the schools' budgets. There would be no lump-sum funding ringfenced to provide support for a period. A greater proportion of the two schools' budgets would be required for leadership and management than in a single two form entry school.
36. There is a risk that an increase in the number of pupils who wish to take up Welsh-medium places does not happen.
37. 'Cymraeg 2050: A million Welsh speakers' is the Welsh Government's strategy for the increasing the use of the Welsh language. It sets out the long-term approach to reaching a target of a million Welsh speakers by 2050.
38. All Local Authorities in Wales are required to publish a Welsh in Education Strategic Plan. Within their plan, they must set a ten-year target for the expected increase in Year 1 children who are taught in Welsh. The target set for Cardiff by

the Welsh Government is between 25% and 29% of Year 1 learners are educated in Welsh by 2031. At present, this figure is around 18%.

39. Cardiff is committed to achieving a scale of growth in line with the 25 – 29% target as provided by the Welsh Government; however, the local target must balance ambition with an understanding of the prevailing trends, which includes falling birth rates and heightened uncertainty relating to school admission choices due to the pandemic.
40. The number of places currently available through the medium of Welsh would not be sufficient to support an increase in take up that would meet the targets set out by the Welsh Government.
41. Cardiff's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) sets out a series of ambitious commitments to build on the progress achieved to date. These will ensure that every child in the city can receive an education in the language of Welsh, the number receiving their education in Welsh-medium schools will increase, and through the significant use of Welsh in English-medium education all will have the opportunity to become confident in speaking Welsh.
42. The approved WESP commits to ensuring city wide capacity in the primary Welsh-medium sector at 10% over and above the projected intake at Reception to support growth and allow for in-year admissions and flexibility for transition. This includes the delivery of new Welsh-medium capacity at primary level by 2025 – 2026 through progressing proposals to increase Welsh-medium primary school provision serving Birchgrove, Gabalfa, Heath and Plasnewydd in the central area of the city.
43. Ysgol Mynydd Bychan has been fully subscribed in each of the past five years. In four of these intakes a number of children resident within the catchment areas of the school were refused places at the school.
44. Projected future demand for places in each catchment area, which take account of the most recent school census data (PLASC) published in 2022, and the most recent NHS GP registration data supplied in August 2022, indicate that the number of children within the Ysgol Mynydd Bychan catchment area is projected to exceed the number of places available at entry to the school.
45. The Welsh in Education Strategic Plan includes a range of actions to increase the take up of Welsh-medium places. The ethnic diversity of Ysgol Mynydd Bychan is not reflective of its local community and the school is largely unable to accommodate children who move to the area after the closing date for admission to Reception class.
46. PLASC data indicates that a greater proportion of children who transfer within the primary education age phase in the area are of non-White-British ethnicities. These children are presently able to access local English-medium provision but less able to access Welsh-medium provision.



47. The Council is committed to the development of Welsh-medium education and as part of the 10-year Welsh in Education Strategic Plan which was adopted in September 2022, consideration is being given to ways in which Welsh-medium can be expanded to increase the number of children from all backgrounds attending.
48. The plan sets specific targets and identifies priority workstreams for the Council and partners such as schools, including a research pilot initiative with Bilingual Cardiff, parental surveys and focus groups, to better understand the reasons for low take-up of Welsh-medium places within specific under-represented groups and communities (including Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic), alongside bespoke promotions. This work is underway.
49. The Welsh Government invited all Local Authorities in Wales to submit bids for grant funding to support capital investments that facilitate growth in Welsh-medium education and use of the Welsh language.
50. The Council was successful in securing funds from the Welsh-medium Capital Grant Scheme including £1.86m to reorganise primary school provision in central Cardiff and expand Welsh medium places by one form of entry (210 places). The purpose of the Welsh Medium Capital Grant is to support capital investments that facilitate growth in Welsh-medium education and use of the Welsh language.
51. The grant funding programme is aimed specifically at capital projects that will demonstrably contribute to meeting the Welsh Government's aim of reaching one million Welsh speakers by 2050. The funding allocated to the Council is ring-fenced to support expansion in Welsh-medium education provision and would allow for investment in school buildings to support increased intakes.
52. Should Ysgol Mynydd Bychan transfer to the Allensbank site, any changes to the buildings utilising the Welsh Government capital grant would be considered at a later design stage. The Council would identify and agree priorities for the investment in partnership with the Ysgol Mynydd Bychan Governing Body.
53. The Council has recently allocated capital funding to address priority condition and suitability works at the shared Gladstone and St Monica's site, and at the Allensbank site. Further capital funding would be identified from the Council's financial resources to support the relocation of English-medium provision. This would improve the suitability of facilities to accommodate the changes to provision and benefit learners. The required funding would depend on the option taken forward.
54. The expansion of Ysgol Mynydd Bychan on the Allensbank site would be phased from September 2025, by increasing the admission number for the nursery and Reception year groups only in the first instance. This would mean that the school does not need to use all of its accommodation in 2025/2026 and could allow for parts of the two buildings to be closed to staff and pupils to reduce the impact on the school's budget and/ or whilst works are undertaken.

55. In the event of the proposed changes being progressed a project lead officer would be assigned to work with the relevant governing bodies to oversee the development of a detailed investment programme. This programme would include the planned works, transition arrangements, pupil and staff health and wellbeing and the timescales of these workstreams.
56. Wherever possible, building and refurbishment works that may be more disruptive would be undertaken during the school holidays to minimise any potential impact on teaching and learning.
57. The Council has investigated alternative site options that may be available and centrally located within the Ysgol Mynydd Bychan catchment area. There is no suitable vacant site available local to the school that could accommodate an enlarged Ysgol Mynydd Bychan. The Council is committed to retaining a Welsh-medium provision in the area and to increasing the spread of provision available to parents in each community.
58. There is also sufficient capacity within existing schools serving the area to enable the reorganisation of existing provision. Reorganisation of provision would present an appropriate means of balancing the availability and take up of both English-medium and Welsh-medium provision in the area. It would also allow for a more effective and efficient use of resources. This would retain flexibility in the school estate to respond to any future population changes affecting the area.
59. The Council has considered relocating Ysgol Mynydd Bychan to the shared Gladstone Primary School and St. Monica's Church in Wales Primary School site and English-medium provision on the Allensbank site but has discounted this option. Information regarding this was included in the consultation document at page 76. Relocating Ysgol Mynydd Bychan to the Gladstone site alone would not provide sufficient capacity to support the growth of the school.
60. The current take-up of places at English-medium provision is widely spread throughout the area, and there are many English-medium schools in the wider areas. The current take-up of places at Welsh-medium provision is concentrated in the northern part of its catchment area, in close proximity to the existing Ysgol Mynydd Bychan site and the Allensbank site. At present, there are significant travel distances to alternative Welsh-medium provision. There is also a high demand for Welsh-medium places at neighbouring schools to the north of its catchment area, with few surplus places overall.
61. Locating English-medium provision on the shared Gladstone Primary School and St. Monica's Church in Wales Primary School site, and Welsh-medium provision on the Allensbank site provides a more appropriate distribution of places for current and future intakes.
62. The Gladstone Primary School building has an assessed capacity of up to 270 which could allow for a Published Admission Number of up to 38 places per year group. This would not sufficiently support the expansion of Ysgol Mynydd Bychan and would not provide an efficient organisation of school places. This proposal would also vacate the existing Ysgol Mynydd Bychan site, removing a

large number of primary school places and reducing flexibility for school provision should the population increase again in the future.

63. Changes to catchment areas could provide a balance between the number of places available, and the projected demand for places, and would allow for a limited increase in take up.
64. However, the projected level of surplus places would not be sufficient to significantly increase Welsh-medium take up in the longer term, in order to meet Cardiff's targeted growth as set out in the Cardiff's approved Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP).
65. Whilst changes to catchment areas could improve the balance of places, these changes alone would not support long term growth and would not represent a sufficient contribution towards meeting the growth target set in Cardiff's WESP.
66. The reference to '*phased expansion*' at page 80 of the consultation document relates to the phased expansion of Ysgol Mynydd Bychan as the sole occupier of the current Allensbank Primary School site, and not that schools would be split across sites as posed in the 2021 consultation. In the event of the proposed expansion of Ysgol Mynydd Bychan being progressed the increase in the admission number would apply to the Reception age group in the first instance.

### **Local Member Response - Cathays**

67. Cllr Chris Weaver submitted a response which included the following points (a copy of the full response can be seen at Appendix 10):
  - *I've not selected a particular option as supported or not supported, all have benefits and opportunities as well as risks. There are a few points that I'd like to be considered as part of the decision making, based on the discussions we've had at Gladstone PS Governing Body. The GB know that many parents really value the culture and ethos of the school and the hard work and excellence of the staff, and understandably these proposals have created some concern that this could be disrupted.*
  - *We do understand the need for school organisation to provide appropriate numbers of places for both Welsh and English medium for local families, but this is obviously a sensitive and challenging time for staff, parents, and the whole school community.*
  - *I would like to emphasise that when considering the best option, the Council should refer to the aims of 'Cardiff 2030', in particular in closing the attainment gap.*
  - *The EM primary schools in this area share similar demographic traits, with high levels of pupils eligible for free school meals, with English as an additional language with multiple different first languages spoken by*

*families at the schools, and all experience a mobile and transient pupil cohort.*

- I believe these factors should be taken into account in determining the best option, with a clear outcome from this process to be to improve even further the education offer to those pupils. This is exactly the cohort of pupils we need to be investing in to close that attainment gap, and this should be a crucial factor in deciding which option is best – and necessary resource should be made available to ensure enhancement for these pupils can be delivered.*
- I can see that locating either one LEA school or two federated LEA schools on the Gladstone site could bring some opportunities to economies of scale and efficiency in allocating resources that could support some of this enhancement.*
- I'd also like to emphasise that this process is unsettling and concerning for staff at schools that may be going to federate or amalgamate, and everything possible must be done to support staff welfare during this process. I would like to see the most simple and clear process possible should schools federate or merge, to give staff the greatest and quickest certainty about their situation that is possible.*
- Gladstone is an excellent school, as evidenced by the most recent Estyn visit, with an inclusive and welcoming culture. Parents of children at the school have expressed their strong support for the school's culture and ethos. If federation or amalgamation are chosen as the preferred option I hope the history and ethos of Gladstone and Allensbank can be reflected in the future school(s), and acknowledged in some way, to reflect their longstanding and important presence in the lives of so many families in this area, and to reassure parents of pupils currently at the schools that the very positive, welcoming, successful cultures and practice of the schools will continue.*

### **Appraisal of views expressed**

68. The Council acknowledges the views of Cllr Weaver on the overall merits of the proposed changes.
69. The support of parents for all of the schools included in the proposed changes was a notable feature of the consultation.
70. As set out at paragraph 11 and paragraph 12, the Council is committed to supporting Cardiff's most vulnerable learners and ensuring funding for education is targeted towards learning experiences and opportunities alongside support for families is critical.
71. In order to achieve this, the Council must ensure that there is an appropriate balance in the number and different types of school places serving each area,

with a sustainable level of surplus places. Each school provision offered must meet the diverse needs of the communities they serve. The Council must maximise the potential of its teaching and learning staff to ensure best use of their talent, thereby securing the greatest impact on learner opportunities and outcomes for all.

72. The number of primary school places available in existing communities in Cardiff is sufficient to accommodate all pupils, but the level of surplus is projected to increase.
73. Proposals to better balance capacities of schools with the forecast take up of places would therefore provide a more effective use of the schools' financial resources. This would allow schools to allocate a greater proportion of their budget to teaching and learning.
74. The options presented support a more effective and efficient use of resources and also aim to aim to increase school effectiveness and narrow inequalities in achievement between advantaged and disadvantaged areas, groups, and individuals.
75. As set out at paragraph 27 and paragraph 28, Option 1 would provide a more economically sustainable pattern of school provision over the long term and support schools to be financially sustainable in an improved patters of provision through amalgamation. This option would allow for schools to allocate a greater proportion of budget to teaching and learning, thereby retaining and increasing opportunities for learners, provide an improved balance between the availability and take up of both English-medium and Welsh-medium primary school places and maintain the current number of English-medium school places serving the area.
76. The Council is mindful of the impact on staff at the schools affected and the Council's HR Service is committed to continuing to work directly with the schools affected, and with trade unions, to ensure staff are supported through the process of change. Meetings with school staff have been offered by the Council's HR Service and have been taken up by those at Gladstone Primary School.

## **Estyn**

77. Estyn submitted a response which included the following points: (a copy of the response can be seen at Appendix 10)
  - *It is Estyn's view that each of the three options are likely to at least maintain the standard of education provision in the area.*
  - *The council has provided a reasonable rationale for suggesting the changes detailed in the three options. This is mainly to provide an appropriate balance of Welsh-medium and English-medium school places. A previous consultation showed that there was support overall for the expansion of Welsh medium education, although other issues were raised. The current options address the issues that informed the earlier consultation.*

- *The council has provided suitably detailed descriptions of the options, highlighting the similarities and differences between each one. It has also appropriately provided key dates for the statutory procedures relating to the proposal and indicated that the proposed changes would take effect from September 2025. The council properly makes reference to the fact that the option to close two schools, and to establish a new school, would require the establishment of a temporary governing body ahead of the opening of the newly opened, larger school.*
- *The council has clearly set out the benefits for the different parts of each option. It has also provided the common disadvantages associated with each aspect of option one and option two and separately provided the potential disadvantages of option three.*
- *The council has suitably identified the main risks associated with the options. The council appear to have suitable mitigation processes in place to manage these risks.*
- *The council has considered a few different options. It has provided reasonable explanations as to why these options have been discounted.*
- *The council has suitably presented information on the impact of the options on learner travel arrangements.*
- *The council has provided a detailed analysis of data that includes the numbers of pupils on roll in each of the affected schools and also historical numbers and forecasts for the next few years. This data demonstrates that there are significant numbers of surplus places overall in the English medium schools which are forecast to continue over the next few years.*
- *The council accurately states that the options would have a positive impact on the Welsh language with an increase in the number of Welsh-medium primary school places available at primary age.*
- *The council has considered the financial costs of each option and any potential savings.*
- *The council has considered the impact of the options on pupils receiving free school meals, pupils with English as an additional language, minority ethnic pupils and pupils with additional learning needs. It has presented data that shows the numbers of these pupils in each of the schools. For each of these groups of pupils, it reasonably concludes that there is no information available that suggests that the options would have a negative effect on provision. It has also provided a single impact assessment, an equality impact assessment and a community impact assessment which all appear to be relevant and valid.*
- *The council has suitably considered the potential disruption to pupils in implementing the proposed changes. A project lead officer would work with the governing bodies of the schools to develop an investment programme*

*that would include transition arrangements and support the wellbeing of pupils and staff. More disruptive work would be undertaken during the school holidays wherever possible. The proposed expansion of Ysgol Mynydd Bychan would be phased and parts of the two buildings could be closed to staff whilst works are undertaken.*

### **Appraisal of views expressed**

78. The Council acknowledges the conclusions of Estyn on the overall merits of the proposals.
79. Whilst Estyn did not provide a view on a preferred option it is noted that the views expressed acknowledge a full and detailed presentation of all aspects of the proposed changes.

