

GLAN-YR-AFON CONSULTATION



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22 October 2018

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Dear Director of Education,

Please accept this as the formal response from us as local ward members to the consultation: '21st Century Schools Consultation Document 2018. THE PROVISION OF ENGLISH-MEDIUM PRIMARY SCHOOL PLACES IN THE LLANRUMNEY AREA'.

We OBJECT to the proposal to close Glan-Yr-Afon Primary School from 31.08.19.

We ask that the Cabinet reject the proposal and come back with a comprehensive spelt out plan for how the provision of English medium primary school places in the Llanrumney area can be addressed for future years.

Glan-yr-Afon Primary School serves an area of high economic deprivation within Llanrumney, which is itself a very poor community. Approximately half of Glan-yr-Afon's children are eligible for free school meals (46%) with many of its children identified as possessing additional learning needs with many pupils on 'School Action' and 'School Action Plus' statuses. The school also encompasses a 'Wellbeing Class' and 'Flying Start' provision.

The Council seems to primarily be focusing on the low intake at the school. This it seems to us is unfair as it does not take into account the unique set of circumstances that the school has had to endure over recent years. Circumstances that the Council has clearly aggravated.

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Glan-yr-Afon has had a torrid period with the long term suspension of its head teacher. Mr. Kevin Thomas was appointed Headteacher of Glan yr Afon in 2012 and was suspended from his post in March 2016. Two and a half years after his suspension Mr. Kevin Thomas was convicted, by a jury at Newport Crown Court, of sexually assaulting a woman. According to media reports, Mr. Kevin Thomas is due to be sentenced on 22.10.18, the date that the consultation to close Glan-yr-Afon Primary formally closes. As of 22.10.18 Mr. Kevin Thomas remains, albeit it suspended, in post as Headteacher of the school. Whilst we totally understand legal restrictions limit what can be stated by the authority there is no mention of these extraordinary circumstances in the consultation documentation whatsoever. The school has been served by a succession of interim headteachers. We believe there have been three at the last count. This has dramatically undermined the running of the school.

As Llanrumney ward councillors we take our responsibilities to listen to our constituents diligently. We have listened closely as the consultation has proceeded. We have attended meetings with staff, parents and the public meeting where the Director of Education addressed the community. Our inboxes and the Llanrumney Labour Facebook account have received length pleas from our constituents for the council to re-consider its desire to close Glan-yr-Afon. The overriding call has been to **“Give us a chance.”** Indeed it was a repeated cry directed at the Director of Education at the public meeting. It is a message that has resonated with us.

We fully understand the arguments that have been propagated for why Glan-yr-Afon should be immediately closed in the summer of 2019. It would facilitate a closing of the 269 spare places across primary provision in Llanrumney. Currently 1,342 places are available whilst 1,073 are taken across Llanrumney. Glan-yr-Afon has to run a deficit budget, in a building of deteriorating quality whilst its educational standards are not currently as high as those available in neighbouring primary schools on the Llanrumney estate.

However, we question what vision there is for education in the poorest parts of society if we close Glan-yr-Afon forever when it clearly has been handicapped by the suspension of its headteacher and a chronic historic lack of investment in its infrastructure. Parents have a basic desire to want to serve their children’s best



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interests by ensuring they have the best education possible. It is a commendable and universal desire. Cardiff County Council should see it as its moral obligation not to walk away from those areas of our communities where poverty is so deeply ingrained.

The number of pupils on roll at Glan-yr-Afon has increased every year from 2013 – 2017. However, in Glan-yr-Afon's catchment area only 133 pupils (27.8%) attend the school. This is clearly a low number and underlines the inherent problems. More pupils from Glan-yr-Afon's catchment area attend St. Cadoc's Catholic Primary School (157 pupils). These startling statistics merely go to display that parents will shop around for what they perceive to be a better education for their child. This is highlighted as only 47% of St. Cadoc's pupil population are actually baptised Catholics, a minority.

The local education authority's principle solution for the education of the pupils of Glan-yr-Afon, if their English medium school closes, is for the majority to be schooled at an expanded St. Cadoc's. Presumably greatly increasing the majority percentage of non-baptised Catholic children within the Catholic Primary School. It seems a rather odd thing to do irrespective of how good the quality of education that is on offer.

The odd solution becomes, potentially, even more incoherent to parents of Glan-yr-Afon children when they read that the local authority offer no guarantees that St. Cadoc's will actually expand at all.

The consultation documents state: "If the Published Admission Number at St. Cadoc's Primary School was not permanently increased the council could consult on changes to catchment areas and school capacity at a later date. This would be across a larger area including Llanrumney, Old. St. Mellons, Rumney and Trowbridge."

It would be completely unacceptable to us for Glan-yr-Afon school to be closed and for its children to be scattered across wider east Cardiff.

The logic underpinning the consultation seems to be a numbers exercise that pays little heed to any deeper cultural or educational obligation to one of the most economically deprived communities in the capital city of Wales.

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Cardiff Council postulate that Glan-yr-Afon pupils could, hopefully, go to a Catholic Primary School if St. Cadoc's "decide to increase the number of pupils in each group from 45 to 60." St. Cadoc's is situated on Shaw Close off Ball Road. As the consultation documents admit St. Cadoc's is beset by access issues for pupils and staff as they enter and exit the school. The situation is so chaotic that St. Cadoc's staff feel unsafe to use the entrance and exit to the school's car park because of intense anti-social behaviour they experience on Boswell Close. This has resulted in the vast majority of school staff feeling unable to use the school's car park but parking in the public car park for the adjacent Llanrumney Medical Centre. This in turn ensures limited capacity for parents who are dropping and picking children up. To add to this ongoing problem a large influx of children from Glan-yr-Afon hardly seems attractive. The council's only action has to been to seek to change a traffic order for Shaw Close to ensure that no vehicle can stop in Shaw Close. How this new traffic order will be enforced is an obvious question. The inevitable reality is that beyond a few sporadic visits by one of the council's civil enforcement cars there will be none. Indeed on a site visit in 2017 with civil enforcement officers on Shaw Close local Councillors were informed officers do not issue penalties on foot as to not get into confrontation with parents.

Ball Road, which St. Cadoc's is accessed by via Shaw Close, is a road with serious speeding issues which Cardiff Council and the police have so far been unable to curb. The Department of Highways have instructed the council to remove obsolete road calming measures in Ball Road but on present timescales the council will not be in a financial position to do this for another fifteen years. Currently GO Safe are periodically sending a mobile speed unit to Ball Road as the road is a hotspot for speeding vehicles. To place the children of Glan-yr-Afon into this already dangerous environment would make a mockery of the council's avowed aim that children should seek to walk and cycle to school. How children access safely to and from any school must never be compromised by an accountants' exercise in saving money.

The council state that the condition of the physical infrastructure of Glan-yr-Afon necessitates the school's closure, "The Glan-yr-Afon Primary School building is in poor condition." It is rated on the A-D classification scale as being designated within Band C. Yet, only one other of the Llanrumney Primary schools has a better



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rating for the state of the physical building. The other primary stock in Llanrumney all have a C rating:

Bryn Hafod is rated C

Pen-y-Bryn is rated C

St. Mellons, CIW, Primary is rated C

Ysgol Bro Eirwyg is rated C

The parents of Glan-yr-Afon have passionately advocated that there has been a historic substantial lack of investment in their school building. Whilst surplus places within the school may make managing this problematic it is clear that the situation is replicated across the Llanrumney estate with primary schools in a poor physical condition. If this consultation has shown anything is that one of Cardiff's poorest communities is crying out for radical investment in its school stock. We ask that the Director of Education and Education Cabinet Member urgently address how Llanrumney can benefit from 21st Century School investment from the Welsh Government as soon as funding streams permit.

