

**CABINET MEETING: 23 MARCH 2023**

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**SCHOOL ORGANISATION PLANNING: PRIMARY SCHOOL  
PLACES TO SERVE CATHAYS AND PARTS OF GABALFA,  
HEATH, LLANDAFF NORTH AND PLASNEWYDD**

**EDUCATION (COUNCILLOR SARAH MERRY)**

**AGENDA ITEM: 4**

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**Reason for this Report**

1. To enable the Cabinet to consider a recommendation to hold public consultation on revised proposals for primary school provision to serve Cathays and parts of Gabalfa, Heath, Llandaff North and Plasnewydd.
2. For Cabinet to note the revenue and potential capital implications arising from reorganisation of school provision in the area, and potential VAT implications that may arise from the land ownership arrangements relating to the potential transfer of St Monica's Church in Wales Primary School.

**Background**

**The Cardiff Context - 'Stronger, Fairer, Greener' and the importance of Education**

3. In June 2022, the Council published its 'Stronger, Fairer, Greener' document, setting out the key themes and commitments for the next five years with a strong focus on putting children and young people front and centre of their ambitions for the city. Central to this is the explicit belief that good education is the surest route out of poverty and, in turn that, the long-term prosperity of the city relies on firm support for our children and young people to reach their potential.
4. In order to build on the high standard of education delivered in Cardiff as recognised by the recent Estyn Inspection, the Council has reiterated its commitment to making every school in Cardiff a good school, where every child can receive a great education.
5. This includes continued commitment to high levels of investment in new and existing school buildings alongside continuing to drive up educational attainment and delivering on our commitment to put the views of children and young people at the heart of the Council's policy agenda. In doing so,

the Council is keen to place a particular focus on supporting Cardiff's most vulnerable children to the world of work and higher education.

6. Education is consistently ranked as the top priority for children and young people in Cardiff, a key social and cultural right which plays an essential role in overcoming poverty and disadvantage.
7. Included within the Stronger, Fairer, Greener document is the commitment to set a new vision and strategy for education through the refresh of the Cardiff 2030 strategy. This is intended to strengthen and sharpen the focus to place greater emphasis on ensuring no child or young person is left behind and all are able to access appropriate routes into education and learning opportunities that enable them to thrive and realise their individual dreams and ambitions.
8. There are also clear commitments to close the gap for our most vulnerable learners with a particular focus on children in care, those educated other than at school and children from the most deprived communities; to develop a Community Focussed Schools programme and to promote the benefits of bilingualism, expanding uptake in Welsh-medium education in line with Cymraeg 2050.
9. In Cardiff, ensuring funding for education is targeted towards learning experiences and opportunities alongside support for families is critical. Whilst investment in the infrastructure can be a key part of reducing spend on fixed assets, ensuring an appropriate and sustainable organisation of places distributed across the city is essential. The Council must support each school to continue to improve education for all their learners.
10. To achieve this, the Council must also ensure that there is an appropriate balance in the number and different types of school places serving each area, and that each school provision offered meets the diverse needs of the communities they serve. Whilst doing so, 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.

### **City-wide population context**

11. Intakes to Reception classes city-wide peaked at c4,370 pupils in 2015/16 and 2016/17, corresponding with peak birth rates recorded in 2010/11 and 2011/12. Comparing intakes to the number of places available of c4,700, Cardiff retained approximately 8% surplus places.
12. As a consequence of a sustained fall in the birth rate from 2017/18 onwards, and changes to migration patterns, city-wide intakes to primary education in September 2021 to September 2025 are projected to reduce significantly. These are evidenced in data published by the Office of National Statistics and the most recent NHS GP registration data sets. However, changes to populations are not consistent in all parts of the city.

13. Intakes to Reception classes in 2021/22 fell to c3,860 pupils, a fall of c510 pupils since the peak, and are projected to fall further to c3,500 by 2025/2026, an overall fall of c18%. Comparing projected intakes to the number of places available of c4,700, Cardiff's surplus places would increase to c25% city-wide. This represents the equivalent of 18 surplus two-form entry primary schools. Parental preference patterns mean that the impact on some schools will be negligible, whilst for other schools the impact on pupil numbers will be far greater than the city-wide average of an 18% fall.
14. As birth rates in Cardiff, and nationally, have followed a long-term cycle of approximately 25 years it is therefore anticipated that intakes would not return to high levels until later than 2030. Nationally, the previous lowest birth rates were recorded in 1977, followed by a significant uplift and then fall to a low in 2001. This was then followed by a period of uplift to 2011/12 which then falls from this date. Whilst a small uplift has been recorded in ONS data for the 2021 calendar year, no uplift has been recorded in NHS GP registration data in the most recent dataset for the 2020/21 academic year period.
15. The School Organisation Code provides guidance that, where there are more than 10% surplus places in an area overall, local authorities should review their provision and should consider whether to make proposals for their removal if this will improve the effectiveness and efficiency of provision.
16. The number of places available in existing communities in Cardiff is sufficient to accommodate all pupils and a reasonable proportion of surplus must be retained above the 10% guidance level to respond to the high variance in intakes over the long term.
17. As schools' budgets are predicated on pupil numbers, reducing intakes and increased surplus places city-wide will have a significant impact on some schools. Proposals to better balance capacities of schools with the forecast take up of places would provide a more effective use of the schools' financial resources, allowing schools to allocate a greater proportion of their budget to teaching and learning.