### **Member of the Senedd Response**

80. Julie Morgan MS submitted a response which included the following points: (a copy of the full response can be seen at Appendix 10)
  - *There has clearly been an increase in demand for Welsh language education and it is the policy of the Welsh Government to try to meet that demand and to try to reach a million Welsh speakers by 2050. It is therefore understandable that plans are being considered to allow for an increase in the numbers of children able to attend Ysgol Mynydd Bychan. It is very unfortunate that it is not possible to expand the school on the current site but it seems clear that there is insufficient space to accommodate extra classes there.*
  - *It is to be welcomed that Ysgol Mynydd Bychan could expand to that size but there is concern that they would be moving into an older building which is listed and therefore they may be prevented from carrying out the improvements they would wish to see. I am aware that permission has not been granted in the past for doors which open to the outside area and I understand that CADW will not now consider specific plans until after the consultation ends. There is also concern that the outside space will not be adequate for the increased size of Ysgol Mynydd Bychan.*
  - *Option 1 involves Allensbank and Gladstone Primary Schools amalgamating to establish a new 420 place English-medium School with nursery provision on the current site shared by Gladstone primary School and St Monica's Primary School. This seems to be the option preferred by Allensbank School, if they do have to move. The Allensbank building has been clothed in scaffolding and had a huge amount of repair work going on for the last four years. Children have often had to be moved to a different site within the building as the work was going on. This has naturally been difficult for the staff and children but they had hoped that at least at the end of it, they would have benefitted from the improvements. That benefit will now be lost to them, when they move out.*

- *Option 2 would involve Allensbank children moving to the site currently occupied by St Monica's Primary School but there are concerns that the space would not be large enough for all the Allensbank children so some may have to be accommodated in Gladstone school and this does not seem desirable.*
- *I am aware that some parents feel that by offering the three options, the Welsh language is being preferred over English. I do support the promotion of the Welsh language and it is obvious that there is a high demand for it. However, in Allensbank school, they have successfully improved their ranking over the years and have worked very well with a large number of children from various ethnic communities and between them, the children speak over 30 different languages. It is important that the success of the school is not diluted by these proposed moves.*

### **Appraisal of views expressed**

81. The Council welcomes the Member of the Senedd's support for the expansion of Welsh-medium provision.
82. Issues related to improvements to the Allensbank Primary School site are addressed at paragraphs 49 – 56.
83. There is sufficient outdoor space available at the Allensbank Primary School site to accommodate an expanded Ysgol Mynydd Bychan. The current Ysgol Mynydd Bychan site has c1100m<sup>2</sup> outdoor provision; the Allensbank Primary School site has c2000m<sup>2</sup> outdoor provision with the option of increased outdoor space if any of the existing car park provision of c600m<sup>2</sup> is repurposed.
84. It is recognised that the works to maintain the fabric of the school building have impacted on the day to day running of Allensbank Primary School however these works have been undertaken as priority condition and suitability works to ensure the health and safety of the school buildings. Similar works are being undertaken at the Gladstone Primary School/St Monica's Church in Wales Primary School site and in the event of Option 1 or Option 2 being progressed, the children currently attending Allensbank Primary School would benefit from this.
85. The current Gladstone Primary School/St Monica's Church in Wales Primary School site overall is capable of accommodating up to 420 primary age pupils and a nursery. However, as the St Monica's building alone could not accommodate 210 pupils, the Governing Bodies of Allensbank and Gladstone (or the single Governing Body, if federated) would have to consider and agree how the available accommodation could best be used to meet the operational requirements of each school. Option 2 would not relocate Allensbank solely to the current St Monica's site.
86. The work of Allensbank Primary School and other schools in the area to successfully support children from various ethnic communities with a wide range of home languages is acknowledged and is recognised as a strength of these schools by the Council. The proposed changes have been brought forward in



order to provide an appropriate means of balancing the availability and take up of both English-medium and Welsh-medium provision in the area allowing for a more effective and efficient use of resources.

## **National Education Union (NEU)**

87. The National Education Union (NEU) submitted a response which included the following points: (a copy of the full response can be seen at Appendix 10)

- *We are pleased to see that the good standard of education in all schools under consideration has been recognised.*
- *While we appreciate that many of the proposals offer enhanced opportunities for collaboration and professional development for staff and potentially expanded learning opportunities for children, it has been noted by our members that these proposals for change come at a time when all of the schools have recently emerged from the COVID pandemic, and its implications for dwindling staff resilience and an increase in the needs of pupils and families are continuing.*
- *It has also been stated that staff in some settings have been on a heightened and rapid school improvement journey throughout the period, resulting in very positive ESTYN reports, in the hope that this would lead to a secure and settled future for all. These staff now report feeling very vulnerable and the work that they do, undervalued.*
- *We would expect those proposing change to be mindful of the context in which the change is being suggested, and to ensure appropriate support for staff is put in place at every stage, should plans be progressed.*
- *We are pleased that Cardiff LA has a well-publicised commitment to no compulsory redundancies wherever possible, but we note also the fact that there is no stated possibility of the direct transfer of staff should any of the schools be closed, leaving the sustained employment of staff at risk. ... we would expect the employer/s to ensure that the jobs and livelihoods of existing staff who wish to be employed in any new configuration of provision are protected and staff are as far as possible safeguarded from detriment during any restructuring process.*
- *these school sites have been subject to significant and ongoing building repairs over recent years, and staff have expressed disappointment that they may not get to enjoy the improved buildings following the years working in disrupted and noisy conditions.*
- *There is also concern that if plans are progressed, this would mean further periods of prolonged disruption whilst the school accommodation is further adjusted to suit the needs of any of the proposed configurations. There is also the potential for such works to impede the further educational development of the schools in the short term.*

- *the impact of merely beginning a consultation on amending educational provision has been shown in the past to have the potential to disrupt the improvement journey of the schools involved, due to the creation of uncertainty. Such uncertainty may cause parents to choose to send their children to other schools where the future is known and will not be subject to the same uncertainty/upheaval. This could impact on reception intake numbers, but also on pupils who currently attend, particularly the Allensbank and Gladstone schools, where the proposals involve moving site and changes to staffing structures and school leadership.*
- *There are fears that this would spark a negative chain reaction of decreasing pupil numbers leading to an exacerbation of the financial challenges based in the short term, leading to a less sustainable future for English Medium provision overall. If families leave the catchment area, this would lead to a period of financial instability whether there is no change or a federation or amalgamation. What protections could the LA put in place during any transition period to counter the impact of such potential difficulties?*
- *Arrangements for any period of change/transition must be well planned and properly supported to ensure that the current educational improvements are not lost, or the future prospects for all of the schools being viewed as less positive in the eyes of external stakeholders such as the Central South Consortium or Estyn. This would be hard for all staff who have made such efforts to achieve their current good ratings.*
- *We are pleased that the proposals retain all of the buildings currently in use, and that their future use will be as primary schools. These buildings are key not just to the education of the children they serve, but also to their families and the communities they represent. In areas where there are great degrees of linguistic and ethnic diversity such as this, the importance of welcoming in the community to schools must not be underestimated in celebrating diversity and building a sense of community cohesion. Schools such as St Monica's, Allensbank and Gladstone have generations of experience in doing this, and any proposal for change must consider how this may be impacted either positively or negatively.*
- *We appreciate that the further promotion of WM education in this area will not be possible until a suitable site is identified, and we appreciate that additional funding will only be available and ring-fenced to the expansion of WM education as a result of National policy that Cardiff LA have committed to.*
- *The two areas that will need further consideration are around the current identified drop in birthrate that is impacting reception class entry numbers, including those at Ysgol Mynydd Bychan whose reception class currently has vacancies, and the drive towards achieving a million speakers of Welsh by 2050.*
- *the plans to meet the Welsh Government's target of 1 million Welsh speakers by 2050 can only be met if we support the learning of Welsh for everyone in the education workforce. We would encourage the proposals to include*

*consideration of developing any opportunities for the Welsh language skills of those beyond WM setting in this area on the use of Welsh in education, as we see the opportunities for training of the workforce as critical to Cardiff schools playing their part in helping the LA achieve their targets in this area.*

- careful consideration of whether a two-form WM school rather than a 1.5 is the best in the medium term to ensure that too many surplus places are not created, leading to financial pressures being experienced, especially in light of birthrate trends. Indeed, it may be possible in the early years of any expansion, where numbers are not at full complement, any surplus spaces may be used for the development of Welsh Language skills for the wider education workforce in Wales, and the local community.*
- We welcome the potential for the ethnic diversity profile of Ysgol Mynydd Bychan to be improved, but due to the similarity of addresses of those who attend that school and those who attend Allensbank noted in the consultation, we expect that this will not be changed merely by the relocation of the schools. Further work, such as that being undertaken with Minority Ethnic groups as outlined in the WESP will be key to any improvements.*
- We were pleased that the levels of pupil mobility have been included in the background to the proposals. We would expect that a sufficient amount of pupil places be provided, particularly in the case of St Monica's, to accommodate the necessary flexibility required.*
- Although there are potential savings identified in the option of federation/ closer collaboration between Gladstone and Allensbank, further assurance would need to be given that this proposal will not mean a 'half-way house' along the route to the potential eventual closure of one or both schools involved in a future proposal. If this assurance is given, it may make this option more attractive to consultees, as it retains two well-known Cardiff schools, steeped in the history and development of the community of Cathays, and allows both unique identities to persist.*

### **Appraisal of views expressed**

88. The commitment and work of staff at all schools during the period of the Covid-19 pandemic and subsequently in the recovery period is acknowledged. The proposed changes have been brought forward within the context of a sustained fall in the birth rate and changes to migration patterns in the city, the need to better balance capacities of schools with the forecast take up of places to allow for a more effective use of the schools' financial resources with a greater proportion of school budgets available for teaching and learning and national policy commitments.
89. The Council is mindful of the impact on staff at the schools affected and the Council's HR Service is committed to continuing to work directly with the schools affected, and with trade unions, to ensure staff are supported through the process of change.

90. The staffing structure of schools is directly related to the number of pupils on roll with any decisions taken regarding staffing a matter for the relevant Governing Body taking account of its available financial resources.
91. Where there is a higher than necessary number of school places, some resources are having to be utilised inefficiently and could be better used to improve the quality of education for all learners. Combined with this are the difficulties associated with operating a primary school with a high proportion of its places unfilled. Smaller schools, and those with a higher proportion of places unfilled, are most likely to face financial difficulties.
92. Table 1 below sets out the budgetary position for the schools where changes are proposed:

School	Balance brought forward April 2022	Governor Approved Budget 2022/23	Balance brought forward April 2023	Governor Approved Budget 2023/24
	£	£	£	£
Allensbank	23,757	-132,301	-50,628	-274,788
Gladstone	84,651	0	-39,428	-164,920
St Monica's	41,804	0	34,320	-66,726
Ysgol Mynydd Bychan	170,220	86,286	118,001	17,057

93. The combined number of pupils enrolling at Allensbank Primary School and Gladstone Primary School has fallen in recent years, coinciding with low intakes to primary education city-wide which are projected to continue until at least 2025/26.
94. The majority of a school budget is allocated to staffing. In a period of reducing pupil intakes to primary schools, and when schools need to identify saving from within their individual budgets in order to address the deficit budget positions, the number of staff employed may reduce whether or not any proposals to reorganise are progressed.
95. A key aspiration for the Council is to achieve any staff reductions as far as possible through redeployment rather than voluntary or compulsory redundancies. Therefore, the Council is committed to maximising opportunities for school staff to secure employment in other schools in Cardiff through redeployment into vacancies in other schools in Cardiff.
96. The proposed formal closure of Allensbank Primary School and Gladstone Primary School, and the establishment of a new two form entry primary school (Option 1) places staff at a potential risk of redundancy which would need to be managed in line with the School Redeployment and Redundancy Policy.
97. The number of teaching and learning roles required for a two-form entry primary school is similar to the amount required for two one form entry primary schools.

However, the type and number of roles required would be dependent on the number of pupils on roll and on the school budget position.

98. Where roles are duplicated e.g., Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher positions, and administrative and estates staff, it is expected that there would be a reduction in the number of roles required overall.
99. The establishment of a new school would require the setting up of a temporary Governing Body to oversee the development of an appropriate staffing structure and appointments to this. Appointments to the new school, with the exception of the Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher role which would be subject to national advert in line with legal requirements, would be ringfenced in the first instance to existing staff at Allensbank Primary School and Gladstone Primary School subject to the agreement of the temporary Governing Body.
100. Option 2 and Option 3 would allow for the Governing Bodies of Allensbank Primary School and Gladstone Primary School to consider collaborative working or the establishment of a formal federation.
101. Federation could result in a reduction in the number of leadership roles overall across the two schools depending on the model taken forward.
102. The redeployment arrangements would also be taken into account should the decision be taken to relocate the Speech and Language class from Allensbank Primary School to within the remit of a Governing Body of another school.
103. Issues related to building works are addressed at paragraphs 52-56.
104. The Council works closely with the Governing Bodies of schools to make sure that standards in schools are high, that teaching is good, and that leadership and governance is strong.
105. The standard of education at the four schools included in the proposed changes are good.
106. The Council does not expect the proposals to have any negative impact on the quality of standards of education, the delivery of the Foundation Phase or each key stage of education at any of the schools or the ALN provision based at Allensbank Primary School.
107. The potential for proposed changes to impact parental choice is acknowledged however the Council is committed to working with all four schools to ensure that quality and standards are maintained allowing for any fears which parents may have to be allayed.
108. In the event of the proposed changes being progressed a project lead officer would be assigned to work with the relevant governing bodies to oversee the development of a detailed investment programme. This programme would include the planned works, transition arrangements, pupils and staff health and wellbeing and the timescale of these works.

109. No changes are anticipated to the range of accommodation, facilities or services available. A range of benefits specific to each option are set out in the consultation document and the expectation is that schools would continue to meet the diverse needs of the local community.
110. Issues related to falling school rolls and national policy are addressed at paragraphs 13 – 26 and paragraphs 37 – 42.
111. A significant growth of the workforce able to teach Welsh and through the medium of Welsh is critical in order for Cardiff to succeed in delivering the growth of Welsh speakers through education in our schools and wider learning opportunities.
112. The enhanced expectations to teach and learn using a greater amount of Welsh in English-medium schools will also necessitate upskilling across much of the teaching and learning workforce.
113. The Council is committed to working closely with other Local Authorities in Central South Consortium (CSC) in planning and supporting school staff across all sectors to further improve their Welsh language skills along with Welsh-medium Initial Training Education and Childcare workforce training providers to support an increase of Newly Qualified Teachers, learning support staff and childcare practitioners to help reduce the projected workforce shortage in the future and ensure that collective local WESPs can be implemented effectively.
114. Details of how the Council proposes to increase the number of teaching/support staff able to teach Welsh (as a subject) and teach through the medium of Welsh are outlined in the adopted Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) (Outcome 7).
115. A copy of the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan can be viewed at [www.cardiff.gov.uk](http://www.cardiff.gov.uk).
116. A proposal to expand Ysgol Mynydd Bychan to 1.5FE was consulted on previously and not progressed.
117. There are significant differences between the populations at Ysgol Mynydd Bychan and local English-medium schools. The priority workstreams identified in the Council's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan seek to address the disparity in demographic data between Welsh-medium and English-medium schools. These changes are expected to reduce the disparity in the ethnicity data of learners enrolled at Ysgol Mynydd Bychan and its neighbouring English-medium primary schools.
118. Pupil mobility refers to the percentage of children enrolled in a school who transfer in or out of the school in a defined period of time. Some schools have a far greater turnover of pupils than other schools for a variety of reasons.

119. Pupil mobility data for Ysgol Mynydd Bychan is very low (1.3% per year on average in the past three years), which in part reflects the oversubscription of the school at entry to Reception class. Each of the English-medium schools exceeds 10% pupil mobility each year and Allensbank Primary School has reported "*Pupil mobility levels of up to 40% across a single academic year*" during the past consultation on proposals.
120. At present, families who move into the area after the closing date for entry to Reception class are usually unable to gain admission to Ysgol Mynydd Bychan and an alternative Welsh-medium school may be a significant distance from the home address of those families.
121. The proposed changes improve the ability of those applicants who move to the area to equitably access school places in each language medium. The priority workstreams identified in the Council's WESP also seek to address the disparity in demographic data between Welsh-medium and English-medium schools. These changes are expected to reduce the disparity in the pupil mobility data between Ysgol Mynydd Bychan and its neighbouring English-medium primary schools.
122. Under Option 2, where the English-medium schools share a site, federation could be brought forward by the existing governing bodies. Federation could also be considered over separate sites, under Option 3, by the Governing Bodies.
123. To be successful, federation needs to be based on a commitment to work together and a willingness to do things differently for the added benefit of all pupils, their well-being and achievements. Experience from schools that have federated demonstrate that the development of all the schools and their communities within the federation and the sharing of best practice helps drive up standards and improve performance.
124. Any federation/closer collaboration between Allensbank Primary School and Gladstone Primary School would be brought forward to benefit existing and future learners.