The issues of surplus places, poor physical buildings and moderate educational outcomes encapsulated in this consultation echo the same themes that hung over the demise of Llanrumney and Rumney High Schools and the new build of Eastern High. The removal of Llanrumney High School from the estate still casts a shadow for many and has been referenced throughout this consultation. Residents are not even guaranteed that places for their children will remain on the estate of Llanrumney. As Eastern High School shows a well-run school in a modern purpose built environment will attract parents and pupils in numbers. The same is true of the primary sector.

There is a strong sentiment, which we share, that Cardiff Council needs to demonstrate it is committed to education on the estate in Llanrumney with radical investment in bricks and mortar. Residents told the Director of Education to his face that lower Llanrumney has had community assets taken away from it and these resources have not been replaced. Even the impressive Eastern High is still not fully functioning as a community campus almost a year into its opening. We have every

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sympathy with Llanrumney residents who appear frustrated at the wait for Eastern High to be fully accessible to all communities of east Cardiff continues..

Glan-yr-Afon stands on the brink of closure. In 2006 so did Pen-y-Bryn Primary School and St. Mellons, CIW, Primary School. Those two Llanrumney Primary schools were slated for closure by Cardiff Council. Fast forward twelve years on, less than a child's full career of schooling, and both schools in Llanrumney are categorised as Green and experience high parental demand notwithstanding that both school buildings are a C category. The consultation report even notes: "There were more applications for Pen-y-Bryn Primary School in September 2018 than places available."

Cardiff Council could close Glan-yr-Afon Primary School on the premise that it is the only logical option to improve standards and use educational monies efficiently. Both Pen-y-Bryn and St. Mellons, CIW., Primary Schools stand as testimony to the fallacy of that argument. Where there is a political will there is a way. How much political will is there to make a stand? To say that actually Cardiff Council should not retreat from the most economically deprived streets in one of the poorest communities in Cardiff but rather plant a flag and make statement about the value of education to arrest the inequality of the southern arch that disfigures this city.

We reiterate our formal objection to the proposal to close Glan-yr-Afon Primary School in the summer of 2019. This is a piecemeal piece of work that has arisen because of the end of the criminal proceedings against the school's Headteacher. It is wasted opportunity to systemically address the provision of English medium primary school places in Llanrumney. The consultation asks more questions than it answers including what will be done to address the poor quality of school buildings across Llanrumney and what is the long term future for each of Llanrumney's current stock of primary schools.

Cardiff Council emphasise the rights of parents and children to have choice in their education. This often takes the form of highly educated middle class parents in more affluent parts of the city shaping their childrens' educational destiny through strong advocacy skills. Parents in Llanrumney do not always engage in this way. In the past this has led to disparities in services, it can be no coincidence that the poorest parts of the City are without sixth forms and were not removed in more



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affluent parts. We would urge the Cabinet to bear in mind such past mistakes and on this occasion listen to Llanrumney parents when they speak.

We ask that Cardiff Council and its Cabinet listen, as we have to the consultation and to the people of lower Llanrumney. As their councillors we cannot stand by and not give them a voice. They are working class people desperate for their school and their community to be given a chance. The sense of great pride this community feels in lower Llanrumney must not be ignored by their council.

Please give them the chance they crave.

Yours faithfully

LEE BRIDGEMAN, KEITH JONES & HEATHER JOYCE
CYNGHORYDD I LLANRHYMNI
COUNCILLORS FOR LLANRUMNEY

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Estyn's response to the proposal to provide English-medium primary school places in the Llanrumney area of Cardiff. Cardiff City Council intends to hold a consultation on arrangements to reduce the number of surplus places in schools in the Llanrumney area of the capital through closing Glan yr Afon Primary School from September 2019.

Under the terms of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and its associated Code, proposers are required to send consultation documents to Estyn. However Estyn is not a body which is required to act in accordance with the Code and the Act places no statutory requirements on Estyn in respect of school organisation matters. Therefore as a body being consulted, Estyn will provide their opinion only on the overall merits of school organisation proposals.

Estyn has considered the educational aspects of the proposal and has produced the following response to the information provided by the proposer and other additional information such as data from Welsh Government and the views of the Regional Consortia, which deliver school improvement services to the schools within the proposal.

Introduction

The proposal is by Cardiff City Council. The proposal was submitted as a result of the fact that there are many more school places available in English-medium schools in the Llanrumney area than the number of pupils who wish to attend those schools. This has been consistent over a number of years. Cardiff City Council proposes to discontinue some of the surplus school places in schools in the Llanrumney area through closing Glan yr Afon Primary School from September 2019. As long as there are additional places available in other local schools, it is Estyn's view that closing Glan yr Afon Primary School would not have a detrimental effect on the standard of English-medium education in the Llanrumney area.

Summary/Conclusion

The proposal outlines the Local Authority's plans to reduce the number of surplus places in schools in the area of Llanrumney through closing Glan yr Afon Primary School from the end of August 2019. Detailed attention has been given to scrutinising the current number of schools in the area, and the current and historical surplus places, along with projections for the next few years. Appropriate attention is

given within the proposal to the reduction in the demand for English-medium education in the area, and to the possible impact of closing Glan yr Afon Primary School on the school's pupils. The proposal focusses on the impact of the possible increase in numbers in other schools in the area, and needs in terms of admission numbers in those schools.

The proposal identifies suitable opportunities to consult with stakeholders through drop-in sessions, formal meetings and through online forms and questionnaires, all within reasonable timescales.

Description and benefits

The proposal gives background information about the schools affected, or the schools that could be affected, namely Bryn Hafod Primary School, Glan yr Afon Primary School, Pen y Bryn Primary School, St. Mellons Church in Wales Primary School, and St. Cadoc's RC Primary School.

The consultation identifies a number of factors, such as surplus places in every school, the total number of children currently attending the schools, and historical information of trends in numbers and surplus places, location of the school pupils' homes and projections about the demand for places in the schools over the next few years.

The proposal identifies in detail the numbers of pupils attending different schools from different catchment areas. Currently, there are 269 surplus places between the five schools, but this includes 125 surplus places in Glan yr Afon Primary School, places which will not be available if the school were to close. With St. Mellons Church in Wales Primary School oversubscribed by 11 pupils, the total number of surplus places without Glan yr Afon Primary School is 144, with 167 pupils currently attending Glan yr Afon Primary School. The consultation also notes that St. Mellons Church in Wales Primary School is currently oversubscribed by 11 pupils.

By taking into account that places would be needed for the 167 pupils currently attending Glan yr Afon Primary School, the consultation notes that there is not a sufficient number of places for these pupils without making alternative arrangements in the nearby schools. There is a possibility of extending the admission numbers of St. Cadoc's RC Primary School to up to 60 pupils in every year, which would increase the school to 420 pupil places. As St. Cadoc's RC Primary School is a voluntary aided school, decisions about pupil admissions are in the hands of the Governing Body. The consultation notes that there is additional space which could be adapted for use as a learning space, but it is the school's Governing Body that will make decisions about use of the building. The Governing Body would need to consult on any changes in terms of the school admission number, in accordance with the School Organisation Code.

The consultation notes that 157 pupils from the catchment area of Glan yr Afon Primary School already attend St. Cadoc's RC Primary School. Currently, 133 of 167 pupils at Glan yr Afon Primary School living in its catchment area. There are

478 who live in the catchment area of Glan yr Afon Primary School, therefore, the majority of pupils already attend schools outside its catchment area.