### **Improving the balance of English-medium and Welsh-medium school places**

18. The Council is committed to ensuring that every child in Cardiff receives a great education through their chosen language medium.
19. The Council consulted in 2021 on a proposal 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 and sought views on long term changes to school provision.
20. There is sufficient capacity within existing schools serving these areas to support the reorganisation of existing provision. Any reorganisation of provision must present an appropriate means of balancing the availability and take up of both English-medium and Welsh-medium provision in the

area and should also represent a more effective and efficient use of resources. Proposals must also retain flexibility in the Education estate to respond to any future population changes affecting the area.

21. The planning and development of effective school organisation proposals is key to providing better educational outcomes, and proposals should aim to increase school effectiveness and narrow inequalities in achievement between advantaged and disadvantaged areas, groups, and individuals.
22. When organising school provision, local authorities must consider:
  - How to support schools to continue to improve quality and standards in education for all of their learners.
  - The need for places of each type, and the impact on accessibility of schools.
  - The extent to which proposals support Cymraeg 2050 and their local Welsh in Education Plans.
  - The impact proposals will have on educational attainment among children from economically deprived backgrounds.
  - Any equality issues, including those identified through equality impact assessments, ensuring that each school provision offered meets the diverse needs of the communities they currently serve and are able to serve in the future.
  - The resourcing of education and other financial implications, supporting schools to be financially sustainable in an improved pattern of provision through amalgamation, formal federation or collaboration.
  - How to support schools to allocate a greater proportion of budget to teaching and learning, thereby retaining and increasing opportunities for learners.
23. When developing proposals specific to improving the distribution of English-medium and Welsh-medium primary school places in the areas of Cathays and parts of Gabalfa, Heath, Llandaff North and Plasnewydd the following points must also be considered:
  - How any proposed changes would provide an improved balance between the availability and take up of both English-medium and Welsh-medium primary school places, and the level of surplus places to respond to future population changes.
  - How any proposed changes would provide a more economically sustainable pattern of school provision over the long term.
  - How any proposed changes would contribute towards increasing the number and percentage of places available through the medium of Welsh in the local area, and city-wide.
  - How any proposed changes would support Cardiff in meeting its targeted increase from c18% of pupils, to between 25% and 29%, of pupils educated through the medium of Welsh.

### **Cardiff's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP)**

24. In 2017 the Welsh Government published its 'Cymraeg 2050: A million Welsh speakers' strategy for the promotion and facilitation of the use of the Welsh language. This sets out the long-term approach to achieving a target of a million Welsh speakers by 2025.

25. Consistent with this, the Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (Wales) Regulations 2019 require Local Authorities to set a ten-year target outlining the expected increase in Year 1 children who are taught through the medium of Welsh in the local authority area during the lifespan of the plan.
26. Each local authority must set its target in line with the range provided by the Welsh Government in order to contribute toward the overall national target.
27. 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 the end of the ten-year period.
28. In the 2020/2021, the intake to Reception Welsh-medium education was 749 pupils, which was 18% of the total intake. Therefore, to reach the lower range target there would need to be a percentage increase of approximately 7%. To reach the upper range target there would need to be a percentage increase of approximately 11%.
29. At present, 18% of Reception age primary school places available are also through the medium of Welsh, either in Welsh-medium or dual stream schools. As intakes to schools are projected to reduce, the Council would be able to accommodate a greater percentage of children in Welsh-medium schools.
30. 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.
31. At its meeting on 24 February 2022, the Cabinet considered a report which set out details of the responses received following consultation on the draft Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) 2022 – 2031.
32. 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.
33. The Cabinet agreed:
  - Submission of the approved WESP 2022-2031 to the Welsh Government Ministers.
  - Publication of the WESP 2022-2031 on the Council's website following approval by Welsh Government Ministers.

- Delegated responsibility to the Director of Education and Lifelong Learning for the development and implementation of operational plans together with Welsh Education Forum (WEF) partners to deliver the success measures set out in the strategy.
34. The WESP was subsequently agreed by the Welsh Government and work is being progressed to develop/implement an action plan. Cardiff's WESP is attached as Appendix 1.
35. 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 Cathays, Gabalfa, Heath and Plasnewydd in the central area of the city.