### **The Diocese of Llandaff**

125. The Diocese of Llandaff submitted a response which included the following points: (a copy of the full response can be seen at Appendix 10)
  - *The Diocese expressed support for Option 1 with the following points noted:*
    - *The Christian faith ethos of the school is proving to be very attractive to both Christians and those of other faiths. Many of the current year groups in St Monica's are oversubscribed.*
    - *Parental choice should be treated equitably and therefore increasing the number of places available in a faith school is a positive move to address a demonstrably high demand for places.*

- *The refurbished early years provision at St Monica's would be well utilised by a new school and nursery.*
- *Current outdoor areas are totally inadequate for the size of the current school.*
- *Current accommodation would not be able to accommodate the move to universal free school meals as the current kitchen facilities are totally inadequate.*
- *The Diocese did not support Option 2 with the following points noted:*
  - *The current site presents too many restrictions as a split site. The current disproportionate outdoor area size restricts the provision available to children for outdoor play and learning in St Monica's which is not equitable for children.*
- *The Diocese did not support Option 3 with the following points noted:*
  - *The current site of St Monica's is restricted by the availability of outdoor space and inadequate facilities for the provision of universal free school meals.*
- *A demonstrably high demand for places is indicative of the need to extend the provision of places for parents wishing to choose a faith option for their child's schooling. This should be treated in a fair and equitable way and faith provision expanded as an offer for parents.*
- *The Diocese noted that 'St Monica's should only be moved on condition that the new building is reviewed for, decorative condition, furnishings and facilities at no cost to the school. This would include the establishment of a suitable worship space in the school and the relocation of St Monica statue from the present location to the new site'.*

### **Appraisal of views expressed**

126. The Diocese's support for Option 1 is noted.

127. The changes proposed under Option 1 and Option 2 seek to establish nursery provision at St Monica's Church in Wales Primary School and the benefits associated with this. The potential for the school to increase the number of statutory age places for learners aged 4 – 11 to the equivalent capacity of Ysgol Mynydd Bychan would be a matter for the Governing Body of the school to consider and may be subject to a separate consultation and statutory processes.

128. The points raised regarding the present site sharing arrangement are noted. The changes proposed under Option 1 would cease site sharing arrangements. Under Option 2 the arrangements would require the Governing Bodies of the schools (or federated Governing Body) to determine how best to share buildings and outdoor space.



129. The Council would make appropriate arrangements with each of the Governing Bodies to progress the reorganisation of provision and transfer of furniture and resources to alternative sites.

### **Allensbank Primary School Governing Body**

130. The Governing Body of Allensbank Primary School submitted a response which included the following points: (a copy of the full response can be seen at Appendix 10)

- *Firstly, we have to note the distress that these proposals have caused and are still causing to the staff members of Allensbank who have worked tirelessly for many years to improve the experience of pupils in the school, continuing to work with their customary dedication through the recent strains of Covid and extensive building works.*
- *Having endured the massive inconvenience of on-going alterations and construction works, to now be told that others will gain the benefits feels like a complete betrayal.*
- *This is not a failing school as evidenced by the most recent Estyn report:*

*'All staff at Allensbank Primary School work diligently to create a happy, caring and inclusive ethos at the school. The positive and supportive relationships between pupils and with all adults are a strength of the school. Leaders and staff work skilfully to create effective provision for pupils who need additional support. They use a range of approaches, which impact very positively on pupils' achievement and their sense of wellbeing. The headteacher provides clear strategic direction alongside a dedicated team of staff who show a strong commitment towards supporting all of their pupils to achieve and thrive.'*

- *The whole consultation exercise is flawed for the following reasons:*
  - *There was no discussion at all with the concerned parties. i.e., Allensbank Primary School, Ysgol Mynydd Bychan, Gladstone Primary School and St. Monica's Primary School to explore options before the document was published. This would have been a sensible preliminary process to discuss thoughts and opinions.*
  - *The options suggested do not include all possible options, only those which result in Ysgol Mynydd Bychan being relocated to the Allensbank site with all renovation having been completed. The most obvious and not dissimilar option omitted is that of moving Gladstone Primary School to the newly renovated Allensbank site. The number of pupils on roll at Gladstone is fewer than the number on roll at Allensbank so this would result in disruption for fewer pupils. The building would then be close to capacity, (whereas if Ysgol Mynydd Bychan were to move to the Allensbank site they would initially and for the foreseeable future have to*

*deal with the problems of too large a building). This would then allow Ysgol Mynydd Bychan to move to the Gladstone site which is actually more central within its catchment area.*

- There are currently 203 pupils on roll at Ysgol Mynydd Bychan with 181 of these being from within the catchment area. Gladstone has 210 places but sufficient accommodation for up to 270 places, if resource rooms were to be assigned as classrooms. This would therefore allow an expansion for Ysgol Mynydd Bychan by up to nearly 90 pupils from within catchment with none of the problems of too large premises.*
- If, and given the decline in Welsh speakers over the last 10 years this remains a big uncertainty, there was a need for further expansion there would be the possibility of extending into the St. Monica's site and St Monica's being relocated elsewhere. This option would also have the benefit of freeing up the current Ysgol Mynydd Bychan site for development, possibly as a purpose-built Welsh school or possibly to ease the current accommodation shortage in Cardiff.*
- Alternatively, St. Monica's could, as proposed, be moved to the Ysgol Mynydd Bychan site leaving the current St Monica's site vacant for Ysgol Mynydd Bychan's future possible expansion. Again, this would avoid the difficulty for Ysgol Mynydd Bychan of an over large building in the immediate future.*
- Regarding the options as laid out in these proposals, (none of which are welcome): We consider options 2 and 3 to be totally unacceptable whereas option 1 is just undesirable and ill conceived.*
- Finally, while we appreciate the aims of the government's Welsh language strategy and are aware of the need for extra capacity in Welsh medium schools in Cardiff we are concerned and disappointed that these proposals if implemented would be to the detriment of some of the poorer, more vulnerable and more disadvantaged children in our community.*

### **Appraisal of views expressed**

131. The impact of the proposed changes on staff is acknowledged and HR People Services are working with all the schools directly affected.
132. Full support would be offered to employees and Governing Bodies by HR People Services throughout the reorganisation. This would involve attendance at consultation meetings, meetings with school staff, including one to one discussions where appropriate and the circulation of a Frequently Asked Questions document.
133. The Council's Academy provides courses that employees can access on application and interview skills, planning for future pre-retirement, Equality Awareness and digital skills, which includes Excel, Word and PowerPoint.

134. As part of the council's health and wellbeing support, employees have access to Care First, which is the employee assistance programme. Care First is designed to help employees with a wide range of work, family and personal issues. The service is free of charge and is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year and is accessible by phone or online.
135. In addition to Care First, the council has its own in-house employee counselling service available to employees. Sessions are delivered in groups of 4 – 8 and are voluntary and confidential.
136. The quality and standards of education at Allensbank Primary School and each school subject to proposals were acknowledged in the consultation document.
137. The proposed changes have been brought forward in forward within the context of a sustained fall in the birth rate and changes to migration patterns in the city, the need to better balance capacities of schools with the forecast take up of places to allow for a more effective use of the schools' financial resources with a greater proportion of school budgets available for teaching and learning and national policy commitments.
138. Issues related to engagement with each of the schools ahead of the formal consultation on proposals are addressed at paragraphs 6 – 8.
139. The Council sought the views of stakeholders including the Governing Body of Allensbank Primary School on long term changes to school provision to provide an appropriate balance of Welsh-medium and English-medium school places to serve the area. The proposed changes address the issues that informed the earlier proposals and also take account of the issues raised during this engagement process.
140. Issues related to the alternative option of locating Welsh-medium provision on the Gladstone Primary School site are addressed at paragraphs 59 – 62.
141. The Governing Body's rejection of all three options consulted on is noted.
142. The Council does not accept that the proposal if implemented would be to the detriment of some of the poorer, more vulnerable and more disadvantaged children. The proposals were brought forward in order to provide a more appropriate balance of places and to ensure that a greater level of funding is able to be invested in teaching and learning. The standard of education at all the schools subject to the proposed changes is good. There is no information available that suggests that the proposals would have a negative effect on pupils who receive Free School Meals, pupils that receive support because they have English as an additional language, pupils from a minority ethnic background or pupils with additional learning needs. There are clear benefits associated with each option which would enhance learning opportunities for all learners. As set out in the response from Estyn *'the three options are likely to at least maintain the standard of education provision in the area'*.

**Allensbank Primary School Headteacher**

143. The Headteacher of Allensbank Primary School submitted a response which included the following points: (a copy of the full response can be seen at Appendix 10)

- *None of the proposals are desirable for Allensbank. Option one, however, is the only proposal put forward that provides a level of security for the majority of Allensbank staff.*
- *Option one has caused much distress to a highly dedicated and successful staff who have worked tirelessly to bring about school improvement. With the closure of Allensbank and Gladstone and the establishment of a new school comes the potential for job losses and therefore the impact on staff well-being is not to be underestimated if this option were to be carried forward.*
- *The main objection to this proposal is that at no point has there been any form of discussion with schools as to where it would be best to site this larger school.*
- *The distance between the current Gladstone and Allensbank sites is minimal. Surely then, consideration should have been given to which site would be best suited for this purpose. (I refer to this further within my suggestions for alternative proposals).*
- *I consider Option 2 to be unacceptable.*
- *With Allensbank potentially being reduced to a capacity of 210 pupils, it is clear that the school would need to share buildings/outdoor space with Gladstone Primary School. Whilst Allensbank has always had very positive relationships with Gladstone Primary School and would clearly seek to maintain these, there would be concerns around co-location. The burden of sharing facilities on a site that already has a limited amount of outdoor learning space would lead to difficult to manage health and safety and pupil safeguarding arrangements.*
- *The reduction in pupil numbers and removal of Nursery provision would also have a catastrophic impact on Allensbank Primary School in terms of funding and the ability to attract new intake within Reception classes each year.*
- *I consider Option 3 to be unacceptable.*
- *This option would lead to a large reduction in pupil numbers and therefore reduce significantly the funding received by Allensbank Primary School.*
- *The funding for a single form entry school is currently not sufficient to make small schools financially viable. The result of this proposal would be that Allensbank would sustain a huge financial loss of income. This would therefore ultimately mean a lack of job security for all current staff at Allensbank.*

- *All three proposals are based on the assumption that Allensbank Primary School should move from its current building.*
- *A clear alternative to this proposal would be to close Gladstone Primary School and Allensbank Primary School whilst accommodating a new English-Medium school on the Allensbank site.*
- *The Allensbank building is able to comfortably accommodate a 2FE Primary School whilst also allowing provision for staff parking.*
- *There are fewer pupils on roll at Gladstone and so there would be disruption for a smaller number of pupils in terms of them being relocated.*
- *The Gladstone building would comfortably house Ysgol Mynydd Bychan with the option to expand further into the St Monica's site if needed. It would also position Ysgol Mynydd Bychan more centrally within its catchment area.*
- *The siting of Gladstone and Allensbank Primary Schools on the current Allensbank site would mean a disrupted education for fewer pupils.*
- *The positioning of Ysgol Mynydd Bychan on the Gladstone site would allow for easier access for parents, particularly from the more southernly part of their catchment area.*
- *This option also provides the ability for Ysgol Mynydd Bychan to grow over time. It minimises the amount of unutilised space within the area until needed, as the separate St Monica's building could easily be utilised by the wider community. Some examples of potential interim use would be for EAL classes for parents within this diverse community, a support Hub for refugees and asylum seekers in need of support or simply a place for community groups to meet thus providing an income for the Local Authority.*
- *As headteacher at Allensbank Primary School since 2013, I am proud to have led a dedicated team of staff in ensuring that the school meets the needs of pupils from this highly diverse community.*
- *The proposals are being forced on us as a school and community that does not seek change. We would prefer instead to be appropriately funded and resourced in order to continue to meet the needs of our learners.*
- *The school has faced huge challenges in recent years due to the impact of Covid-19 but also the significant building works which have impacted on the everyday life of our school for the past 4 years. Staff have endured all of these pressures whilst remaining steadfastly focused on pupils and the unique ethos of the school. They now face further years of disruption within the building knowing that potentially they will benefit in no way from the improvements to the building. The spending around these building works has been particularly hard to swallow given the fact that Allensbank has been*

*working under severe financial limitations during this period. Scaffolding costs for the building (given that scaffolding was in place for years prior to work commencing) stands at a cost of well over £300,000. Allensbank can only imagine what could have been achieved as a school if this additional Council money had instead been used to address underfunding for the school.*

- Pupil numbers have declined on a Citywide level and so schools are left fighting to attract pupils. Making Allensbank inviting and appealing to parents is hugely challenging given that buildings have been fully scaffolded externally and the outdoor space severely limited.*
- Whilst pupil numbers have declined in line with many across the City, our pupil numbers at any one point do not reflect the high levels of mobility and numbers of pupils from across the globe that enter Allensbank very often for their first experience of the British Education system. We were recognised by Estyn in 2020 as being a school that “celebrates the diversity of culture and language of pupils and their families at every opportunity and uses highly effective strategies to support pupils who need to develop their English language skills.” We strongly feel that the Local Authority should be celebrating these successes of the school rather than making us subject to enforced change.*

### **Appraisal of views expressed**

144. The Council acknowledges the views of the Allensbank Primary School Headteacher on the proposed changes. The Headteacher’s rejection of Option 2 and Option 3 is noted.
145. The impact on staff of the proposed changes is acknowledged. The number of teaching and learning roles required for a two-form entry primary school is similar to the amount required for two one form entry primary schools. However, the type and number of roles required would be dependent on the number of pupils on roll and on the school budget position.
146. Where roles are duplicated e.g., Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher positions, and administrative and estates staff, it is expected that there would be a reduction in the number or roles required overall.
147. The proposed formal closure of Allensbank Primary School and Gladstone Primary School, and the establishment of a new two form entry primary school places staff at a potential risk of redundancy which would need to be managed in line with the School Redeployment and Redundancy Policy.
148. A key aspiration for the Council is to achieve staff reductions as far as possible through redeployment rather than voluntary or compulsory redundancies. Therefore, the Council is committed to maximising opportunities for school staff to secure employment in other schools in Cardiff through redeployment into vacancies in other schools in Cardiff.

149. The establishment of a new school would require the setting up of a temporary Governing Body to oversee the development of an appropriate staffing structure and appointments to this.
150. Any decision taken with regards to staffing would be a matter for the relevant Governing Body.
151. Full support would be offered to employees and Governing Bodies by HR People Services throughout the reorganisation. This would involve attendance at consultation meetings, meetings with school staff, including one to one discussions where appropriate and the circulation of a Frequently Asked Questions document.
152. The Council's Academy provides courses that employees can access on application and interview skills, planning for future pre-retirement, Equality Awareness and digital skills, which includes Excel, Word and PowerPoint.
153. As part of the Council's health and wellbeing support, employees have access to Care First, which is the employee assistance programme. Care First is designed to help employees with a wide range of work, family and personal issues. The service is free of charge and is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year and is accessible by phone or online.
154. In addition to Care First, the council has its own in-house employee counselling service available to employees. Sessions are delivered in groups of 4 – 8 and are voluntary and confidential.
155. The Council sought the views of stakeholders including the Governing Bodies of local school's long-term changes to school provision to provide to serve the area during the earlier consultation with the views expressed informing the revised proposals. A number of alternative options were considered but discounted as set out in the information provided as part of the consultation. The Council must ensure that the provision of primary school places maximises opportunities for investment in teaching and learning and the proposals consulted on align with this.
156. The concerns regarding a site sharing arrangement as set out in Option 2 are noted. The current Gladstone Primary School / St Monica's CiW Primary School site overall is capable of accommodating up to 420 pupils with nursery. However, as each school building could not accommodate 210 pupils each, the arrangements would require the Governing Bodies of the schools (or federated Governing Body) to determine how best to share buildings and outdoor space. to meet the operational requirements of each school.
157. There would be a small reduction in the Allensbank Primary School Admission Number from 30 to 27 if the school were to transfer to the current Ysgol Mynydd Bychan site. The Published Admission Number at Allensbank Primary School was reduced from 45 places to 30 places from September 2022 to better reflect the demand for places. In January 2023 the Foundation Phase had 27 children enrolled in Reception, 21 in Y1 and 24 in Year 2. At 13<sup>th</sup> September 2023, 14

children were allocated for admission to Reception year at Allensbank Primary School. The Council acknowledges that the high level of pupil mobility in the area means that the number of children enrolled at schools fluctuates significantly.