The proposal gives due attention to projections about pupils numbers in the local schools in the next few years. It is anticipated that numbers will remain reasonably steady over the next three years. According to Cardiff City Council's conclusion in the consultation, there will be a sufficient number of places for all pupils in the Llanrumney area in future if Glan yr Afon Primary School were to close.

The consultation considers house building developments in the area, but they do not predict a significant impact on the number of pupils as flats will be demolished and new houses will be built.

The consultation identifies the current situation in terms of school buildings in the catchment area. It gives suitable attention to pupils' standards of achievement in the schools, along with the standard of provision and leadership.

Appropriate attention is given to the reasons as to why Glan yr Afon Primary School should be closed, including the reduction in numbers and the financial deficit of £130,000 in the current financial year. Consideration is given to the increasing demand for Welsh-medium education locally, and the possible impact of the increase in that demand as a result of closing Glan yr Afon Primary School.

Appropriate consideration is given to a wide number of factors, such as the numbers of children entitled to free school meals, numbers of pupils with additional learning needs, and the provision for English as an additional language in the area.

The consultation considers the impact of closing Glan yr Afon Primary School on providing a well-being class and the Flying Start service which is located in the school, and identifies that these services would have to be established in alternative placements locally, although there are no details about the possible alternative placements.

The advantages and disadvantages of closing Glan yr Afon are identified, along with the potential risks of closing the school. One critical risk is if St. Cadoc's RC Primary School's Governing Body were unwilling to extend the school's admission numbers from 45 to 60.

The consultation takes into account the impact on secondary schools locally, and also considers the potential impact on the staff of Glan yr Afon Primary School.

The consultation gives all of the stakeholders a fair opportunity to share their views in a suitable range of ways within fair and reasonable timescales.



Governing Body of Glan yr Afon Primary School’s response to the consultation regarding Proposal for The Provision of English-Medium Primary School Places in the Llanrumney area.

Glan yr Afon is a school in the area of Llanrumney which is recognised as being in the 5% of the most deprived areas in Wales. Its FSM is higher than any other school in the area and its ALN also generally higher. It is therefore a school and community which should be supported not devastated by actions of a Council and Welsh Government which should care for the people living here and not be prepared to tear the community apart. The importance of retaining a community school on the Glan yr Afon site has become increasingly evident to the governors as the consultation process has taken place. The school and its staff services a particularly vulnerable population for whom Glan yr Afon is a vital community resource that goes beyond teaching their children. Removing that support from the immediate locality would have negative social implications for many children and their families.

The governors of the school, along with the staff, work tirelessly to support a very difficult situation. Why were the governors not involved in a discussion about this proposal in order to contribute to the process and maybe avoid it by suggesting alternatives as we do so later in this response? The very last minute communication that the paper was going into the public domain and then to the Cabinet was a shock to all.

The title of the Consultation Document is disingenuous. It is NOT about “The provision of English-Medium Primary School places in the Llanrumney area” it is all about the proposed closure of Glan yr Afon Primary School therefore it should say so.

Why were hard copies of either the main or summary documents not supplied to the governors, as they were to staff and parents? Governors have had to read the documents online, which many of us find difficult, or run them off ourselves at our expense. It is clear that whatever happens the governors, who have such serious responsibilities in law, will be expected to deal with the fall-out from this consultation, as they are doing whilst the process is in place.

We understand that the dates of the consultation process were decided at a meeting of the parents and the LA with governors and staff not being consulted, why was this?

The Document

The whole tenor of the proposal document is denigrating Glan yr Afon Primary School in the comparison with other schools in the area. The issues raised are fourfold namely: school rolls, surplus and capacity: condition and suitability of the buildings: financial situation: standards of education.

On the issue of **surplus places**, **Table 4 PLASC 2017** shows that none of the schools in the area are full in every year group. If Bryn Hafod was closed Glan yr Afon and other schools could be filled. It is fatuous to argue for closure of Glan yr Afon because parents are sending their children to other schools in Reception when it is stated that the number of pupils on roll at Glan yr Afon has increased every year from 2013-17. How do you account for this? The argument is non-sequitur. It is also not recognised that falling rolls have been adversely influenced by reputation in the local area damaged by the circumstances relating to the school over which it has no control. Indeed, because people believe that this is not a consultation but a fait accompli with Glan yr Afon going to close, the school lost 25 pupils LAST week!

Why in **Table 5** have you conveniently left out the details for St Cadoc's? Does it not have a catchment area?

On Page 13 **Table 6** shows that the projected demand for places at GYA are generally GREATER than Bryn Hafod and Pen y Bryn. The statements on Page 14 regarding demand for places are based on NHS projections which are notoriously inaccurate. Developments in housing in excess of the current planned ones and immigration into the area can change the demand significantly, as other areas in the UK have found. Cardiff is a growing city! If the demography of the area changes where will the pupils of the future go if Glan yr Afon closes?

The numbers in St Cadoc's school should be based on people of the Catholic faith not on the expectations that other pupils will be forced into faith school education. A too significant part of these proposals rest on the determination of the governors of St Cadoc's to increase their intake number. St Cadoc's is a Voluntary Aided school and their numbers should not be arbitrarily decided by their governors but by the Council School Organisation Plan. No other school can determine their own intake apart from other faith schools! The school is undersubscribed now. Why are they proposing to increase their places?

It is appalling that the **condition and suitability** of the school buildings be used as a reason to close the school. Historic and current failure of the Council and the Welsh Government to maintain the school at a suitable standard is **their** failure, not that of the school. The Government's "21st Century Schools" programme is spending millions of pounds on other schools, why not Glan yr Afon?

The **financial situation** of the school which is being used as a reason to close the school is fatuous and unfair. The falling rolls which determine size of the school budget is not as a result of the failure of the school but of a damaged reputation as a consequence of media focus on issues over which the school has no control. The failure of services to deal expeditiously with the continuing suspension of the substantive headteacher (2 and a 1/2 Years) has meant that the school has not been consistently led and managed. The current temporary headteacher is the THIRD since the suspension in 2015. Because of the uncertainty of the situation a major restructure of staffing which would have dramatically readjusted the budget demands to deal with falling rolls has not taken place as being judged and advised that it would be inappropriate during this uncertain time of management. It can be seen by looking at the school budget accounts that so many of those problems have emanated from early 2015.

Page 18. The governors did not CHOOSE to set a deficit budget, it was advised to apply by the Local Authority. Had the situation been "normal" i.e. stable and consistent permanent leadership, radical staffing restructure, and proper capital financial expenditure by the LA and Welsh Government's "21st Century Schools programme", then the school would have a better reputation in the area and parents would send their children to the school. Indeed, because of recent staff changes the agreed potential requirements for £130k overspend has already been significantly reduced.

With regard to **educational standards**, in the Estyn report of January 2015 the school's performance was judged as ADEQUATE (Strengths outweigh areas for improvement. ESTYN definition) and the school's prospect for improvement was judged as GOOD (Many strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement. ESTYN definition). This report was at least as good as, and better, than other similar schools in the area when they were inspected by Estyn. This judgement and the prospects for improvement since that date have been damaged by the circumstances in the school over which it had no real control. As a consequence the intake into the school has suffered with the consequent effect on adverse perceptions in the community.

The standards of education in the school have been adversely affected by the emotional stress on the staff. Despite this, the progress of the school has meant that in June of this year it was taken out of Estyn Monitoring. This has been accomplished in ONE YEAR as a result of a temporary but more effective management and leadership being in place.