## **Issues**

### **Previous consultation on proposed changes**

36. At its meeting on 17 December 2020 Cabinet authorised officers to consult on proposals to:
- Increase the capacity of Ysgol Mynydd Bychan from 0.9FE (192 places) to 1.5FE (up to 315 places) from September 2022.
  - Undertake a stakeholder engagement exercise to shape proposals that would be taken forward to provide an appropriate balance of Welsh-medium and English-medium primary school places to serve the area.
37. Cabinet noted that the consultation on the Admission Arrangements for the 2022/23 academic year would include a proposal to reduce the admission number of Allensbank Primary School from 45 to 30 places.
38. The increase in the capacity at Ysgol Mynydd Bychan would be provided at the Allensbank Primary School site, in existing accommodation, with Ysgol Mynydd Bychan operating over split sites.
39. The report noted that engagement with the schools, parents, and the wider community on a preferred long-term solution as part of the statutory consultation on the proposed expansion of Ysgol Mynydd Bychan would allow for the views of stakeholders to shape proposals that would provide an appropriate balance of Welsh-medium and English-medium primary school places to serve the area.
40. Public consultation was held from 29 January until 19 March 2021, with views sought from a wide range of stakeholders.
41. The outcome of the consultation showed that whilst there was support overall for the expansion of Welsh-medium education, the majority of respondents including the Headteachers and Governing Bodies of

Allensbank Primary School and Ysgol Mynydd Bychan did not support the expansion of Ysgol Mynydd Bychan as proposed.

42. The engagement exercise allowed the opportunity for stakeholders to express views on a preferred long-term solution that would provide an appropriate balance of Welsh-medium and English-medium school places to serve the area with any long-term 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.
43. A range of points were raised by stakeholders regarding long term changes to primary school provision including:
- Wanting to ensure that demand for English-medium and Welsh-medium places is met.
  - The need for both Allensbank Primary School and Ysgol Mynydd Bychan to have their own sites.
  - Insufficient information provided in the consultation document regarding the long-term expansion of Welsh-medium provision.
  - The location/proximity of sites suggested.
  - Being content with the current situation and saw no reason to change things.
  - Being against the splitting of sites.
44. A number of alternative suggestions for the provision of primary school places were also put forward. These included:
- Establishing a new build 2FE school for Ysgol Mynydd Bychan on an unidentified site.
  - Utilising the current Cathays High School site for a new build Ysgol Mynydd Bychan.
  - Swapping the Ysgol Mynydd Bychan and Allensbank Primary School sites.
  - Doing nothing - make use of the surplus places available in existing nearby schools, Ysgol Glan Ceubal in particular.
  - Exploring alternative land options.
  - Adjusting existing catchment areas.
  - Enhancing and expanding the existing Ysgol Mynydd Bychan site.
  - Consideration being given to transferring St Monica's Church in Wales Primary School to the Ysgol Mynydd Bychan site.
  - Welsh-medium and English-medium community school provision should be consolidated at 2 forms of entry each, on either the Allensbank or shared Gladstone/ St Monica's site.

45. The children and young people that responded to the consultation echoed many of the concerns raised by other stakeholders.
46. At its meeting on 17 June 2021, Cabinet received a report setting out the outcome of the consultation (Appendix 2). Following consideration of the points raised, the Cabinet resolved to not progress the proposed expansion of Ysgol Mynydd Bychan from 2022.
47. However, Cabinet authorised officers to bring a further report to Cabinet for consideration, setting out details of revised proposals for permanent changes to primary school places serving Cathays and parts of Gabalfa, Heath, Llandaff North and Plasnewydd.
48. Cabinet also noted that the agreed School Admission Arrangements 2022/2023 as set out in the Admissions Policy 2022/2023 includes an Admission Number of 30 for Allensbank Primary School.

### **Sufficiency of primary school places**

49. When considering likely demand for places across the area, a number of factors have been used to inform projections and forecasts, including:
  - Recent and historic numbers on roll taken from verified PLASC (Pupil Level Annual School Census) for Cardiff schools, including the most recent update in February 2022.
  - Recent and historic populations known to be living in each area utilising NHS data, including the most recent update in August 2022.
  - Recent and historic numbers and percentages of children attending English-medium, Welsh-medium, community and faith places in each area of Cardiff.
  - Recent and historic numbers and percentages of children transferring from primary schools in Cardiff to secondary schools elsewhere.
50. Forecasts and target-based trajectories have been prepared based on:
  - Current residential populations.
  - Likely child populations from the future residential developments currently in construction and proposed.
  - Likely demand if parental take-up patterns were to remain consistent with the most recent years applying these trends to the relevant populations in future years.
  - Likely demand for places at entry to primary education if expansion of Welsh-medium provision was progressed consistent with Cardiff's approved Welsh in Education Strategic Plan.
51. Additional information, regarding projections and forecasts prepared relevant to the area, and the methodologies used to model provision are set out in Appendix 3.