158. Consideration was given to locating Welsh-medium provision on the shared Gladstone Primary School/St Monica's Church in Wales Primary School site; however, this was discounted for the reasons set out at paragraphs 59 - 62. The expansion of Ysgol Mynydd Bychan on the Allensbank site would be phased from September 2025, by increasing the admission number for the nursery and Reception year groups only in the first instance. This would mean that the school does not need to use all of its accommodation in 2025/2026 and could allow for parts of the two buildings to be closed to staff and pupils to reduce the impact on the school's budget and/ or whilst works are undertaken.
159. The Council recognises and commends the work of the school in meeting the needs of pupils from a highly diverse community. The proposed changes respond to the need to provide an appropriate balance in the number of school places available to serve the local area and to allow for a greater proportion of school funding to be allocated to teaching and learning.
160. Works to maintain the fabric of the school building have impacted on the day to day running of the school, however these works have been undertaken as priority condition and suitability works to ensure the health and safety of the school buildings. The scaffolding that has been in place was required immediately when condition issues were identified and was necessary in order for the works to be carried out. The funding available for this would not have been available as part of the Allensbank school budget. The funding that schools receive is based for the most part on the number of pupils on roll at the school. The funding allocated to Allensbank Primary School is in line with this.
161. Since 2017/18, there has been a sustained fall in the birth rate and changes to migrations patterns in the city. This means that city-wide intakes to primary education are projected to reduce significantly and remain at low levels until at least September 2026. However, changes to populations are not consistent in all parts of the city. As parents are able to state a preference for schools, some schools would continue to have high intakes, and the fall in population would have little or no impact on those schools. For other schools, the impact on pupil number will be far greater than the city-wide average of an 18% fall.
162. Demand for places at Allensbank Primary School from within its catchment has been consistently lower than the number of places available at the school. The Published Admission Number at Allensbank Primary School was reduced from 45 places to 30 places from September 2022 to better reflect the demand for places. The proposed changes allow for a sustainable pattern of primary school provision to serve the area.
163. Each of the English-medium schools serving the area have a high 'pupil mobility', that is to say the number of children on roll in each year changes frequently, from month to month. The work of the Allensbank Primary School in welcoming families and supporting pupils who need to develop their English language skills



is recognised. The Council is committed to supporting children from all backgrounds and has brought forward the proposed changes in order to be able to sustain high quality education provision to meet the diverse needs of the local area.

### **Allensbank Staff – NEU Union Members**

164. Allensbank Primary School Staff NEU Union Members submitted a response which included the following points: (a copy of the full response can be seen at Appendix 10)

#### **Option 1**

- *We recognise the benefits of amalgamating Allensbank and Gladstone schools and becoming a 2FE. However, we would like to raise the following comments:*
- *Gladstone and St Monica's will not be fit for purpose as a 2FE school by September 2025 if this option goes ahead. We feel that our school will be ready for a 2FE school for a smoother transition to amalgamation and have less of an impact on pupils and staff well-being.*
- *Ysgol Mynydd Bychan whilst currently full will not have a 2FE on September 2025 if current oversubscription figures and 20% drop in birth rate are anything to go by. Therefore, we feel that Ysgol Mynydd Bychan would be better suited on the Gladstone site providing them with ample space and potential room to grow.*
- *We feel this option would cause congestion in an already busy area with a significant amount of staff, pupils and parents needing access to parking. How would the council overcome this issue in an already notoriously bad for parking availability.*
- *With the current cost of living crisis, we are concerned that amalgamating schools would have a significant cost implication for families who reuse uniforms yearly and hand me down. How would the council overcome and address this issue for our families?*
- *There has been a huge impact on all staff's wellbeing, mental and physical health with regards to the prospect of this option as there is a huge uncertainty with regards to our futures and financial security, as even though the number of staff needed would be the same and two schools are being pushed together, we are not guaranteed our role even though the role is there in the new school. We would also like to raise the concern that pupils have been informed via the council that 'All or most of the teachers in the new school are expected to be from Allensbank and Gladstone.' We would be looking to seek clarity on the discrepancy between these two very different viewpoints both of which have been given by the council.*

- *We have some of the most vulnerable pupils in the LEA, who rely on the familiarity of staff and their surroundings to cope and keep them regulated on a day-to-day basis and the change of location will ultimately have an effect on these pupils.*

## **Option 2**

- *We feel strongly that Allensbank being placed on the current St Monica's site right next to Gladstone LEA maintained English medium Primary school, makes no sense and will not benefit Allensbank community as a whole. The reduction of numbers with the closure of our current nursery will have a detrimental effect on pupil numbers in the future. How can a smaller Allensbank compete with a Gladstone that is catering from ages 3-11 and has an abundance of space to do this and we feel that this will ultimately lead to Allensbank's full closure.*
- *This option would also mean uncertainty for all staff and their roles due to the closure of the nursery, having a detrimental effect on the wellbeing of staff and pupils.*
- *We have some of the most vulnerable pupils in the LEA, who rely on the familiarity of staff and their surroundings to cope and keep them regulated on a day-to-day basis and the change of location will ultimately have an effect on these pupils.*

## **Option 3**

- *Whilst on paper this option seems the most straightforward option for all parties involved, we feel that this is another option to set Allensbank up for failure and ultimately close or an eventual amalgamation with Gladstone. Again, the reduction of numbers to a 0.9FE would impact the current pupils on roll at our school as well as our ability to attract potential pupils. This will then have financial consequences for our school which would be catastrophic taking into consideration our current financial situation as a school and would not be sustainable in the longer term.*
- *We have some of the most vulnerable pupils in the LEA, who rely on the familiarity of staff and their surroundings to cope and keep them regulated on a day-to-day basis and the change of location will ultimately have an effect on these pupils.*
- *We would like to propose a fourth option to yourselves where Allensbank remains on its school site and amalgamates with Gladstone to form a new school, as we do see the benefits of amalgamating the two schools and it would limit some of our concerns listed above, along with relieving some anxieties for our most vulnerable pupils.*
- *In conclusion, we do not understand why pupils, staff and our community's wellbeing has not influenced an option for Allensbank to stay on their current*

*site. All options are in favour of the other schools in the proposal and we feel that our rights to a fair proposal have been missed, especially as we have some of the most vulnerable pupils in the LEA, who rely on the familiarity of staff and their surroundings to cope and keep them regulated on a day to day basis.*

### **Appraisal of views expressed**

165. The Allensbank Staff (NEU Members) views regarding Option 1 are noted. Issues related to the alternative option of locating Welsh-medium provision on the Gladstone Primary School site are addressed at paragraphs 59 – 62.
166. The Council has been committed to ensuring that every school in Cardiff has an Active Travel Plan. Such plans identify actions by the school to support and encourage active travel to school of staff and pupils and identify any improvements to on-site and off-site infrastructure required to facilitate active journeys. The Council's Active Travel Plan officers have been working with schools to develop these and all four schools already have Active Travel Plans in place for their current sites.
167. All new (including reorganised) schools need to have an Active Travel Plan in place from the outset of their operation.
168. The Active Travel Plans officers will continue to work with the schools in the review and further development of their current Active Travel Plans as appropriate to suit any change in circumstances. They can support with engagement on the Active Travel Plans as part of an implementation of a proposed expansion of places and any changes in location of school cohorts to alternative sites.
169. Following a reorganisation of the schools, the Council will monitor conditions outside the schools post-completion to see if any further measures such as parking restrictions are required. The scope for introducing parking restrictions will be investigated and put in place where appropriate as a low-cost measure to help discourage short distance car travel, make the environment outside each school safer and more conducive to walking, scooting and cycling and maximise active travel to school.
170. The Council's Road Safety Team already provides a programme of cycle and pedestrian training to further encourage take up of active travel to school. This support will continue as part of the ongoing engagement and support that will be provided by the Council's Schools Active Travel Team on Active Travel Plan development and delivery.
171. School uniform is a matter for individual governing bodies; however, the Council would work with schools to minimise the impact of any changes.
172. It is acknowledged that the proposed changes have had an impact on staff. Option 1 would require the formation of a new governing body who would be responsible for appointments to the new school. HR People Services would recommend that posts are ring fenced to existing staff in the first instance with

the exception of the Head and Deputy Head posts which would be subject to national advert. For staff appointed to a lower grade post, salary protection would be in place for up to three years.

173. HR People Services would provide advice, support and guidance to the Governing Bodies for the workforce planning process and consequential ringfenced recruitment processes.
174. The Council is committed to supporting Cardiff's most vulnerable learners. The proposed changes if implemented would take effect from September 2025 and the Council would work with the schools to ensure that a detailed transition plan was put in place taking account of the needs of all learners.
175. Under Option 2, it is proposed that Allensbank Primary School transfer to the shared Gladstone Primary School/St Monica's Church in Wales Primary School site. Whilst the St Monica's Church in Wales Primary School building would not be capable of accommodation a one form entry Allensbank Primary School, the site overall is capable of accommodating up to 420 pupils with nursery. However, as each school building could not accommodate 210 pupils each, the arrangements would require the Governing Bodies of the schools (or federated Governing Body) to determine how best to share buildings and outdoor space to allow for both schools to function appropriately.
176. Issues related to vulnerable children are addressed at paragraph 10 and paragraph 142.
177. The Published Admission Number at Allensbank Primary School was reduced from 45 places to 30 places from September 2022 to better reflect the demand for places at the school. Under Option 3 a further reduction to 0.9FE is proposed, however the site currently operates at one form of entry and this could be a possibility (subject to the agreement of the Governing Body) in the event of increased demand for places Allensbank Primary School.
178. The Allensbank Staff (NEU Members) suggestion of a fourth option is noted. Issues related to English-medium provision being located on the Allensbank Primary School site are addressed at paragraphs 59 – 62.
179. The proposed changes have been brought forward in order to ensure an appropriate balance of places to serve the area and to allow for resources to be invested in teaching and learning leading to improved outcomes for all learners. A range of factors have informed the proposals as set out in the consultation document and acknowledged by Estyn in their response with all schools treated fairly.

### **Gladstone Primary School Governing Body**

180. The Gladstone Primary School Governing Body submitted a response which included the following points: (a copy of the full response can be seen at Appendix 10)

***Do you support Option 1? No***

- *I can see the positives to solve Gladstone's deficit budget by pooling resources with another school. A wider group of staff may also offer wider opportunities for staff and more after school clubs. We may also be able to host a speech and language unit. However, there are several issues which would threaten the school's ability to offer the education and support it currently offers.*

*1. Impact on staff and learners. Many staff are already anxious about losing their jobs. With this uncertainty lasting until September 2025, this may impact the teaching and learning experience for children. This option would also risk the headteacher's role as she too would have to apply. The headteacher has been an excellent leader, pupil numbers have grown annually since her arrival and our ESTYN inspection a success. This option risks losing the most vital resources that make Gladstone such a success.*

*2. Loss of identity. Gladstone holds a special place in the community and it is vital to support many vulnerable families. 36% of our children qualify for free school meals as they live in relative poverty. 65% of our pupils aged over 5 years speak English as an additional language (EAL), 48% of which are below competent in English (A-C). Our ESTYN inspection recognised our ability to help many vulnerable families to live happy and safe lives. The school supports them informally through translation and interpretation and because the school is small, staff are able to build relationships and trust with families. This is important for parents that have not had the linguistic or social confidence to engage otherwise, and is especially so for those whose children have additional learning needs. We have multiple generations of families that send their children to Gladstone because they trust their children will gain a positive and inclusive education. A loss of Gladstone as an entity would take away that role of trust the school holds locally.*

*3. Concern over lack of space to provide free school meals for a two-form entry school. We are constrained by the hall size and kitchen capacity; considerable investment would be needed to make it viable, as well as more midday supervisors to ensure the system functions. I also worry that this would take a long time to manage each day and could end up compromising teaching and learning time.*

*4. Concern over lack of space outdoors for a larger number of learners. Many of our children have limited access to safe outdoor spaces within the community. Doubling the number of children would put pressure on the available space and limit capacity to offer more outdoor activity after school clubs. The playground was described as "adequate" for a larger school by local authority staff, but I feel strongly that the needs of already-disadvantaged children should be a priority, accessing better than "adequate" outdoor space to enrich their learning experience and help to rebalance their life chances.*

**Do you support Option 2? No**

- *Co-location of the two schools on a single site could bring complexity to practical operations. If the schools federated, it is not clear what the budget implications would be for the schools and may ultimately lead to amalgamation due to funding pressures, which would effectively be option one.*

### **Do you support Option 3? Yes**

- *The third option may be the most practical from Gladstone's perspective in many ways. It would be the least disruptive option for the staff and children and therefore limit the impact of an uncertain period of change or reconfiguration on teaching and learning and reduce the risk of loss of experienced, knowledgeable staff.*
- *However, from a budgetary point of view, I acknowledge that this option may not benefit Gladstone and may not offer us an immediate way of setting a sustainable budget in the short term. However, I perceive this option could enable a reallocation of pupils from Allensbank to Gladstone, which might enable us to grow our pupil numbers to bring Gladstone's numbers up to capacity. This might allow us to make for a sustainable budget in the long-term with a full cohort in each class (we have capacity for around 30 more pupils currently).*
- *As a governing body, we wish for the good work that Gladstone primary does within the community and for its learners to continue, and this option may allow us to keep the ethos and spirit of the school without compromising due to budgetary pressures. This option naturally also ensures that Ysgol Mynydd Bychan can operate in the space it needs and the community retains its schools and minimises disruption for all.*

### **Appraisal of views expressed**

181. The work of the Gladstone Headteacher and staff in meeting the diverse needs of children who attend the school is acknowledged. The proposed changes have been brought forward within the context of falling pupil rolls and the need to provide a more sustainable pattern of primary school provision to allow for a more effective use of the schools' financial resources with a greater proportion of school budgets available for teaching and learning and learning experiences and opportunities alongside support for families.
182. The impact on staff of Option 1 is recognised. The formal closure of Allensbank Primary School and Gladstone Primary School would place staff at the risk of redundancy and staffing issues related to this are addressed at paragraphs 89 - 91.
183. The issues related to the impact on vulnerable learners are addressed at paragraph 10 and paragraph 132.
184. The combined Gladstone and St Monica's school buildings could accommodate a 2 Form Entry primary school (up to 420 pupils) with nursery. The Boathouse

building, currently used for storage, could provide an additional resource base but would require investment to do so.