Additionally, should these proposals go ahead, it is appalling to suggest that parents and children may have to travel significant distances to get their children to school. To suggest that children of all ages could walk two miles to school or be carried by car (assuming that parents have their own transport and the money to use it) shows the lack of consideration or understanding of parents in a highly socially deprived area. Nor should it be regarded as a way of dealing with this that children could be shoehorned into a voluntary aided school being the closest to the area Glan yr Afon serves.

The whole tenor of this paper has been written to denigrate Glan yr Afon School by comparing it constantly unfavourably with other schools in the area. It is unfair, unfeeling and the Council should consider these proposals unfavourably and reject them whole heartedly. We recommend that alternatives to these proposals be explored, such as:

1. **Phased review** over 5 years to enable families of pupils to complete their education in Glan Yr Afon without the massive disruption to them and their families.
2. **Amalgamate** with another local community school to reduce the demands on each on Glan Yr Afon's site because of the size of its buildings and its playing areas.
3. Reduce to a one form entry school and **Federate** Glan Yr Afon with another school in the City with the consequent reduction in budget demands and the advantage of consistent leadership, management and training across both schools. We already have had a suggestion from another school.
4. **Reduce to a one form entry and consolidate** in the Foundation Phase part of the building. Refurbish thoroughly and either demolish the junior building or place a council facility such as the Court School on the site. This would require a significant input within the "21st Century Schools" Demolition and a new build could resolve a variety of issues.

We trust that you will give this response and these suggestions, which we would be pleased to discuss with you, serious consideration and reject the proposal for closure.



L.A. Maxim
Chair of Governors
Glan Yr Afon Primary School

Responding on behalf of all the governors of the school

Karen Brown LLB (Hons), P.G.C.E., N.P.Q.H.

Interim Executive Headteacher 1st Sept 2018 – 31st August 2019

I am writing in response to the proposal to close Glan-yr-Afon Primary School. The children at the Glan-yr-Afon part of Llanrumney deserve an outstanding education – and with the right investment and visionary leadership, this could be accomplished at Glan-yr-Afon within three years. The improvement journey has begun in earnest in 2018, with ESTYN recognising the progress made against the original recommendations.

The consultation has quite possibly been one of the best things to happen for Glan-yr-Afon – as it has driven the school community to show what it can do when everyone comes together with a shared purpose and vision. The collective response of the parents, and the many activities and actions they have organised, has shown the pride, passion and potential in the school. What has been accomplished just in the 6 weeks of the consultation has made me very proud of the school community – and I believe the voice of this community needs to be listened to.

The proposal expects children to either attend a faith school or walk a significant distance, along busy roads and up significant inclines. The proposal does not begin to show any understanding of the distance needed to be walked, up steep inclines, by children as young as 3 years, if they have to attend one of the other community schools in the area. It also shows no understanding of the community – Llanrumney is a large estate and there are some distinct smaller localities/communities within it. The lower end of Llanrumney, and the children in the area, now and in the future, need a local community school.

The proposal is based on money and figures – but not on what is best for the children and the community.

The school must continue on its improvement journey – the current position of the school is clearly not financially viable and sustainable, and standards are not yet outstanding. The pace of this improvement needs to continue to be rapid and intense. But that does not mean it needs to be closed and the families of lower Llanrumney left without a community school and with distinct barriers to accessing education. It needs new, strong leadership, investment in the building, a significant review of staffing and structure, and a vision, belief and commitment to make it the outstanding school the children in Llanrumney need.

The main issues with the proposal are:

1. The impact on many of the poorest families in Cardiff – making education so inaccessible to many. The proposal suggests PUTTING BARRIERS in the way of pupil-progress and is in direct conflict with the Closing the Gap priority the LA and Welsh Government has.
2. Maintaining good attendance at school will be very difficult for many children from the lower end of Llanrumney. E.g. A single parent with 2-4 children and no car will not be able to get his/her children all the way to Pen-y-Bryn in poor weather. If one child is ill, all may have to stay home. Parents would be penalised for poor attendance – poor attendance created by a council decision.
3. Glan-yr-Afon has the highest eFSM percentage and ALN percentage in Llanrumney. There is extensive evidence that the biggest group advantaged by smaller schools are children in areas of deprivation and disadvantage.
4. The discrimination against non-Catholic families – who will have no choice but to choose a faith school due to the practicalities of physical access and space, not because it is what they want for their children. We would not expect parents to happily accept an education within other faiths, so how can the LA expect parents to accept a Catholic education? This will be an education that will teach the Catholic tenets of faith as fact; spending 2.5 hours a week studying religious education; spending time every day worshipping and praying to God, Mary and the Saints. The right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion in Article 14 of the UNCRC is for all children, including children living in Lower Llanrumney.

5. Several year groups are already in both Bryn Hafod and Penybryn Primary Schools. This is a trend which will continue – maybe not for every year – but for many years. Parents’ right to choose a school for their children will not exist for parents of children in these year groups – and this will be repeated in subsequent years. There are not enough spaces for all children in all year groups for families wishing to choose a community school.
6. The consultation shows it is wholly reliant on St Cadoc’s Catholic Primary School extending its admission numbers. This proves that whilst there are surplus places, there are not enough places for all children in Community schools.
7. The rising numbers of families returning to choosing English medium community schools in Llanrumney has been evidenced this year, with an over-subscribed Eastern High School. In the past decade, one of the reasons parents have selected Welsh-medium primary schools and faith schools is the quality of the secondary education provided by the former High Schools, and they wanted to maximise their chances of accessing a better secondary education.
8. The geography/topography of Llanrumney, which means accessing another community school (non-faith) will be very, very difficult for many families.
9. It is unjust that the faith schools in the area cannot be considered in the discussion, as the main purpose is to save the money associated with surplus spaces. The Church in Wales primary school is a restricted site, in C-graded condition, and with a tiny admission number. It is therefore a huge financial burden on the LA. It could merge with the catholic primary school as an ecumenical school. Or it could be closed – which will mean less surplus places.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS DESERVING OF CAREFUL CONSIDERATION

1. Reducing the admissions number of Glan-yr-Afon to 1-form entry, and federating the school with another primary school, to improve teaching and leadership and assist in the financial sustainability of both schools.
2. The site of Glan-yr-Afon is extensive and could easily house two schools – such as a school specialising in pupils with emotional, social and wellbeing difficulties, alongside a mainstream school. There would be plenty of land (such as where the current top yard is) to ensure parking and access, and vehicular movement around the site. Likewise, there are options for alternative or extra road entry/exit (access) through another road, such as Kipling Close or Dryden Close.

These schools could be a federation and share many costs. Or the mainstream school could be federated with another single-form entry in the area, such as Pen-y-Bryn.

How could this be funded?

- Selling off other Council assets, such as the site of The Court School – another school not fit for purpose.
 - Money ring-fenced for community purposes from Housing Developers
 - 21st century schools Band B funding
3. Re-modelling/modernising the Infant section of the school and demolishing the junior section. Allowing the school to move forward as a one-form entry school.
 4. Amalgamating Pen-y-Bryn and Glan-yr-Afon on the bigger Glan-yr-Afon site and completely changing the catchment areas of Llanrumney to suit this amalgamation and pupil-distribution. Access to Glan-yr-Afon could easily be improved by a one-way system and separate exit/entry for traffic, using other streets which also back onto the grounds of the site.

5. Making Glan-yr-Afon a 2-form entry school and closing Penybryn Primary School, as this is only 1 form entry. This would mean a much more realistic and sustainable situation of 2 community schools in Llanrumney, both with 2-form entry. The selling of the Penybryn site would be much easier and more profitable than selling the Glan-yr-Afon site, and the profits from this could be used towards modernising and remodelling (or rebuilding) Glan-yr-Afon.