185. The schools occupy two Grade 2 listed buildings which have been assessed as Condition category C+ (Poor with major defects) and Suitability category B (Satisfactory). The school buildings were assessed as generally in a satisfactory condition, with the exception of the building formerly used for childcare (St Monica's) and the Boat House (Gladstone) which required large scale roofing works to remedy water ingress and damp to internal areas. Works to external walls, windows and roofs were planned through the Council's Capital Asset programme and are underway with many aspects completed in 2022/2023. Boundary walls are also showing signs of deterioration due to age and have recently been reviewed by a structural engineer to determine the urgency of works required, it is likely that these works will be included within the main contract for the building works.
186. The works currently underway are expected to be completed in the 2023/24 school year and have been phased appropriately to minimise disruption to teaching and learners.
187. The concerns regarding the co-location of Allensbank Primary School and Gladstone Primary School on the Gladstone Primary School/St Monica's Church in Wales Primary School site are noted.
188. The Gladstone Primary School Governing Body's support for Option 3 is noted.
189. Option 3 would allow for all the existing schools to be retained but would not allow for the establishment of nursery provision at St Monica's Church in Wales Primary School and the associated benefits. Maintaining Allensbank Primary School and Gladstone Primary School as two separate schools would not allow for the benefits of a two-form -entry school to be realised. It would also not allow for in the formula funding that would be released in Option 1 to be made available for ring-fencing to the schools, nor for distribution to schools city-wide through the funding formula. Compared to Option 1, there would be fewer financial resources to support the school to further develop provision and/ or invest in resources to benefit its pupils, and to maintain and improve standards.
190. As each of the schools has surplus places in the Foundation Phase year groups, and many neighbouring schools also have surplus places, there is no information to suggest that this option would have a positive impact on Gladstone Primary School's intake and future budget position.
191. Should the Governing Bodies of Allensbank Primary School and Gladstone Primary School agree to implementation of collaborative/formal federation arrangements, a number of the educational benefits identified could be realised.

**Gladstone Primary School Headteacher**

192. The Gladstone Primary School Headteacher submitted a response which included the following points: (a copy of the full response can be seen at Appendix 10)

**Do you support Option 1? Opinion not indicated**

- *This would be an exciting opportunity for two community schools to unite and form one larger Primary School in the Cathays area. Having one larger Primary School in the area would ensure a smooth transition for pupils from the age of 3 through to 16 years at High School. A larger school would allow for staff to share expertise and create greater collaboration/CPD opportunities. Additional staff could also provide a range of expertise and educational experiences for pupils in the school. An amalgamated school would offset any deficit budgets schools may currently have and provide a more sustainable future for the families and staff. An increase in pupil numbers would impact positively on the school budget and provide additional resources and opportunities for pupils. The whole school community would have the opportunity to contribute their ideas and thoughts to help shape their child's school for the future e.g., deciding on the school name, school uniform, branding giving them ownership of their school in their own community.*
- *The school's building work will be completed and will hopefully provide pupils with a structurally sound building to be proud of. There was previously one school on the whole site with the infant building being located in St Monica's and the Junior school at Gladstone. This could be a possibility for a new amalgamated school with also space for an After School Club and/or a Speech and Language Unit, SRB or Nurture facility. Gladstone Primary School currently hold family learning courses for parents/carers which could continue.*
- *Having one Primary School will also create more opportunities for families to network and support one another in the community. This would also allow the community to work together to help support raise funds for the school and support any local events/businesses. A larger school could enable the school to reach out to more people in the community and raise awareness of the Boathouse building as a potential space which could be utilised by families/businesses.*
- *I appreciate this option would be unsettling for all staff, including myself, as we would all have to re-apply for our jobs with the Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher positions going national which could mean potential redundancies.*

**Do you support Option 2? Opinion not indicated**

- *Co-locating Allensbank and Gladstone Primary School on a shared site would allow two community schools to come together and provide greater collaboration opportunities for staff, pupils, families and governors. Having both schools on one site would allow for staff to share expertise and create greater collaboration/CPD opportunities. Staff could also provide a range of*



*expertise and educational experiences for pupils in the school. There would be the opportunity to pool resources together which both schools could benefit from. This would also ensure that Gladstone and Allensbank retain their identity and ethos. If schools were to federate this would be an exciting opportunity to work closely with all stakeholders of both schools and unite them under one umbrella.*

- This would give families time to adjust to the schools working on one site and be a smoother transition should the schools federate in the future.*
- This option would have little impact on staffing with nearly all staff not having to reapply for their jobs offering more job security.*
- Consideration would need to be given as to how Allensbank and Gladstone would share the site as this would need to be managed appropriately to ensure families are clear on school structures etc.*

### **Do you support Option 3? Yes**

- This option would allow us to keep our identity, history and ethos which is important to our school community. This option would have the least disruption and impact on our school.*
- This option would have no impact on the pupils at Gladstone which would provide continuity and stability for their future. We are proud of the recent Estyn Inspection report and would like to build on the already good practice recognized by inspectors. Families have expressed how welcoming and nurturing the school is and how they like the fact we are a small community school as it allows us to support everyone including our EAL and most vulnerable families. We are a multigenerational school, and this option would allow families to continue to return to Gladstone School.*
- Pupil numbers have been on the increase since 2018 and are continuing to rise which will hopefully contribute positively to the budget and future of Gladstone School. Option 3 would allow us to maintain and grow our current nursery numbers.*
- If schools were to federate this would be an exciting opportunity to work closely with all stakeholders of both schools and unite them under one umbrella. With federation there could potentially be a staffing restructure which could create savings in the long term to the budget. There would be the opportunity for both Allensbank and Gladstone to work collaboratively and share expertise and knowledge. This would also impact positively on the learners as their educational experiences could be enhanced. There would be the opportunity to pool resources together which both schools could benefit from. Having a Federated School would create more opportunities for families to network and support one another in the community. This would also allow the community to work together to help support raise funds for the school and support any local events/businesses. A federated school could enable the school to reach out to more people in the community and raise*

*awareness of the Boathouse building as a potential space which could be utilised by families/businesses.*

- *There is space at Gladstone School to house a Speech and Language Unit.*
- *This would be a quicker and easier option to manage only impacting on 2 schools physically. This option also means that the majority of staff will not have to re-apply for their jobs which will ensure staff wellbeing is maintained.*
- *The Local Authority have invested heavily in the restoration of Gladstone School with extensive building work being undertaken over the last few years – option 3 would allow the staff and pupils/families to enjoy and appreciate their new renovated building.*

**Would you like to suggest any changes or alternatives to the proposed options?**

- *Extra funding to support the huge pupil mobility factor would support schools in this area and make budget planning for the future less challenging.*

**Do you wish to make any additional comments?**

- *We have faced (as have other schools) many challenges over the last few years which have included Covid, Building Work, Budgets, Estyn and now the consultation of schools in the area. I appreciate that there are advantages and disadvantages for all schools involved with all options but trust that the Council will make the right decision for the future of learners and families in the Cathays area. Although Option 3 is my preferred option I have offered my opinion on Option 1 and 2 as I feel this is important. We will support whatever the outcome will be and help manage the change effectively for all parties involved.*

### **Appraisal of views expressed**

193. The Gladstone Primary School Headteacher's comments on each of the options, and support for Option 3, are noted.
194. The abilities of a larger school as proposed in Option 1 and schools within federations to allow for staff to share expertise and create greater collaboration/CPD opportunities are noted; the benefits of these arrangements are addressed at paragraphs 27 – 28 and paragraph 34.
195. In the event of Option 1 being progressed there would be an impact on staff and issues related to this are addressed at paragraphs 90 - 94.
196. The financial matters related to each of the school's budgets, and the establishment of a new school in Option 1 are addressed at paragraph 90 and paragraphs 29 – 31. The formula funding of primary schools includes a specific allocation within a school's budget relating to pupil mobility and the formula for funding school budgets is reviewed annually.

197. The Council acknowledges that the self-contained accommodation on the shared Gladstone and St Monica's site could provide space for an After School Club and/or a Speech and Language Unit, SRB or Nurture facility subject to investment in these facilities.
198. The current Gladstone Primary School/St Monica's Church is Wales Primary School site overall is capable of accommodating up to 420 pupils with nursery. However, as each school building could not accommodate 210 pupils each, the schools would have to work together to agree how the available accommodation could best be used to meet the operational requirements of both schools.
199. As set out previously whilst Option 3 would allow for all of the existing schools to be retained, this would now allow for the range of benefits that would be achievable under Option 1 as set out at paragraphs 27 – 31.

### **Gladstone Primary School Staff**

200. The Gladstone Primary School Staff submitted a response which included the following points: (a copy of the full response can be seen at Appendix 10)

#### ***Do you support Option 1? No***

- *The two oldest primary schools in the Cathays area, lose their identity and history.*
- *The intimate school ethos of two smaller primary schools, would be lost. With the new families, the families who need that support, and the families with little to no English, having the support within a smaller setting has always been crucial in maintaining positive relationships, and helping those in need.*
- *Staff have to re-apply for their posts.*
- *Senior staff, i.e. HT & DHTs have to re-apply for their positions; this would be advertised nationally, not just between the schools.*
- *Redundancies.*
- *A new nursery could reduce numbers at Gladstone.*

#### ***Do you support Option 2? No***

- *Could be confusing for parents/families if schools are having to share both buildings?*
- *Could be logistically challenging for schools.*
- *Federation could mean Senior Leaders are at risk of losing their jobs from both schools*
- *Possible redundancies*

#### ***Do you support Option 3? Yes***

- *This option would allow us to keep our identity, history and ethos which is important to our school community. This option would have the least disruption and impact on our school.*

- *Parent/Carers have expressed how much they value the staff at the school and are concerned about the impact of the consultation process on staff wellbeing. They are also concerned that this could also impact on standards due to the uncertainty ahead for staff and pupils. This option would have little impact on staffing with nearly all staff not having to reapply for their jobs offering more job security.*
- *This option would have no impact on the pupils at Gladstone which would provide continuity and stability for their future. We are proud of the recent Estyn Inspection report and would like to build on the already good practice recognized by inspectors. Families have expressed how welcoming and nurturing the school is and how they like the fact we are a small community school as it allows us to support everyone including our EAL and most vulnerable families. We are a multigenerational school and this option would allow families to continue to return to Gladstone School.*
- *Pupil numbers have been on the increase since 2018 and are continuing to rise which will hopefully contribute positively to the budget and future of Gladstone School. Option 3 would allow us to maintain and grow our current nursery numbers.*
- *If schools were to federate this would be an exciting opportunity to work closely with all stakeholders of both schools and unite them under one umbrella. With federation there could potentially be a staffing restructure which could create savings in the long term to the budget. There would be the opportunity for both Allensbank and Gladstone to work collaboratively and share expertise and knowledge. This would also impact positively on the learners as their educational experiences could be enhanced. There would be the opportunity to pool resources together which both schools could benefit from. Having a Federated School would create more opportunities for families to network and support one another in the community. This would also allow the community to work together to help support raise funds for the school and support any local events/businesses. A federated school could enable the school to reach out to more people in the community and raise awareness of the Boathouse building as a potential space which could be utilised by families/businesses.*
- *There is space at Gladstone School to house a Speech and Language Unit.*
- *This would be a quicker and easier option to manage only impacting on 2 schools physically. This option also means that the majority of staff will not have to re-apply for their jobs which will ensure staff wellbeing is maintained.*
- *The Local Authority have invested heavily in the restoration of Gladstone School with extensive building work being undertaken over the last few years – option 3 would allow the staff and pupils/families to enjoy and appreciate their new renovated building.*

***Would you like to suggest any changes or alternatives to the proposed options?***

- *Extra funding to support the huge pupil mobility factor would support schools in this area and make budget planning for the future less challenging.*

***Do you wish to make any additional comments?***

- *Our preferred option is 3 but we will support whatever the outcome will be and help manage the change effectively for all parties involved.*

**Appraisal of views expressed**

201. The support of Gladstone Primary School staff for Option 3 is noted.
202. The work of each school in supporting pupils and families from a range of backgrounds is acknowledged. The proposals were brought forward in order to provide a more appropriate balance of places and to ensure that a greater level of funding is able to be invested in teaching and learning. The proposals were brought forward in order to provide a more appropriate balance of places and to ensure that a greater level of funding is able to be invested in teaching and learning enhancing opportunities for all children.
203. The implementation of Option 1 would have implications for staff and issues related to this are addressed at paragraphs 90 – 94.
204. At present the Council funds 112 community nursery places between Allensbank Primary School and Gladstone Primary School. The number funded is reducing to 96 places next year, to reflect demand. It is proposed to allow for 96 places English-medium community nursery places under each of the three options consulted on.
205. The establishment of nursery provision at St Monica's Church in Wales Primary School would allow for a range of benefits for learners attending the school supporting the transition from Nursery to Reception.
206. Whilst the Gladstone Primary School/St Monica's Church in Wales Primary School site is capable of accommodating two one form entry primary schools it is acknowledged that there are challenges associated with this. The expectation is however that two schools could co-locate without confusion for parents/families if the schools are having to share both buildings.
207. Option 2 or Option 3 would allow for the Governing Bodies of Allensbank Primary School and Gladstone Primary School to consider collaborative working or the establishment of a formal federation. Federation could result in a reduction in the number of leadership roles overall across the two schools depending on the model taken forward. Any decision taken with regards to staffing would be a matter for the relevant Governing Body.

208. It is recognised that Option 3 would directly impact the least number of schools however it would also deliver fewer benefits than Option 1 or Option 2. Maintaining four separate school establishments would not allow for the savings that would be achieved and available for reinvestment in education in Option 1 or the establishment of nursery provision at St Monica's Church in Wales Primary School and the associated benefits in Option 1 and Option 2.
209. A range of benefits could be delivered through a federation and in the event of Option 2 or Option 3 being progressed, federation would be an option for the relevant governing bodies to consider. Any proposal to federate would be subject to a separate consultation.
210. Consideration would be given to the relocation of the city-side Speech and Language class hosted by Allensbank Primary School should Option 3 be progressed.
211. The staffing structure of schools is directly related to the number of pupils on roll.
212. The majority of a school budget is allocated to staffing. In a period of reducing pupil intakes to primary schools, and when schools need to identify saving from within their individual budgets in order to address the deficit budget positions, the number of staff employed may reduce whether or not any proposals to reorganise are progressed.
213. Both Option 1 and Option 2 allow for staff and pupils/families to enjoy and appreciate the renovated building.

#### **St Monica's Church in Wales Primary School – Finance, Premises and Health & Safety Committee of the Governing Body**

214. The St Monica's Church in Wales Primary School Finance, Premises and Health & Safety Committee of the Governing Body submitted a response which included the following points: (a copy of the full response can be seen at Appendix 10)

##### ***Do you support Option 1? Yes***

- *As a committee we believe option 1 to be in the best interest of our school and other schools involved. We believe the relocation of St Monica's to the current Ysgol Mynydd Bychan site would benefit us for several reasons:*
- *Our school is currently oversubscribed, we have waiting lists for every year group (except for reception). Our current site isn't fit for purpose for growing demand for church school places. Site move would allow us to incorporate a nursery. We hope there is scope for us to increase to a 0.9 form entry school. Making our school more financially viable.*
- *Moving site would place St Monica's in new Parish Ministry area. Allowing for the first time children in that area catchment – widening choice for church schools.*

- *Our current building is listed and has undergone significant repairs in recent years. A financial challenge due to us being a church school and relying on CRAMP funding (Capital Repairs and Maintenance Programme).*
- *To have a modern, more economical building we could better use CRAMP funding for betterment of school. Relieving financial pressures.*
- *For all schools involved we feel it would be best use of tax payer money and most efficient distribution of finances to manage schools.*

### **Appraisal of views expressed**

215. St Monica's Church in Wales Primary School – Finance, Premises and Health & Safety Committee of the Governing Body support for Option 1 is noted.
216. The changes proposed under Option 1 seek to establish nursery provision at St Monica's Church in Wales Primary School and the benefits associated with this. The potential for the school to increase the number of statutory age places for learners aged 4 – 11 would be a matter for the Governing Body of the school to consider and may be subject to a separate consultation and statutory processes.
217. Issues related to Parish Ministry areas are outside the scope of School Organisation Planning.

### **St Monica's Church in Wales Primary School Standards Committee of the Governing Body**

218. The St Monica's Church in Wales Primary School Standards Committee of the Governing Body submitted a response which included the following points: (a copy of the full response can be seen at Appendix 10)

#### ***Do you support Option 1? Yes***

- *The committee believe that St Monica's having nursery provision would support the transition from nursery to reception (albeit that parents would have to apply for places in Reception) as the transition can be tricky especially if Additional Learning Needs have been identified for individual children. So if we had our own nursery, we would already know the children well and transition would be easier.*
- *The benefits to standards are that all the foundation phase classrooms have direct access to outdoor areas which would enhance the curriculum we were able to provide. The building is also in a better condition, so more money would be available for resources. Also, having more staff would allow responsibilities to be shared, thus reducing the workload for SLT and Headteacher and allowing them to focus on improving teaching across the school.*
- *If option 3 is decided, there will still be 3 very small schools and less money in the system to support learning and teaching. Currently there are 4 small*

*schools. Option 1 means that there will only be one small school - St Monica's. The funding model currently used for Nursery places would mean that St Monica's would be financially more stable, also allowing a higher percentage of the budget to be spent on learning and teaching - thus raising standards further.*

**Do you support Option 2? No**

- *This option is in effect exactly the same as Option 1 for St Monica's, however, there would be less money in the system if there were still 3 small schools in the Cathays/Heath area.*

**Do you support Option 3? No**

- *St Monica's is an oversubscribed primary school that is financially unviable. The only option for sustainability is for the school to be allowed to grow - which it is very capable of having waiting lists in almost every single year group.*

**Appraisal of views expressed**

219. The St Monica's Church in Wales Primary School Standards Committee of the Governing Body support for Option 1 is noted.

220. The views expressed regarding Option 2 and Option 3 are noted. Option 1 would provide a more economically sustainable patterns of school provision over the long term and support schools to be financially sustainable in an improved patterns of provision through amalgamation. This option would allow for schools to allocate a greater proportion of budget to teaching and learning, thereby retaining and increasing opportunities for learners, provide an improved balance between the availability and take up of both English-medium and Welsh-medium primary school places and maintain the current number of English-medium school places serving the area.

221. The changes proposed under Option 1 and Option 2 would see St Monica's Church in Wales Primary School transfer to the current Ysgol Mynydd Bychan site at its existing capacity and with a Published Admission Number retained at 20 places. Any increase in the capacity of the school, would be a matter for the Governing Body to consider.

**St Monica's Church in Wales Primary School Vision and Values Committee of the Governing Body**

222. The St Monica's Church in Wales Primary School Vision and Values Committee of the Governing Body submitted a response which included the following points: (a copy of the full response can be seen at Appendix 10)

**Do you support Option 1? Yes**



- *We would recommend Option 1. Considering the impact Option 2 would have on the school communities involved, from our experience we know that sharing a site comes with many challenges.*
- *Furthermore, Option 1 would enable any future children attending St Monica's to enjoy the facility of a nursery attached to the school on the Mynydd Bychan site, so they are able to be with any older siblings and benefit from a faith-based (Anglican) nursery experience which is not currently available in this area.*
- *The ability to move site would also increase the catchment area for the school to include the Parish of St Mark's in Gabalfa. St Mark's also does not have a church primary school attached to it, and this change would further increase parents' access to a faith-based education - which is their right. This also aligns with the Diocesan vision to 'grow the Kingdom of God'.*
- *The opportunity to have a larger building would enable us to further develop our curriculum offering, including quieter spaces for prayer and reflection. Consideration would need to be given to how St Monica's could ensure the whole learning environment is suitable for a faith-based education - this includes areas for prayer/worship and reflection both inside and outside the Mynydd Bychan site.*
- *We are a thriving, oversubscribed school community, and are current having to turn away many children. This means that many families are not able to exercise their right to choose a faith-based education and many come to our school who have already had significant transitions, changes, and challenges in life before their arrival in Cardiff. Turning away families from our community sits very uncomfortably with us as a Governing Body.*
- *The close proximity of the proposed new site means that our existing links with St Michael's Church and The Table can continue. Travel time for families would be only marginally impacted upon. Traffic management of the Mynydd Bychan site would be easier as only one school's community will be attending and leaving at any one time.*
- *For all of the reasons outlined above, we feel that the potential move would accord with the vision, values and Christian ethos which we have worked so hard to develop and sustain in St. Monica's CW Primary School.*

**Do you support Option 2? No**

- *Please see comments for Option 1.*

**Do you support Option 3? No**

- *Please see comments for Option 1.*

**Appraisal of views expressed**

223. St Monica's Church in Wales Primary School Vision and Values Committee of the Governing Body support for Option 1 and comments are noted.

### **St Monica's Church in Wales Primary School Headteacher**

224. The St Monica's Church in Wales Primary School Headteacher submitted a response which included the following points: (a copy of the full response can be seen at Appendix 10)

#### ***Do you support Option 1? Yes***

- *I support Option 1 as I am aware of the huge difficulties all schools in Cardiff currently have in trying to balance budgets. I sit on the School Budget Forum and represent small schools and faith schools. The budget formula has a disproportionately negative impact on small schools as they are less economical to run. Only Option 1 significantly reduces the number of small schools. This option would mean that more money is available in the system for the education of all children in the city. This money is then available to spend on learning and teaching, rather than the upkeep of multiple buildings by small individual schools, space/school places are also used more efficiently so heating and resources are used better.*
- *Three school buildings are listed, under Option 1 St Monica's would move into an unlisted building, enabling better use of the CRAMP fund (Capital Repairs and Maintenance Programme fund from Welsh Government for the upkeep of faith schools) so the school should be able to repair and maintain the building better. The design of the Mynydd Bychan building is also better matched to meeting the needs of pupils within the Curriculum for Wales. Each downstairs classroom has direct access to the outdoors, which would facilitate outdoor learning, supervision and alternative learning styles - meeting the needs of the St Monica's learners better.*
- *Moving school site would also mean that we would not need to share a site with another school. Time, we spend for worship activities would not be interrupted by the (understandable) noise from another school, playground space would be greatly enhanced from the area we are current able to utilise and traffic management would be easier as we would not need to stagger out start and end times to correspond with another school.*
- *The transition from Nursery to Reception would be easier as children (once they have applied for a place in Reception) would be known to us, any ALN processes would have already been started and then continued in the same setting and any settling in periods would not need to be factored in before we requested additional support as that would have already happened in Nursery.*
- *An additional teacher would need to be employed which would further reduce the burden held by all teachers in the school as multiple roles are held by teachers that in a larger school shared out amongst many.*

- *The change in Ministry Area would mean that the Governing Body are likely to consult to extend the catchment area currently proscribed in our admissions policy to include the Parish of St Mark's, Gabalfa. There is no Church in Wales primary school for that Ministry Area currently, so this would also support the Diocesan mission to 'Grow the Kingdom of God'.*

**Do you support Option 2? No**

- *There is less financial or educational benefit to relocating 3 schools in this option.*

**Do you support Option 3? No**

- *St Monica's is a thriving, oversubscribed primary school. Option 3 gives no room for growth and does not enable the school to become financially viable. As smaller schools, Gladstone and Allensbank are also much less likely to be financially viable under this model.*

**Appraisal of views expressed**

225. The Headteacher of St Monica's Church in Wales Primary School's support for Option 1 and comments are noted.

226. The funding formula for schools is driven by per pupil funding and a number of lump sum allocations per school. A reduction in the number of schools would allow for a reduction in the number of lump sum allocations to schools. The school budget formula saving from amalgamating Allensbank Primary School and Gladstone Primary School by closing each school and creating a single two form entry primary school as set out in Option 1 would be approximately £98,000 per year. This is based on the removal of one of the lump sum allowances provided to schools city-wide.

227. Option 1 would therefore allow for a redistribution of financial resources to schools city-wide through the reduction in the number of lump sum allocations to individual schools.

**Ysgol Mynydd Bychan Governing Body and Members of Staff**

228. The Ysgol Mynydd Bychan Governing Body and Members of Staff submitted a response which included the following points: (a copy of the full response can be seen at Appendix 10)

- *The Governing Body and members of staff are fully supportive of national and local goals to increase the number of children receiving Welsh-medium education and stand ready to play their part, alongside the Council and Welsh Government.*
- *Given the consistent oversubscription for places at YMB over several years, and the reality that the school catchment area is one of many areas within the city of Cardiff where there is scope to increase the number of children in*

*Welsh-medium education, we are pleased that the Council has been proactive in seeking, and successfully obtaining, grant funding to support capital investments that facilitate growth in Welsh-medium education and use of the Welsh language at YMB.*

- While we recognise that uptake is projected to level out over the next few years, due to falling birth rates, we are mindful that an upsurge is forecasted towards the end of this decade and the beginning of the next, which requires us to think creatively now to achieve a sustainable solution and to accommodate the demand we expect in the coming years.*
- The Governing Body and members of staff are of the view that the best way to achieve expansion of Ysgol Mynydd Bychan is a new school building and site that further exploration of the potential utilisation of the existing Cathays High School site, should the relocation of Cathays High School go ahead, or the vacant space at the Companies House site, would be worthwhile.*
- Whilst the financial implications of a new building and site for YMB and the need to utilise the Council's existing assets where possible are appreciated, it is presumed that it would be possible to dispose of an existing school site for redevelopment in the event that it became redundant.*
- All three options could offer a permanent solution to provide for the demand for Welsh-medium education and the achieving the goal of expanding Welsh-medium education in the area.*
- Any expansion of Ysgol Mynydd Bychan must be delivered on a whole school basis, rather than year-by-year or progress step-by-step basis. This is essential to enable Ysgol Mynydd Bychan to continue being able to offer the level of education and opportunities to its pupils as at present, as well as to achieve the 'buy in' from Ysgol Mynydd Bychan's parents and wider community.*
- Ysgol Mynydd Bychan will continue proactively to seek and foster a positive relationship and a sense of community with the other schools in our area, including regular interactions between pupils to mark, for example, the Urdd's Day of Goodwill and the Eisteddfod.*
- All the other existing school sites within the locality are Listed Buildings and, as such, could prove difficult to alter and adapt to meet our requirements in line with the Curriculum for Wales and the 21st Century Schools and Education Programme.*
- We are also concerned about the ongoing maintenance requirements of the other existing school sites within the locality given that all three schools have been covered in scaffolding for at least the past three years, with very little progress on any remedial works being undertaken. We would not want to see the school burdened by long-term outstanding maintenance works.*

- *Ysgol Mynydd Bychan may be relocated to a site, at which it could prove difficult or impossible to deliver a scheme of improvement works which ensures that we are able to offer the same, if not a better, level of facilities as our current site.*
- *We ask the Council to make appropriate further enquiries regarding the issues raised above, and to make this information available.*
- *We are concerned about the energy efficiency of the school buildings under consideration. We have requested information from the Council on this matter but unfortunately this has not been forthcoming. We were told that this information was available to Council Officers but have not received anything to date.*
- *We are also concerned that any move to a larger school building could cause the school major financial challenges if not properly addressed by the Council. In the future, school will be operating in a larger building with only a marginal increase in pupil numbers for a few years. School budgets are becoming increasingly challenging and there will be substantial pressure over the next few years. We would look for the Council to work with the Governing Body to alleviate the budgetary implications of a rapid expansion.*
- *Given that all three options would deliver the same outcome for YMB, and given the questions and concerns we have outlined above, we are not minded to indicate a preferred choice between the three options.*
- *However, we believe that achieving expansion of Welsh-medium primary education in the north of Cardiff, as in the city more generally, which we support strongly, requires a permanent solution which enables YMB to continue to provide rich learning experiences to our pupils. All three options under consultation could provide such a solution.*

### **Appraisal of views expressed**

229. The Council welcomes the Ysgol Mynydd Bychan Governing Body's and members of staff support for the expansion of Welsh-medium provision.
230. The Council has investigated alternative site options that may be available and centrally located within the existing Ysgol Mynydd Bychan catchment area. There is no suitable vacant site available in the area local to the school that could accommodate an enlarged Ysgol Mynydd Bychan.
231. There is also sufficient capacity within existing schools serving the area to enable the reorganisation of existing provision. Reorganisation of provision would present an appropriate means of balancing the availability and take up of both English-medium and Welsh-medium provision in the area. It would also allow for

- a more effective and efficient use of resources. This would retain flexibility in the school estate to respond to any future population changes affecting the area.
232. Proposals brought forward must ensure that the growth of schools is sustainable whilst the potential negative impact on other schools is minimised.
233. The expansion of Ysgol Mynydd Bychan to 2FE would enable an increase in the take up of places at the school. If the proposed changes were to be implemented, it is expected that most of the additional pupils enrolled at Ysgol Mynydd Bychan would be from within its catchment area, and some may be from other areas of the city. This takes account of recent school preference patterns, and the overall fall in the population entering primary education in the next three intakes.
234. An increase in the take up of places at Ysgol Mynydd Bychan by children from within its catchment area would mean that the take up of places in local English-medium schools by children from the area would reduce. An increase in the take up of places at Ysgol Mynydd Bychan from outside its catchment area would mean that the take up of places in other Welsh-medium schools in other parts of the city would likely reduce.
235. Works to maintain the fabric of the school buildings have been undertaken as priority condition and suitability works to ensure the health and safety of the school buildings. The scaffolding that has been in place was required immediately when condition issues were identified and was necessary in order for the works to be carried out and is due to be removed during the academic year 2023/24.
236. Should Ysgol Mynydd Bychan transfer to the Allensbank site, any changes to the buildings and external areas utilising the Welsh Government capital grant would be considered at a later design stage. The capital funding allocated is to enable the expansion of Welsh Medium education. The Council would identify and agree priorities for the investment in partnership with the Ysgol Mynydd Bychan Governing Body.
237. The expansion of Ysgol Mynydd Bychan on the Allensbank site would be phased from September 2025, by increasing the admission number for the nursery and Reception year groups only in the first instance. This would mean that the school does not need to use all of its accommodation in 2025/2026 and could allow for parts of the two buildings to be closed to staff and pupils to limit the impact on the school's budget and/ or whilst works are undertaken.
238. Each school receives funding for energy usage within its delegated budget. The allocation is based on actual usage from the previous year abated by a notional energy efficiency proportion. The overall energy performance operational rating of Allensbank is 'C', with a score of 75. The overall Energy performance operational rating of Ysgol Mynydd Bychan is 'C', with a score of 65. The typical score for a public building is 100. This typical score gives an operational rating of D. Energy certification information and performance ratings are published online at [Find an energy certificate - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk).

239. The expansion of the school would incur additional staffing and leadership costs for the school which would be met from the school's budget. The budget would increase in line with the greater number of pupils on roll. The Council would support the school to plan and prioritise spending with a dedicated local financial management officer providing advice.
240. The proposed expansion may result in the school operating some smaller classes, or some mixed-aged classes, as the school grows. School admissions preference data indicates that the number of pupils admitted to the school would increase, but the school would have a high level of surplus places for a number of years. Although the school's budget would increase as the number of pupils increases, the cost per pupil would likely be higher for an extended period while the school grows. As growth, and investment, would be phased, the financial impact of changes would be minimised wherever possible.