SURPLUS PLACES and SPACE FOR ALL LLANRUMNEY CHILDREN?

The consultation document is not convincing that there will remain enough spaces in community schools for all pupils of Glan-yr-Afon (present and future).

- It only considers the new/proposed new housing developments in Llanrumney. However, there are many families from Llanrumney currently attending schools outside Llanrumney. With the wider housing developments in Rumney, St Mellon's and further afield, there will be less option for families to choose education out of Llanrumney and the schools will begin to fill up for this reason as well.
- Now that the area has a better-quality high school facility, more families will opt for English-medium community schools, instead of faith schools and welsh-medium schools.
- The data the LA uses is notoriously inaccurate and has been proved totally incorrect and inaccurate in other attempts to close schools due to surplus spaces. Or indeed to open schools. The already-oversubscribed Eastern High shows this.

Children's Rights and the need for the best, LOCAL education for children most at risk of disengagement

Cardiff is committed to becoming a UNICEF Child-Friendly City. **Yet the greatest impact, if this proposal were to go ahead, would be on some of the most vulnerable children and families in our city.** The "closing the gap" aims for the Council and Government are seriously negated by this proposal. Children have a right to attend primary school – this should be a local school which is part of their community and is easily accessible. Articles 28 and 29

Glan-yr-Afon has the highest FSM level and highest ALN level of the Llanrumney schools – therefore some of the most vulnerable children would have a long distance to walk to school. There are many single-parent families and many without a car at their disposal. The distance and difficulty of the walk will prevent good parent-engagement – one of the proven factors in increasing aspirations and life-chances for more vulnerable pupils.

QUALITY IMPACT?

Who will be most (and disproportionately) disadvantaged by the closure of Glan-yr-AFon?

- Parents and pupils with disabilities
- Single parents, especially the many single mothers – unmarried people
- Young children
- Non-Catholic families who follow a different faith or do not have a faith.

5 protected characteristics – age, gender, marital status, religion and disability – are seriously disadvantaged and prejudiced by this proposal.

The initial Equality Impact Assessment presented to the cabinet fails to address the discrimination created by forcing families in Glan yr Afon catchment to have to attend a faith school - St Cadoc's. Whilst the LA may say that parents aren't forced to opt for faith education, in practical terms they will be forced. The proposal removes parent choice in this part of Llanrumney.

Conclusion

A closure of Glan-yr-Afon would soon be proven to be short-sighted in that it would leave Llanrumney families short of places for primary school pupils and will be detrimental to the education to many very vulnerable pupils.

Just as the area of Llanrumney, Rumney and St Mellon's is beginning to be provided with a good quality secondary education, reducing spaces in community primary schools would be a grave and costly mistake. The proposal is based on a false economy.

There are many other alternatives and options which are plausible and need to be considered – options which can provide the education and learning environment all children in Cardiff deserve, in a location which is accessible to the community, and which is non-discriminatory. Glan-y-Afon's community deserves the chance to have a local, outstanding school.

Have Your Say!

What is proposed?

The Council is proposing to close Glan Yr Afon Primary School from 31st August 2019

- There are not enough pupils attending the school. Glan yr Afon currently has 141 spaces free – almost half of all spaces.
- Fewer spaces means less funding for the school. The school currently has a deficit budget of £130,000. It is extremely unlikely that this situation will change.
- The school building is in need of major repair and provides poor suitability for purpose.
- Spaces are available to accommodate existing pupils across other schools in the local area. The quality of the education and buildings at these schools is of a higher or equal standard.

Are you responding as: Please tick all that apply

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Parent of a child at Glan yr Afon | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> School Employee (Which school?) <i>GYA</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Parent of a child at another primary school (which school?) | <input type="checkbox"/> Pupil (Which School) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> School Governor (which school?) | <input type="checkbox"/> Interested Member of the Public |

2. Do you understand the reasons for the proposal to close Glan yr Afon Primary?

Yes No

3. Which of the following do you believe are most important when choosing a primary school for your child/ren? (Tick 3)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Size of the school | <input type="checkbox"/> Proximity to home |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Class sizes | <input type="checkbox"/> Siblings already in the school |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Quality of school buildings and resources | <input type="checkbox"/> I / family members went to the school |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Teaching staff | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please tell us) |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Educational attainment | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Good reputation | |
- _____
- _____

Response to the consultation document

We are writing as the staff of Glan Yr Afon Primary School in response to the consultation document regarding the proposed closure of our school. In order to understand the position the school is in it is vital to understand what has happened to the school in the last three years.

Glan Yr Afon was inspected by Estyn in January 2015. The school's performance was judged to be adequate and its prospects for improvement were judged to be good.

Estyn stated in their report that the school's prospects for improvement are good because:

- The head teacher, senior management team and governors have a clear vision and aims and are strongly committed to raising standards
- Monitoring is effective in identifying the school's strengths and areas for improvement
- The development plan has appropriate priorities that link well to the outcomes of self-evaluation
- Recent initiatives, which focus on raising standards in literacy and numeracy, are starting to have a positive impact on pupils' standards
- There are effective partnerships that contribute significantly to pupils' wellbeing

These statements prove that the school was in a good position moving forward.

This put Glan Yr Afon in a stronger position than the other local non-faith schools in our area. Bryn Hafod and Pen Y Bryn were both judged as having adequate prospects for improvement at this time.

Glan Yr Afon was put into local authority monitoring following this inspection. Bryn Hafod and Pen Y Bryn were put into Estyn monitoring. This has not been explained accurately in the consultation document.

So what went wrong?

Initially the school made good progress against the recommendations – reports by challenge advisor confirm this and the staff were told by the headteacher and challenge advisor that the recommendations were on track and there was a strong likelihood the school would be removed from monitoring. Categorisation was also going to improve.

However in March 2016 the headteacher Kevin Thomas was suspended. It cannot be underestimated how damaging his suspension and the subsequent court case has been on the whole school- staff and pupils alike. We have been told on many occasions that this is something we should not raise as a concern or even talk about but it has been life changing for many of the staff.

Following his suspension a deputy head from another school was drafted in to take over. She had very little experience as a head and during this time changes were made which

were detrimental to the school. The strengths which Estyn had identified were not acknowledged. The staff tried to take action seeking help from their unions and governing body as they were concerned with the direction the school was going in but this did not result in any positive support at that time. It was perceived as the staff being difficult –this was not the case –the staff had genuine concerns for the school. At times the acting head, the deputy head the ALNCO, the site superintendent, all admin staff and several teachers were absent on sick leave directly or indirectly due to the stress of the situation.

Two senior teachers were asked to take over the day to day running of the school. They asked Challenge Advisor several times about recommendation and told not to worry – this was a crisis management situation. There was little support at that time when the school could have avoided Estyn monitoring. If that had happened we would be in a very different situation now.

Despite this, and due to the hard-work and commitment of the staff, the school has come out of Estyn monitoring in June 2018.

Teaching and Learning

However, one of the key arguments to now shut Glan-yr-Afon is that teaching and learning in the school is judged not to be as good as in other local schools. .

The consultation document is again misleading. This seems to be based on school categorisation. However as already stated Glan Yr Afon was in the strongest position for improvement. It would have been very hard if not impossible for our school to improve considering the number of headteachers and changes of governing body we have had during the last three years.

Teaching and Learning has never been an issue at Glan Yr Afon. All staff regularly exceed their Performance Management targets and no staff member has ever been involved in the compability process.

As a staff we firmly believe that every child has the right to an excellent standard of education. This can be provided at Glan Yr Afon. Estyn acknowledged that our children make good progress from a very low starting point in 2015. Progress data is vital to us with such a high percentage of children with additional needs.