### **RhAG (Parents for Welsh Education)**

241. A response from RhAG (Parents for Welsh Education) submitted a response which included the following points: (a copy of the full response can be seen at Appendix 10)
- *few opportunities exist still in the county for pupils to be able to choose a Welsh language education easily and conveniently with only 20 Welsh medium schools while there are 96 English medium schools.*
  - *A pledge has been made and money has been received from Welsh Government to increase the Welsh language education capacity of this area of the city since 2018 with pressure being felt in this area since long before then.*
  - *The lack of an increase in Welsh language education provision in this area of the city has and will continue to cause challenges and other negative side effects across the county until a solution is found. There are families in this area of the city who have had to accept places in schools that are not within their catchment area, and as younger siblings applied for places in local schools, have been forced to apply to a school that is not within the catchment and therefore have had to travel further than normal, changing a journey made on foot to a journey in a car and in increasing cases of children from the same family having to go to different schools.*
  - *the new provision must be suitable for education in the C21st and we are not fully convinced that this building will fulfil this need from the information that's been provided.*
  - *It is not clear from the consultation the details and impact of the sanitary and drainage works nor who will be responsible for funding these aspects when the reorganization takes place and therefore what will be Ysgol Mynydd Bychan's budgetary responsibility in this situation.*
  - *Increasing the capacity of Ysgol Mynydd Bychan to 420 will mean a significant change in the area in terms of the Welsh language education offer. We see*

*no mention of the promotion and public communication steps that will be needed for this change. RhAG would of course be able to assist with this aspect.*

### **Appraisal of views expressed**

242. Cardiff has invested significantly in the growth of Welsh-medium by delivering additional places at entry to primary education and at transfer into secondary education. The establishment of the highly successful immersion provision has also played a crucial role in supporting and increasing the number of in-year transfers.
243. Since 2010, Cardiff has increased the Welsh-medium capacity available at entrance to the primary sector by approximately six forms of entry (FE) and intakes at reception have grown by an average of approximately 0.25% per year between September 2015 and September 2020.
244. During the same period within the secondary school sector, the Council established Cardiff's third Welsh-medium school and increased capacity at established schools which has resulted in an overall increase of 7 Forms of Entry.
245. Cardiff has also established its highly successful Welsh Immersion provision. Initially established within the primary sector to support parents to transfer their children to Welsh-medium education, the provision has grown to welcome pupils at KS3 and KS4. This has meant that pupils from Cardiff and neighbouring authorities could transition effectively from English-medium into Welsh-medium schools, becoming fully bilingual students and experiencing success at all key milestones.
246. As set out in Cardiff's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan, the Council is committed to increasing the number of Welsh-medium places available which will result in a corresponding increase in the children receiving their education through the medium of Welsh.
247. Demand for places at Ysgol Mynydd Bychan has been greater than the number of places available at the school in recent years. The Council consulted previously on proposed changes to increase the number of Welsh-medium school places serving the area, however these proposals were not progressed. The proposals consulted on in the most recent consultation reflects the issues raised during the previous consultation.
248. In each of the three options consulted on Ysgol Mynydd Bychan would transfer to the current Allensbank Primary School site. Should Ysgol Mynydd Bychan transfer to the Allensbank site, any changes to the buildings utilising the Welsh Government capital grant would be considered at a later design stage. The Council would identify and agree priorities for the investment in partnership with the Ysgol Mynydd Bychan Governing Body.
249. The Council is committed to the development of Welsh-medium education and as part of the 10-year Welsh in Education Strategic Plan which was adopted in



September 2022, consideration is being given to ways in which Welsh-medium education can be expanded to increase the number of children from all backgrounds attending.

250. The plan sets specific targets and identifies priority workstreams for the Council and partners such as schools, including a research pilot initiative with Bilingual Cardiff, parental surveys and focus groups, to better understand the reasons for low take-up of Welsh-medium places within specific under-represented groups and communities (including Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic), alongside bespoke promotions. This work is underway.
251. The proposed changes seek to provide an appropriate balance whereby each school type is available to all groups and each school is supported to be accessible, and to be seen to be accessible, to all groups. The work underway to better understand parental preferences and take up of places in each community, alongside improving visibility of language medium and immersion opportunities available, will directly target decreasing the disparities between demographic data in English-medium and Welsh-medium schools.

## **Other Responses Received**

### **Expansion of Welsh-medium provision**

- *There is insufficient demand for places at Ysgol Mynydd Bychan to justify an expansion to 2 forms of entry (Option 1, Option 2 & Option 3). Rationale based on provided spaces not take-up; what will happen when pupil numbers at Ysgol Mynydd Bychan do not increase?*
- *Ysgol Mynydd Bychan was only oversubscribed by 6 last year and that number is declining year or year. So, unless the Council's intention is to force people into Welsh medium education, there is no need for them to move to a larger school.*
- *It's unfair to move Allensbank school just to accommodate a Welsh speaking school that is oversubscribed by 2 people, furthermore there is a Welsh speaking school in Gabalfa that is undersubscribed.*
- *The potential for future English-medium demand to be greater than the number of places available has not been considered.*
- *The expansion of Welsh provision will restrict parents' choice; children won't have the option of choosing English-medium provision.*

### **Appraisal of views expressed**

252. Ysgol Mynydd Bychan has been fully subscribed at entry in each of the intakes in the 2018/19 to 2022/23 school years. In each year, there were sufficient places in schools serving neighbouring catchment areas to accommodate those pupils who were unable to gain admissions. However, for children within the catchment area of Ysgol Mynydd Bychan, alternative school places were often significantly further from their home address.

253. Table 2, below, summarises the admissions allocation data on offer day for Ysgol Mynydd Bychan in the most recent intakes.

<b>Table 2: Summary of allocation of Reception places at Ysgol Mynydd Bychan on offer day (April) in past five intake years</b>						
	<b>Intake Year</b>					
	<b>2018/19</b>	<b>2019/20</b>	<b>2020/21</b>	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>2023/24</b>
Places available	30	30	30	30	30	30
Places allocated	30	30	30	30	30	26
Total Preferences refused	11	4	22	7	6	0
Within catchment area preferences refused	7	0	15	3	2	0
Furthest distance of child admitted	0.592	1.19	0.584	0.788	0.937	N/a

254. In four of the past six intakes, the school has been unable to admit all children within its catchment area who stated a preference for a place in its Reception class. The take up of places by children in the south of catchment area, in parts of Cathays and Roath is low and applicants in this area would have been unable to gain admission. Many applicant's resident within the catchment area who live north of Eastern Avenue are also unable to gain admission.

255. For applicants in the south of the Ysgol Mynydd Bychan catchment area, the next nearest schools are significantly further away. The next nearest schools are Ysgol Glan Ceubal (Llandaff North), Ysgol Glan Morfa (Splott) and Ysgol Y Berllan Deg (Llanedeyrn). For applicants whose home address is north of Eastern Avenue, the next nearest schools are Ysgol Gymraeg Melin Gruffydd, Ysgol Glan Ceubal or Ysgol Y Wern. Each of these is further away, and both Ysgol Gymraeg Melin Gruffydd and Ysgol Y Wern have been fully subscribed in many of their recent intakes.

256. In the intake to primary education in 2023/24, all applicants for admission to Ysgol Mynydd Bychan were offered a place on national offer day. However, the level of surplus places at entry to Reception in north/ central Cardiff is at a low level.

257. Taking account of the projected lower intakes to primary schools until at least 2025/2026, there would be sufficient provision across the wider area to accommodate growth in Welsh-medium in the short term if there was no percentage growth, or a low level of growth, in demand. Changes to catchment areas could provide a balance between the number of places available, and the projected demand for places, and would allow for a limited increase in take up.

258. However, the projected level of surplus places would not be sufficient to significantly increase Welsh-medium take up in the longer term, in order to meet Cardiff's targeted growth as set out in the Cardiff's approved Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP).
259. Whilst changes to catchment areas could improve the balance of places, these changes alone would not support long term growth and would not represent a sufficient contribution towards meeting the growth target set in Cardiff's WESP.
260. Over the last ten years the increasing demand for Welsh-medium places in Cardiff was met and driven/supported by expanding the existing Welsh-medium schools. More provision may be needed to accommodate further increases in demand in some areas of Cardiff. The number of children taking up Welsh-medium places would increase further by opening or expanding more Welsh-medium schools.
261. There has been an average growth in the take up of Welsh-medium places of one quarter of a percentage point per year in recent years.
262. If the percentage of pupils entering Welsh-medium Reception classes increases at the same rate between 2021 and 2030, 20% of pupils would enter Welsh-medium Reception classes in September 2030. The target set for Cardiff by the Welsh Government is to deliver growth so that between 25% and 29% of Year 1 learners are educated through the medium of Welsh by 2031.
263. The existing capacity of Welsh-medium primary schools and classes in Cardiff would be sufficient to accommodate up to 21.8% of the pupil population, who are expected to enrol in the 2024/ 2025 school year. However, to achieve the targeted level of growth, annual growth of between 0.75% and 1.15% would be required city-wide.
264. Table 3, below, provides an indicative representation of a 1% point or 2% point per year growth to increase Welsh-medium take-up in the Ysgol Mynydd Bychan catchment area, taking account of the changing population in the catchment area.

**Table 3: Projected and forecast targeted demand for places in Welsh-medium Reception classes, of children resident in the Ysgol Mynydd Bychan catchment area, 2022 to 2026**

School Year	Existing take up	Projected take up – assuming no % increase	+1% point increase	+1% of catchment population	+2% points increase	+2% of catchment population
2022/23	16.2%	37				
2023/24	16.2%	37	17.2%	39	18.2%	41
2024/25	16.2%	35	18.2%	41	20.2%	46
2025/26	16.2%	31	19.2%	42	22.2%	49

2026/27	16.2%	34	20.2%	39	24.2%	46
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265. The above increase in take up of places could be accommodated in other schools if there was no growth in take up elsewhere. However, the Council must increase the take up of places throughout the city to meet the set targets. The Council cannot, therefore, rely on accommodating the targeted growth in demand in schools serving neighbouring catchment areas.

266. Any growth in the percentage of children taking up places in Welsh-medium provision would result in an equivalent reduced take up of places in English-medium provision, which may affect local schools and/or schools further afield.

267. Whilst a reasonable level of surplus would be required in the Welsh-medium sector to support future growth, consideration must be given to the impact on existing school provision of carrying a high level of surplus places in the English-medium sector.

268. On national offer day (Monday 17 April 2023), the Council allocated the following community school places in accordance with parental preferences:

Table 4: Summary of the allocation of places at community primary schools, as at 17 April 2023		
School	Admission Number	Places allocated
Albany Primary School	60	28
Allensbank Primary School	30	17
Gladstone Primary School	30	23
Ysgol Glan Ceubal	30	30
Ysgol Gymraeg Melin Gruffydd	60	60
Ysgol Mynydd Bychan	30	26
Ysgol Y Wern	90	83

269. The Governing Bodies of the following schools also allocated the following places in accordance with parental preferences.

Table 5: Summary of the allocation of places at faith-based primary schools, as at 17 April 2023		
School	Admission Number	Places allocated
St Joseph's RC Primary School	30	15
St Monica's CiW Primary School	20	10
St Peter's RC Primary School	60	36

270. A full summary of the number of places allocated on offer day is published on the Council's website at [www.cardiff.gov.uk/schooladmissions](http://www.cardiff.gov.uk/schooladmissions)

271. The combined level of surplus places in Reception year at Albany Primary School, Allensbank Primary School and Gladstone Primary School on offer day was 43%. The Council expects the combined number allocated to reach approximately 90 pupils in Autumn 2023. This is in part because some children in nursery classes did not apply by the closing date, and also due to families moving into the area at a later date.
272. The combined level of surplus places in Reception year at Ysgol Glan Ceubal, Ysgol Gymraeg Melin Gruffydd, Ysgol Mynydd Bychan and Ysgol Y Wern on offer day was 5%. At July 2023, there were 207 children allocated to the 210 places available between Ysgol Mynydd Bychan, Ysgol Glan Ceubal, Ysgol Gymraeg Melin Gruffydd and Ysgol y Wern, retaining less than 2% combined surplus.
273. There would be no reduction in the number of English-medium primary places under Option 1 or Option 2. There would be a small reduction in the number of English-medium primary school places under option 3, however there would still be sufficient places to meet demand with an appropriate level of surplus to allow for fluctuations in the pupil population.

### **Impact on Allensbank Primary School**

- *All of the options result in Allensbank Primary School moving from its current building (Option 1, Option 2 and Option 3) which was perceived as being unfair. This suggests that a decision has already been made by the Council.*

### **Appraisal of views expressed**

274. The Council is committed to ensuring that every child in Cardiff receives a great education through their chosen language medium.
275. The Council consulted previously on proposals to provide an appropriate balance of Welsh-medium and English-medium primary school places to serve Cathays and parts of Gabalfa, Heath, Llandaff North and Plasnewydd.
276. The Council also sought views on long term changes to school provision to provide an appropriate balance of Welsh-medium and English-medium school places to serve the area. The outcome of the consultation showed that there was support overall for the expansion of Welsh-medium education however the majority of respondents did not support the interim expansion of Ysgol Mynydd Bychan as proposed.
277. The revised proposals consulted on addressed the issues that informed the earlier proposals and take account of the issues raised during the earlier consultation.
278. There is sufficient capacity within the existing schools serving these areas to support the reorganisation of existing provision and support a more effective and efficient use of resources.

279. The reasons for proposing that Welsh-medium provision be located on the Allensbank site were set out in the consultation document and are addressed at paragraphs 59 - 62.
280. The Council consulted in good faith and full consideration is being given to the points raised. No decision has been taken.

### **Alternative Options**

- *The option of having Welsh-medium provision on the shared Gladstone Primary School/St Monica's Church in Wales Primary School and English-medium provision on the Allensbank site should have been included as part of the consultation.*
- *Why cause so much disruption to the children of Allensbank, there are so many other options that have not been considered. Why doesn't Ysgol Mynydd Bychan move to Gladstone? why are we as a multicultural school of the area, being moved out of the area?*
- *Why should 2 or 3 schools suffer disruption just to accommodate this move when they could easily move into the school in Gabalfa. Furthermore, why is a direct swap between Gladstone and Ysgol Mynydd Bychan not given as an option? I believe that in the council document published it mentions that it is too far for Ysgol Mynydd Bychan to travel, yet it is of an equal distance (or thereabouts) as Allensbank, so therefore there are no grounds that i can see for that to be a reason.*

### **Appraisal of views expressed**

281. Issues related to locating Welsh-medium provision on the Gladstone Primary School/St Monica's Church in Wales Primary School site are addressed at paragraphs 59 - 62.
282. The distance between the Allensbank Primary School site and the Gladstone Primary School site is approximately 0.5 miles. Each of the schools subject to proposals is within 0.5 miles of the other schools. Pupils attending each of the schools are spread across each of the schools' catchment areas.
283. Ysgol Glan Ceubal is a two Form Entry Welsh-medium primary school located in Gabalfa. The school shares a site and a purpose-built two form entry building with Gabalfa Primary School. Ysgol Glan Ceubal is full in the lower year groups and expanding the school by extending the building is unnecessary when there are sufficient surplus places in school buildings in the area local to Ysgol Mynydd Bychan.

### **Challenges around a shared site arrangement**

- *Consideration would need to be given to how Allensbank Primary School and Gladstone Primary School would share a site (Option 2); this would need to be managed appropriately to ensure families are clear on school structures etc. This option could be confusing for parents/carers/pupils and lead to operational*

*difficulties e.g., timetabling for playtimes/lunch, at least one class would need to share the Gladstone school buildings.*

- *The burden of sharing facilities (Option 2) on a site with a limited amount of outdoor learning space would lead to difficult to manage health and safety and pupil safeguarding arrangements.*

### **Appraisal of views expressed**

284. It is acknowledged that there can be greater challenges for schools sharing a site than operating as a single school. The shared Gladstone Primary School/St Monica's Church in Wales Primary School site is sufficiently large to accommodate two one form entry primary schools, however the governing bodies would need to consider how best to utilise the available accommodation if this option were implemented.

### **The needs of vulnerable pupils**

- *The needs of vulnerable families and families for whom English is a second language have not been considered (Option 1 & Option 2)*
- *The intimate school ethos of two smaller primary schools, would be lost. With new families, families who need that support, and families with little to no English, having the support within a smaller setting has always been crucial in maintaining positive relationships, and helping those in need (Option 1).*

### **Appraisal of views expressed**

285. The English-medium primary schools included in the proposals serve a diverse range of pupils and needs. The proposals were brought forward in order to provide a more appropriate balance of places and to ensure that a greater level of funding is able to be invested in teaching and learning. The standard of education at all the schools subject to the proposed changes is good. There is no information available that suggests that the proposals would have a negative effect on pupils who receive Free School Meals, pupils that receive support because they have English as an additional language, pupils from a minority ethnic background or pupils with additional learning needs. There are clear benefits associated with each option as set out in the consultation document which would enhance learning opportunities for all learners. Providing support to families, including those with little to no English, is common in schools of varying sizes in communities across Cardiff.

### **Ongoing disruption for schools/pupils**

- *I don't think it's fair for the children in Allensbank, it will be a massive disruption, they have been through a lot with the pandemic, the scaffolding we have had up for years, we are nearly sorted with the school is almost finished with the scaffolding and we just hand the school over to another school, not fair at all.*

### **Appraisal of views expressed**

286. As set out at paragraph 84, it is recognised that the works to maintain the fabric of the school building have impacted on the day to day running of Allensbank Primary School, however these works have been undertaken as priority condition and suitability works to ensure the health and safety of the school buildings. Similar works are being undertaken at the Gladstone Primary School/St Monica's Church in Wales Primary School site.

287. In the event of Option 1 or Option 2 being progressed, the children currently attending Allensbank Primary School would benefit from the investment at the site currently shared by Gladstone and St Monica's. In the event of Allensbank Primary School transferring to the current Ysgol Mynydd Bychan site, the school would be moving to a nearby site with a capacity greater than the recent intakes to Allensbank.

### **Financial impact**

- *The potential financial impact on Ysgol Mynydd Bychan of occupying a larger site whilst the school grows.*

### **Appraisal of views expressed**

288. The expansion of Ysgol Mynydd Bychan would be on a phased basis and financial issues related to this are addressed at paragraph 232 and paragraphs 236 – 237.

### **Impact on Ysgol Glan Ceubal**

- *The impact on Ysgol Glan Ceubal from the increased Welsh medium places has not been considered. The school already struggles from a catchment area that encompasses Bute Park where there are no homes. The catchment area doesn't even fully cover Llandaff North and instead splits the community in two on Station Rd. The school suffers from too small a catchment area meaning many years have low pupil number which has a devastating impact on school funding.*

### **Appraisal of views expressed**

289. Ysgol Glan Ceubal is fully subscribed at entry to Reception in September 2023 and all nursery places for the 2023/24 intakes have also been allocated. The school has a large catchment area from which approximately 15% of learners access Welsh-medium primary school places. At July 2023, there were 207 children allocated to the 210 places available between Ysgol Mynydd Bychan, Ysgol Glan Ceubal, Ysgol Gymraeg Melin Gruffydd and Ysgol y Wern, retaining less than 2% combined surplus.

290. Ysgol Glan Ceubal occupies new build accommodation, standards at the school are good and the number of pupils attending Ysgol Glan Ceubal has grown steadily. The expectation is that this would continue.

291. Proposals brought forward must ensure that the growth of schools is sustainable, whilst the potential negative impact on other schools is minimised.



292. The expansion of Ysgol Mynydd Bychan to 2FE would enable an increase in the take up of places at the school.
293. As the overall pupil population in primary schools is expected to fall in coming years an increase in the take up of places at Ysgol Mynydd Bychan would be expected to coincide with a reduced take up in English-medium schools.
294. If the proposed changes were to be implemented, it is expected that most of the additional pupils enrolled at Ysgol Mynydd Bychan would be from within its catchment area, and some may be from other areas of the city. This takes account of recent school preference patterns, and the overall fall in the population entering primary education in the next three intakes.
295. An increase in the take up of places at Ysgol Mynydd Bychan by children from within its catchment area would mean that the take up of places in local English-medium schools by children from the area would reduce. An increase in the take up of places at Ysgol Mynydd Bychan from outside its catchment area would mean that the take up of places in other Welsh-medium schools in other parts of the city would likely reduce.

### **Welsh-medium secondary school provision**

- *Will there be sufficient places available to secondary level to allow for the increased number of primary school pupils.*

### **Appraisal of views expressed**

296. The combined demand for places across the three Welsh-medium high school catchment areas is at a high level and can be accommodated within the existing school capacity.
297. Proposals to respond to changes in demand would be brought forward in good time to ensure there are sufficient places to meet the demand for Welsh-medium places.

### **Governance arrangements**

- *How would governance arrangements work if the proposed changes were progressed?*

### **Appraisal of views expressed**

298. In the event of Option 1 being taken forward, the governing bodies of Allensbank Primary School and Gladstone Primary School would be dissolved, and new governance arrangements put in place for the newly established two forms of entry primary school.
299. Under Options 2 and 3, the existing governing bodies would remain, however there is an expectation that Allensbank Primary School and Gladstone Primary School would work in partnership to maximise opportunities for all pupils at the

schools. This could be achieved by informal or formal collaboration, or by formal federation.

300. Should the schools consider implementing a formal collaboration or federation this would be led by the Governing Bodies of Allensbank Primary School and Gladstone Primary School and would be supported by the Council. Any proposal to federate would be subject to a separate consultation by these Governing Bodies.

### **Consultation Process**

- *The English-medium schools serve a diverse population and not all parents will be able to access the information regarding the proposed changes.*

### **Appraisal of views expressed**

301. The Council recognised the need for all stakeholders to be able to access information regarding the proposed changes and worked with the schools to ensure this was the case before and during the consultation process.
302. Ahead of the consultation, schools agreed to use their relevant communication platforms e.g., Class Dojo and Schoop to distribute information to parents in a number of languages. The summary document was also made available in nine community languages, distributed to parents via the schools. Drop-in sessions for parents were held at each school at times agreed with the schools.
303. Additionally, letters were also sent to places of worship in the local area to make them aware of the consultation, how they could make their views known and an offer to meet with any groups that they run or that make use of their accommodation who would like to find out more about the proposed changes.

### **Nursery provision**

- *The impact on existing nursery provision of additional places at St Monica's Church in Wales Primary School*

### **Appraisal of view expressed**

304. At present the Council funds 112 community nursery places between Allensbank Primary School and Gladstone Primary School. The number funded is reducing to 96 places next year, to reflect demand. It is proposed to allow for 96 places English-medium community nursery places under each of the three options consulted on.
305. Should the transfer of St Monica's Church in Wales Primary School to the current Ysgol Mynydd Bychan site be taken forward (Option 1 and Option 2) it is proposed that 32 part time nursery places are provided. This would develop continuity and progression in children's learning at the school from the age of three enhancing the opportunity to appropriately address individual developmental and cultural needs, and would support the financial sustainability of the school.

306. The number of nursery places at Ysgol Mynydd Bychan would be increased from 64 to 96 to support its growth to a two-form entry school.

### **Welsh-medium workforce**

- *Will there be sufficient Welsh-medium staff available to support the expansion of provision?*

### **Appraisal of views expressed**

307. It is recognised that the expansion of Welsh-medium provision will require a significant growth of the workforce able to teach Welsh and through the medium of Welsh.

308. As set out at paragraph 113, the Council is committed to working closely with other Local Authorities in Central South Consortium (CSC) in planning and supporting school staff across all sectors to further improve their Welsh language skills along with Welsh-medium Initial Training Education and Childcare workforce training providers to support an increase of Newly Qualified Teachers, learning support staff and childcare practitioners to help reduce the projected workforce shortage in the future and ensure that collective local WESPs can be implemented effectively.

309. Details of how the Council proposes to increase the number of teaching/support staff able to teach Welsh (as a subject) and teach through the medium of Welsh are outlined in the adopted Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) (Outcome 7).

### **Allensbank Primary School site**

- *The outdoor space available at Allensbank Primary School is limited and not sufficient to allow for the expansion of Ysgol Mynydd Bychan*
- *The listed status of the Allensbank Primary School buildings will limit the improvements that can be made; additionally, the cost of any works is likely to be greater.*

### **Appraisal of views expressed**

310. As set out at paragraph 83, there is sufficient outdoor space available at the Allensbank Primary School site to accommodate an expanded Ysgol Mynydd Bychan. The current Ysgol Mynydd Bychan site has c1100m<sup>2</sup> outdoor provision; the Allensbank Primary School site has c2000m<sup>2</sup> outdoor provision with the option of increased outdoor space if any of the existing car park provision of c600m<sup>2</sup> is repurposed.

311. The Council was successful in securing funds from the Welsh-medium Capital Grant Scheme including £1.86m to reorganise primary school provision in central Cardiff and expand Welsh medium places by one form of entry (210 places).

312. In each of the three options consulted on Ysgol Mynydd Bychan would transfer to the current Allensbank Primary School site. Should Ysgol Mynydd Bychan transfer to the Allensbank site, any changes to the buildings utilising the Welsh Government capital grant would be considered at a later design stage. The Council would identify and agree priorities for the investment in partnership with the Ysgol Mynydd Bychan Governing Body.

### **Traffic concerns**

- *The current site of Gladstone will also cause huge disruptions with parking.*
- *The impact of increased traffic around the Allensbank Primary School site.*

### **Appraisal of views expressed**

313. The Council has been committed to ensuring that every school in Cardiff has an Active Travel Plan. Such plans identify actions by the school to support and encourage active travel to school and identify any improvements to on-site and off-site infrastructure required to facilitate active journeys. The Council's Active Travel Plan officers have been working with schools to develop these and all four schools already have Active Travel Plans in place for their current sites.

314. The Active Travel Plans officers will continue to work with the schools in the review and further development of their current Active Travel Plans as appropriate to suit any change in circumstances. They can support with engagement on the Active Travel Plans as part of an implementation of a proposed expansion of places and any changes in location of school cohorts to alternative sites.

315. The recent construction of the cycleway along Cathays Terrace, Whitchurch Road and Allensbank Road has provided a new cycling facility directly linking to Allensbank Primary School, Gladstone Primary School and St Monica's Church in Wales Primary School and will be utilised within these Active Travel Plans.

316. Currently, the St Monica's / Gladstone site benefits from the implementation of school streets within its vicinity. Pentyrch Street and Cwmdare Street are closed to traffic between 08.30am - 09.30am and 3pm – 4pm. Plans are already being progressed to expand this with the creation of a School Street on New Zealand Road. There is also potential to do this on part of Llanishen Street. However, both proposals will require consultation with residents and local businesses.

317. The maximum distances between the school sites is circa 0.5 miles. Should any of the schools be relocated on to an alternative site, the maximum increase in home to school travel distance for current pupils is therefore 0.5 miles.

### **Racial makeup of schools**

- *Allensbank diversity and its achievements while being under funded should be praised and supported not punished*

- *Education should be egalitarian in nature, with equal opportunity to all, yet in this instance it truly feels that the pupils and staff at Allensbank school are being marginalised for the promotion of opportunities for the pupils at Ysgol Mynydd Bychan. Given the number of pupils and families at Allensbank from racial minority groups, these proposed options are even more shocking, the Council should be supporting this school community and not seeking to disturb their educational experience and future potential.*
- *The kids don't need to be disrupted, and you keep pushing Welsh first and every else second. Is that not racism?*

### **Appraisal of views expressed**

318. Analysis of school census data (PLASC) confirms that, at present, there are significant differences in the demographic data between some of the schools in the area.
319. It is notable that the home addresses of pupils enrolled at Ysgol Mynydd Bychan are clustered around the school sites of Ysgol Mynydd Bychan and Allensbank Primary School. The majority of Allensbank Primary School pupils live within the same area, with home addresses also clustered around the school sites of Ysgol Mynydd Bychan and Allensbank Primary School. However, demographic data for those pupils and for the school overall is very different to that of Ysgol Mynydd Bychan.
320. Demographic data also differs greatly between Ysgol Mynydd Bychan and other English-medium schools serving the area. These datasets include:
- Pupil mobility (how many children transfer into and out of a school)
  - Eligibility of pupils for Free School Meals
  - Home language
  - Acquired level of competency in English or Welsh, and
  - Ethnicity
321. Proposals must consider the disparity in demographic data but must also consider the ability of those applicants who move to the area to equitably access school places in each language medium.
322. The Equality Act 2010 places a duty on public services to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. The Council must therefore ensure, when bringing forward proposals and following implementation of proposals, that each of the schools is supported to meet the diverse needs of the communities in which they are located. Proposals must support each school to be able to advance equality of opportunities for all families in the area.
323. The Council's adopted Welsh in Education Strategic Plan 2022-2032 sets specific targets and identifies priority workstreams for the Council and partners such as schools. This includes a research pilot initiative with Bilingual Cardiff, parental surveys, and focus groups to better understand the reasons for the low

take-up of Welsh-medium places within specific under-represented groups and communities (including Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic), alongside bespoke promotions. This work is underway.

324. The proposed changes seek to provide an appropriate balance whereby each school type is available to all groups and each school is supported to be accessible, and to be seen to be accessible, to all groups.
325. The work underway to better understand parental preferences and take up of places in each community, alongside improving visibility of language medium and immersion opportunities available, will directly target decreasing the disparities between demographic data in English-medium and Welsh-medium schools.

### **Prioritisation of Welsh-medium over English-medium**

- *Welsh & English medium should be treated equally & funded equally irrespective of whether they speak Welsh or not. Cardiff is a multicultural city, we should be pushing the agenda on both parts. we need just as many places in English medium as Welsh medium.*
- *There should be equal funding for both English and Welsh speaking schools and that there should be no bias in favour of Welsh speaking schools. It seems that this government is extremely biased towards Welsh speaking education when all children have the right to equal education/funding.*
- *It is unethical that the funding for the Welsh speaking schools and English speaking schools is not equal. It seems to me that this government extremely biased towards Welsh speaking education when all children have the right to equal education/funding.*

### **Appraisal of views expressed**

326. The Council believes that the long-term prosperity of the city relies on firm support for our children and young people to reach their potential.
327. The proposed changes have been brought forward within the context of:
- supporting each school to continue to improve education for all their learners
  - ensuring that each school provision offered meets the diverse needs of the local community
  - supporting schools to be financially sustainable, with stable school budgets
  - supporting schools to allocate a greater proportion of budget to teaching and learning thereby retaining and increasing opportunities for learners
  - increasing Welsh-medium primary school places by one Form of Entry (210 primary age pupils)
  - consolidating English-medium primary school places with an appropriate level of surplus

328. There would be an increase in the number of primary school places available to serve the area overall. There would be no reduction in the number of English-medium primary places under Option 1 or Option 2. There would be a small reduction in the number of English-medium primary school places under option 3, however there would still be sufficient places to meet demand with an appropriate level of surplus to allow for fluctuations in the pupil population.
329. Overall, accommodation to allow for an increased number of English-medium and Welsh-medium nursery places would be retained, and the number of places funded would reflect the demand for places in the local area.
330. There would be a minor change in the pattern of distribution of places however given the close proximity of the school sites this would have little or no impact.

### **Conflict of Interest**

- *Do Councillors have to declare a conflict of interest?*
- *Were decision makers representing the views of the actual community of Cathays, rather than the views of the white, middle class voting community of Cathays? There is a danger of the community perceiving that white, middle-class children are getting treated better than other children, which could cause division.*

### **Appraisal of views expressed**

331. All Councillors are bound by the statutory Members' Code of Conduct (found within Part 5 the Council's Constitution, which includes rules on personal interests and when and how they must be disclosed).
332. If a Councillor has a conflict of interests in a matter (referred to in the Code as a 'personal and prejudicial interest'), they must not participate in Council decisions regarding that matter.
333. The pre-consultation report considered by Cabinet at its meeting on 23rd March 2023 included a specific section on the 'Diversity of school communities', which highlights the importance of ensuring that the school proposals meet the needs of their diverse communities:
334. The Equality Act 2010 places a duty on public services to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. The Council must therefore ensure, when bringing forward proposals and following implementation of proposals, that each of the schools is supported to meet the diverse needs of the communities in which they are located and that each is able to advance equality of opportunities for all families in the area.'
335. Further information about the statutory equality duties is set out in the legal implications' advice section of the Cabinet report (paragraph 270); and an Impact Assessment, which includes an Equality Impact Assessment, is appended as Appendix 10 to the report.

336. The public consultation was made accessible to all sections of the community with information published in various community languages. The Impact Assessments are being updated to reflect the consultation feedback, to ensure that decision makers have all relevant information to properly consider all equalities implications before deciding whether to progress with any of the proposals.
337. The Council has a robust equalities impact assessment process to ensure that it properly addresses the needs of its diverse communities.