In 2017/18 our progress data showed that our pupils had made excellent progress. All children in Foundation Phase made expected progress and most made higher than expected progress.

In Key Stage 2 all children with one exception made expected progress and many made more than expected progress.

This data was not included in the consultation document but we feel that if this was compared with other schools locally it would give a truer picture of achievement.

Where are Glan-yr Afon pupils going to go?

Article 3

The best interests of the child must be a top priority in all decisions and actions that affect children.

There are not enough places in the local schools on the estate to accommodate all of the Glan-yr-Afon pupils. Pen-y-Bryn and Bryn Hafod currently have some of our pupils on a waiting list; they are certainly in no position to accept all of our pupils. Equally, there are currently doubts over whether St Cadoc's will be prepared to increase their intake, in order to accommodate Glan-yr-Afon pupils. Regardless of whether they do decide to increase their intake, parents should not feel compelled to send their children to a Catholic school. They chose an English medium, non-faith education for their child and now that choice is being taken away from them. We believe that expecting parents to send their children to a faith school is against Article 14

Article 14 (freedom of thought, belief and religion) Every child has the right to think and believe what they choose and also to practise their religion, as long as they are not stopping other people from enjoying their rights. Governments must respect the rights and responsibilities of parents to guide their child as they grow up.

Even if they could all be found places in Pen-y-Bryn and Bryn Hafod (this is not possible unless the local authority have already agreed to Bryn Hafod increasing their numbers), these two schools are at the top of the Llanrumney estate. We are talking about families who already struggle to get their children to school on time, without the additional demand of the extra distance. Glan-yr-Afon staff, have worked hard to ensure that regular attendance by all pupils is a priority, but this is inevitably going to be impacted upon negatively if they have to travel further to school. Some of our families have three or four children in the school. How can it be ensured that all of their children are placed in the same school?

The geography of the local area with a large hill on each side of the estate means access to the other schools would be extremely difficult for parents without transport.

Consideration needs to be given to the Active Travel Legislation. Within the report there is a section on active journeys. Active Journeys is a programme to encourage and promote walking and cycling in schools across Wales. As a school we support this but this proposal would make it very difficult to implement this scheme. Safety is also a concern. Many of our older children walk to and from school alone – they would face many dangers walking for up to 45 minutes alone.

Damaging effect on some of the most disadvantaged pupils in Wales

Glan-yr-Afon has one of the highest percentages of Free School Meals across the whole of Cardiff. As a school, we are judged on the impact that we make in particular to FSM pupils, as it is widely acknowledged that these pupils are the most vulnerable, and most at risk of not making the progress that they should. However, these are now the very children who are being expected to settle in a new school and continue making progress, with no negative impact on them. For many of the pupils at the school, the relationships that they have built with the staff at the school are one of the few certainties in their life and the impact of the

closing of the school on these pupils cannot be underestimated. Indeed, it feels like the least consideration is being given to the children most in need. We feel that barriers are being put in the way of our most vulnerable children learning and this is not acceptable.

The Well – Being of Future Generations Act(Wales 2015) makes reference to well being goals.

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

A Wales of cohesive communities –attractive, safe, viable and well connected communities.

Has the local authority considered this Act as there is no reference to it in the consultation document,

The report states the importance of balancing short-term needs with the need to safeguard the ability to also meet long-term needs. We feel that not enough consideration has been given to the long term impact on these children of losing their primary school.

Deficit budget

One of the key reasons given for the proposed closure of Glan-yr-Afon is its current deficit budget of £130000. When Kevin Thomas was suspended, we had a balanced budget. The deficit has dramatically increased in the last two years from £60,00 in 2017/18 to £130,000 in 2018/19.

This raises two main questions. Why was the governing body allowed to set a deficit budget in 2017/18 and why have they set a deficit budget of such a large sum for 2018/19 on the recommendation of the local authority. This deficit could be reduced significantly now but the Governing Body are not being given the opportunity to do this. The school is being denied the opportunity to improve the situation.

In a document obtained under the Freedom of Information act, the cost on the school, local authority and ultimately the public purse was given as £190,817.77. This is despite us being told that the school has incurred no cost to its budget due to the suspension of the headteacher. This must have had an impact on the budget. It can't be a coincidence that the deficit has suddenly appeared since the suspension of the head.

It has been stated that the school would require 'significant investment' – Kevin Thomas has been suspended on full pay for two and a half years, yet the pupils of one of the most deprived areas of Wales are apparently not worth 'significant investment'.

Number of pupils on roll

Another key reason given for the proposed closure is the falling number on roll and excess places in the school. Points to consider in regards to this

Glan-yr-Afon used to be three separate schools, which have been amalgamated about twenty years ago. This in itself has led to there being excess classrooms

Due to the bad reputation of the former Llanrumney High and the amalgamated Eastern High, some parents in recent years have opted to send their children to St Cadoc's in order to send them to a Catholic high school instead. Since the opening of the new school campus, Eastern High is now an over-subscribed school, which may well lead to an increase in demand for a non-faith, English medium primary in the bottom end of Llanrumney.

The suspension of the headteacher Kevin Thomas, and subsequent conviction for sexual assault, has led to the school receiving a lot of negative publicity which will have impacted on pupil numbers. This is entirely not the fault of the Glan-yr-Afon school community.

Following his conviction for sexual assault Kevin Thomas is still in post, still being paid – this money should be being used to improve our school.

Fair Consultation

Since the announcement of the proposed school closure, one of the local councillors (Lee Bridgeman) and an employee from the local authority (Brett Arthur) have both advised parents to move their children now. This is despite this only being at the consultation period. In the week following the parents meeting where Brett Arthur advised this, we had 13 pupils apply to move schools

Planned new housing in Llanrumney

In terms of new housing, there are many new homes planned in Llanrumney and Rumney. There are 106 houses planned for the site near Countisbury Avenue. The forecast number of primary age pupils is 17 for these houses. I would question if the statistical model that is used to predict that figure is based on areas such as Llanrumney, where many families have 3+ children.

In addition, the consultation states (on p15) "If additional housing was planned on the former Llanrumney High School site.....". However, housing is planned there; the plans are available online to view. There are 98 houses being built with 28 being affordable housing. These houses will increase the demand for primary education in the bottom of Llanrumney.

Two hundred houses are being built on Newport Road. This will put pressure on Bryn Hafod and Pen Y Bryn who already do not have enough spaces for the children of Glan Yr Afon.

With so much building going on in the local area this is not the right time to be considering closing a school!

Levels of support

On page 17 of the consultation document, it states that Glan-yr-Afon is an amber school, and as such would receive support, and that the school has received more support than a school of this category would normally receive. We would like to question what that support consists of as I don't believe being given a deputy headteacher on a secondment (when we requested a full time, experienced head to help us through such a difficult situation), who then subsequently spent lengthy periods of time on sick leave, leaving us with no headteacher, can be considered as adequate support. We also had a change of challenge

advisor during this time. We were told to 'crisis manage'. With adequate support, maybe the school would have made the progress expected.

Risks of proposal

On page 24 of the consultation document, it states the risks associated with the proposal. It does not list the impact on pupil and staff wellbeing as a risk. With regards to the Wellbeing and Future Generations Act (2015), it would have to be questioned as to whether sufficient consideration has been given to the long term impact on the pupils of Glan-yr-Afon.

In addition, the loss of jobs has not been included as a risk. However, the effect on staff wellbeing and the cost of compulsory redundancies should be included as risks. The cost of redundancy payments alone would be a significant sum .

Building

There has been no significant investment in the school building for many years – Why not ? The school was not considered for 21 st Century Schools Funding – Why not?

It is the responsibility of the landlord to provide a dry, safe and warm building. Yet again the Glan Yr Afon community have been let down by factors over which they have no control.

Alternative plans for school

There are other uses for the existing school and site that could be considered.

The school used to be three separate schools- what consideration has been given to moving Key Stage Two provision into the Foundation Phase side of the school, and demolishing the unused part of the school (which is the part in the worst state of repair)? This would ensure that the education of the pupils of Glan-yr-Afon would not be disrupted and maintain a non-faith, English medium primary school at the bottom end of Llanrumney. It would also allow scope for potential rebuilding and extension of provision, if numbers were to rise due to the planned housing developments in the area.

Alternatively consideration could be given to moving some of the behaviour support provision in Cardiff to occupy half of the school. The school would be ideal for this sort of provision due to the extensive woodland and fields. This is something that is not available at many schools in Cardiff.

Glan Yr Afon could federate with another local school. This was successful in some ways when the school worked with Meadowlane enabling the staff to access joint training and share expertise. Problems encountered at that time were due to the school needing a full time head while facing the court case. This should now be resolved.

Glan Yr Afon could reduce to a one form entry enabling children to have continuity of education in their local school.

Thank you for considering our views. In conclusion the staff feel that finally the school is in a very strong position to move forward –

The situation with Kevin Thomas substantive headteacher, should soon come to an end,

leadership in the school is strong and consistent with a clear vision moving forward
the Governing Body is taking an active part in the school and is continuing to develop
Estyn have stated that the school needs no further monitoring

The staff are able to access training – something they have been denied for many years.

Our pupils made excellent progress in the last academic year

Parental support is very strong

The parents should be given the opportunity to engage in their children's education in a local school and barriers should not be put in their way.

The area is currently being regenerated with new housing which will require a community base. The area has already lost the High School, Youth Centre and community Football Pitches,

This is not the right time to close our school when there is so much potential for growth and change.

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There are not enough places in the local schools on the estate to accommodate all of the Glan-yr-Afon pupils. Pen-y-Bryn and Bryn Hafod currently have some of our pupils on a waiting list; they are certainly in no position to accept all of our pupils. Equally, there are currently doubts over whether St Cadoc's will be prepared to increase their intake, in order to accommodate Glan-yr-Afon pupils. Regardless of whether they do decide to increase their intake, parents should not feel compelled to send their children to a Catholic school. They chose an English medium, non-faith education for their child and now that choice is being taken away from them. We believe that expecting parents to send their children to a faith school is against Article 14

Article 14 (freedom of thought, belief and religion) Every child has the right to think and believe what they choose and also to practise their religion, as long as they are not stopping other people from enjoying their rights. Governments must respect the rights and responsibilities of parents to guide their child as they grow up.

Even if they could all be found places in Pen-y-Bryn and Bryn Hafod (this is not possible unless the local authority have already agreed to Bryn Hafod increasing their numbers), these two schools are at the top of the Llanrumney estate. We are talking about families who already struggle to get their children to school on time, without the additional demand of the extra distance. Glan-yr-Afon staff, have worked hard to ensure that regular attendance by all pupils is a priority, but this is inevitably going to be impacted upon negatively if they have to travel further to school. Some of our families have three or four children in the school. How can it be ensured that all of their children are placed in the same school?

The geography of the local area with a large hill on each side of the estate means access to the other schools would be extremely difficult for parents without transport.

Consideration needs to be given to the Active Travel Legislation. Within the report there is a section on active journeys. Active Journeys is a programme to encourage and promote walking and cycling in schools across Wales. As a school we support this but this proposal would make it very difficult to implement this scheme. Safety is also a concern. Many of our older children walk to and from school alone – they would face many dangers walking for up to 45 minutes alone.

Damaging effect on some of the most disadvantaged pupils in Wales

Glan-yr-Afon has one of the highest percentages of Free School Meals across the whole of Cardiff. As a school, we are judged on the impact that we make in particular to FSM pupils, as it is widely acknowledged that these pupils are the most vulnerable, and most at risk of not making the progress that they should. However, these are now the very children who are being expected to settle in a new school and continue making progress, with no negative impact on them. For many of the pupils at the school, the relationships that they have built with the staff at the school are one of the few certainties in their life and the impact of the

closing of the school on these pupils cannot be underestimated. Indeed, it feels like the least consideration is being given to the children most in need. We feel that barriers are being put in the way of our most vulnerable children learning and this is not acceptable.

The Well – Being of Future Generations Act(Wales 2015) makes reference to well being goals.

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

A Wales of cohesive communities –attractive, safe, viable and well connected communities.

Has the local authority considered this Act as there is no reference to it in the consultation document,

The report states the importance of balancing short-term needs with the need to safeguard the ability to also meet long-term needs. We feel that not enough consideration has been given to the long term impact on these children of losing their primary school.

Deficit budget

One of the key reasons given for the proposed closure of Glan-yr-Afon is its current deficit budget of £130000. When Kevin Thomas was suspended, we had a balanced budget. The deficit has dramatically increased in the last two years from £60,00 in 2017/18 to £130,000 in 2018/19.

This raises two main questions. Why was the governing body allowed to set a deficit budget in 2017/18 and why have they set a deficit budget of such a large sum for 2018/19 on the recommendation of the local authority. This deficit could be reduced significantly now but the Governing Body are not being given the opportunity to do this. The school is being denied the opportunity to improve the situation.

In a document obtained under the Freedom of Information act, the cost on the school, local authority and ultimately the public purse was given as £190,817.77. This is despite us being told that the school has incurred no cost to its budget due to the suspension of the headteacher. This must have had an impact on the budget. It can't be a coincidence that the deficit has suddenly appeared since the suspension of the head.

It has been stated that the school would require 'significant investment' – Kevin Thomas has been suspended on full pay for two and a half years, yet the pupils of one of the most deprived areas of Wales are apparently not worth 'significant investment'.

Number of pupils on roll

Another key reason given for the proposed closure is the falling number on roll and excess places in the school. Points to consider in regards to this

Glan-yr-Afon used to be three separate schools, which have been amalgamated about twenty years ago. This in itself has led to there being excess classrooms

Due to the bad reputation of the former Llanrumney High and the amalgamated Eastern High, some parents in recent years have opted to send their children to St Cadoc's in order to send them to a Catholic high school instead. Since the opening of the new school campus, Eastern High is now an over-subscribed school, which may well lead to an increase in demand for a non-faith, English medium primary in the bottom end of Llanrumney.

The suspension of the headteacher Kevin Thomas, and subsequent conviction for sexual assault, has led to the school receiving a lot of negative publicity which will have impacted on pupil numbers. This is entirely not the fault of the Glan-yr-Afon school community.

Following his conviction for sexual assault Kevin Thomas is still in post , still being paid – this money should be being used to improve our school.

Fair Consultation

Since the announcement of the proposed school closure, one of the local councillors (Lee Bridgeman) and an employee from the local authority (Brett Arthur) have both advised parents to move their children now. This is despite this only being at the consultation period. In the week following the parents meeting where Brett Arthur advised this, we had 13 pupils apply to move schools

Planned new housing in Llanrumney

In terms of new housing, there are many new homes planned in Llanrumney and Rumney. There are 106 houses planned for the site near Countisbury Avenue. The forecast number of primary age pupils is 17 for these houses. I would question if the statistical model that is used to predict that figure is based on areas such as Llanrumney, where many families have 3+ children.

In addition, the consultation states (on p15) "If additional housing was planned on the former Llanrumney High School site.....". However, housing is planned there; the plans are available online to view. There are 98 houses being built with 28 being affordable housing. These houses will increase the demand for primary education in the bottom of Llanrumney.

Two hundred houses are being built on Newport Road. This will put pressure on Bryn Hafod and Pen Y Bryn who already do not have enough spaces for the children of Glan Yr Afon.

With so much building going on in the local area this is not the right time to be considering closing a school!

Levels of support

On page 17 of the consultation document, it states that Glan-yr-Afon is an amber school, and as such would receive support, and that the school has received more support than a school of this category would normally receive. We would like to question what that support consists of as I don't believe being given a deputy headteacher on a secondment (when we requested a full time, experienced head to help us through such a difficult situation), who then subsequently spent lengthy periods of time on sick leave, leaving us with no headteacher, can be considered as adequate support. We also had a change of challenge

advisor during this time. We were told to 'crisis manage'. With adequate support, maybe the school would have made the progress expected.

Risks of proposal

On page 24 of the consultation document, it states the risks associated with the proposal. It does not list the impact on pupil and staff wellbeing as a risk. With regards to the Wellbeing and Future Generations Act (2015), it would have to be questioned as to whether sufficient consideration has been given to the long term impact on the pupils of Glan-yr-Afon.

In addition, the loss of jobs has not been included as a risk. However, the effect on staff wellbeing and the cost of compulsory redundancies should be included as risks. The cost of redundancy payments alone would be a significant sum .

Building

There has been no significant investment in the school building for many years – Why not ? The school was not considered for 21 st Century Schools Funding – Why not?

It is the responsibility of the landlord to provide a dry, safe and warm building. Yet again the Glan Yr Afon community have been let down by factors over which they have no control.

Alternative plans for school

There are other uses for the existing school and site that could be considered.

The school used to be three separate schools- what consideration has been given to moving Key Stage Two provision into the Foundation Phase side of the school, and demolishing the unused part of the school (which is the part in the worst state of repair)? This would ensure that the education of the pupils of Glan-yr-Afon would not be disrupted and maintain a non-faith, English medium primary school at the bottom end of Llanrumney. It would also allow scope for potential rebuilding and extension of provision, if numbers were to rise due to the planned housing developments in the area.

Alternatively consideration could be given to moving some of the behaviour support provision in Cardiff to occupy half of the school. The school would be ideal for this sort of provision due to the extensive woodland and fields. This is something that is not available at many schools in Cardiff.

Glan Yr Afon could federate with another local school. This was successful in some ways when the school worked with Meadowlane enabling the staff to access joint training and share expertise. Problems encountered at that time were due to the school needing a full time head while facing the court case. This should now be resolved.

Glan Yr Afon could reduce to a one form entry enabling children to have continuity of education in their local school.

Thank you for considering our views. In conclusion the staff feel that finally the school is in a very strong position to move forward –

The situation with Kevin Thomas substantive headteacher, should soon come to an end,

leadership in the school is strong and consistent with a clear vision moving forward
the Governing Body is taking an active part in the school and is continuing to develop
Estyn have stated that the school needs no further monitoring

The staff are able to access training – something they have been denied for many years.

Our pupils made excellent progress in the last academic year

Parental support is very strong

The parents should be given the opportunity to engage in their children's education in a local school and barriers should not be put in their way.

The area is currently being regenerated with new housing which will require a community base. The area has already lost the High School, Youth Centre and community Football Pitches,

This is not the right time to close our school when there is so much potential for growth and change.

Flying Start Health Visitors
Glan Yr Afon Primary School
Browning Close
Cardiff
CF3 5NJ
10/10/18

To whom it may concern

We are Flying Start Health Visitors based at Glan Yr Afon (GYA) Primary School and are collectively responding to the proposed closure of GYA.

Whilst, we agree with the proposal set out by Cardiff Council on page 3 of the Summary Document we would like to articulate the benefits of our Flying Start Team being based locally and within GYA school and the wider community.

We realise that creating a strong economy which delivers prosperity and security for all individuals, families and communities in Wales is a key priority for Welsh Government (WG 2017). As Flying Start Health visitors we make a huge contribution to positively changing the lives of children and their families within the local area- Llanrumney. Pivotal to this is the fact that we are based at GYA, having high visibility with parents and children attending the school. The Flying Start Health Visitors are seen as part of the community of Llanrumney having strong links with the GYA school, local schools, Nurseries, GP surgery and wider community. This has strengthened our relationships with teachers, GP's, Community nurses, police and other professionals. This has provided us with excellent communication channels as we are seen to be part of the community and a great resource to other professionals and families. Also, our engagement with the wider multi-disciplinary agencies is crucial to safeguarding children in the local area. We also identify and refer children to Flying Start childcare which is offered to parents within the local area. Being based at the school allows us to maintain close links with parents and children particularly as we work closely with local nurseries.

The primary function of the Flying Start health visitor is to support the family in the home within an intensive structured home visiting programme. We offer an enhanced service to our families and help and support can be provided on a range of issues which may affect our families. We are supported by the Community Nursery Nurse (CNN) service and Karen (based at GYA) is invaluable to supporting us with the referral process for caring for newborn babies and giving advice and support with breastfeeding, feeding, weaning and nutrition, sleep routines, potty training and behavioral issues such as sleep. We provide additional home visits from the ante natal period through to 3 years and 11 months. This is to support our local families with parenting and to provide them with any help and advice which they might need. This enables us to build up secure trusting relationships with our family which is crucial in developing a partnership with our families, enabling them to draw out their values and beliefs and enabling us to identify health needs to determine appropriate interventions and early referrals. This contributes to health promotion, improved education, enhanced wellbeing and improved outcomes for all children and families living within the GYA flying start catchment area.

As Flying Start Health Visitors we have an excellent working knowledge and profile of the local area and as a result are able to sign post and refer our families to other agencies within and outside Flying Start if required. This is a crucial part of our role as we are at the forefront of delivering a robust Flying Start Service and we are the first point of contact with our families. Given the fact we spend lengthy periods of time with our families /clients we are able to identify early detection within the levels of provision offered, such as dental health, immunisation, smoking and substance misuse, prevention of SIDS, breastfeeding, nutrition, obesity, baby safety and accident prevention, promotion of secure attachment and bonding, involving dads and safeguarding children which are vital to the principles underpinning WG initiatives and also health visiting practice.

In order to facilitate health enhancing activities, it is necessary for us to work collaboratively with schools and health professionals within the local area to establish support networks in the community as well as individually planned home-based programmes. We continually assess our families identified as medium and high risk, and make appropriate referrals. Therefore being based at Glan Yr Afon has

enabled us to identify and work closely with families and relatives attending the school.

Our group sessions include baby massage, weaning parties and baby clinic. We also take part in delivering the Parenting programme. Evidence shows that speech, language and communication ability is an important predictor of later progress in literacy and has an impact on social skills as well as behaviour of children (WG 2017). Every family in our area has on-going access to an appropriate language and play group which is held at GYA primary school. From this, a more targeted approach based on assessment and referral can be taken when there is evidence of additional need

Looking forward, we will continue to strive towards improving outcomes for children and families and are committed to enabling our parents and families to find enjoyment and enrichment in parenthood. The government recognises that Health Visitors are in a key position to lead and influence change (DOH 1997). Therefore, in order for this to continue, it is vital that we have a profile and remain locally in order to continue to arrest this challenge of delivering a robust F/S programme with the enthusiasm and commitment that we have practiced since being based at Glan Yr Afon for the past 10 years.

Yours Faithfully

Helen Swann (HV)

Stephanie Cotton (HV)

Margaret Davies (HV)

Vicky Forsey (HV)

Karen Parker (CNN)

Julie Hugo (Clerk)