## **Primary schools serving the area**

52. The Cathays, Gabalfa, Heath, Llandaff North and Plasnewydd areas are served by a number of Welsh-medium and English-medium primary schools.
53. Ysgol Mynydd Bychan serves a catchment area that includes the community of Cathays and parts of the communities of Gabalfa, Heath and Plasnewydd.
54. The catchment areas of Ysgol Y Wern, Ysgol Glan Ceubal and Ysgol Melin Gruffydd lie adjacent to the catchment area of Ysgol Mynydd Bychan.
55. The current catchment areas of Allensbank Primary School, Albany Primary School and Gladstone Primary School, which together form the secondary school catchment of Cathays High School, serve Cathays and parts of Gabalfa, Heath, Llandaff North and Plasnewydd.
56. St Monica's Church in Wales (Church in Wales) Primary School in Cathays, St Joseph's Roman Catholic (RC) Primary School in Gabalfa and St Peter's Roman Catholic (RC) Primary School in Plasnewydd also serve these communities.
57. Secondary Welsh-medium provision to serve the area is provided at Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Glantaf with secondary English-medium community provision provided at Cathays High School. The area is also served by Corpus Christi Catholic High School and St Teilo's Church in Wales High School.
58. A map indicating the location of, and catchment areas of, the Welsh-medium schools can be seen at Appendix 4.
59. A map indicating the location of, and catchment areas of, the English-medium primary schools can be seen at Appendix 5.
60. Cardiff's wider education community includes a number of independent schools. Cardiff Muslim Primary School and Kings Monkton are located in Cathays and Plasnewydd communities respectively. The proposals outlined in this report relate to community primary school provision and the impact on independent schools is not known.

## **Establishing local demand for and take up of school places**

61. In order to calculate the likely demand for school places, historic trends specific to well established school catchment areas have been used.
62. The geographical units that are most suitable to analyse the demand for Welsh-medium primary school places are the discrete catchment areas of Ysgol Mynydd Bychan, Ysgol Y Wern, Ysgol Glan Ceubal and Ysgol Gymraeg Melin Gruffydd (map attached as Appendix 4), each of which falls within the secondary school catchment area of Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Glantaf.

63. The geographical units that are most suitable to analyse the demand for English-medium primary school places are the discrete catchment areas of Allensbank Primary School, Albany Primary School, and Gladstone Primary School (map attached as Appendix 5), which together form the existing catchment of Cathays High School.
64. The following paragraphs give details of these catchment areas, the data used, and the methodology applied. Projected demand takes account of the recent proportionate demand for places and pre-school population data supplied by the NHS. Forecast demand considers these data sets, and factors in other contextual information.

### **Sufficiency of Welsh-medium primary school places**

65. Whilst intakes to Ysgol Glan Ceubal, Ysgol Gymraeg Melin Gruffydd and Ysgol Y Wern have fluctuated in recent years, 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 area of the school were refused admission to the school.
66. 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, indicates that the number of children within the Ysgol Mynydd Bychan catchment area who would take up a place at a Welsh-medium primary school is projected to exceed the number of places available at entry to the school.
67. Taking account of the projected lower intakes to primary schools until at least 2025/2026, there is sufficient provision across the wider area to accommodate growth in Welsh-medium in the short term.
68. However, the projected level of surplus places city-wide and in the combined catchment areas of Ysgol Glan Ceubal, Ysgol Gymraeg Melin Gruffydd, Ysgol Mynydd Bychan and Ysgol Y Wern would not be sufficient to significantly increase Welsh-medium take up in the longer term, in order to meet Cardiff's targeted growth.
69. Whilst changes to catchment areas could improve the balance of places, these changes alone may not support long term growth and would not represent a sufficient contribution towards meeting the growth target set in Cardiff's WESP.
70. Furthermore, school admissions data for the September 2023 intake to primary education confirms that 207 first preferences have been submitted for the combined total of 210 places available at Ysgol Glan Ceubal, Ysgol Gymraeg Melin Gruffydd, Ysgol Mynydd Bychan and Ysgol Y Wern. This data indicates that at least two of the schools will be fully subscribed on offer day (16 April 2023). The combined level of surplus places between these schools, based on first preferences only, would be 1.4%.

71. Additional information, regarding projections, forecasts and the methodologies used to model provision are set out in Appendix 3.

### **Sufficiency of English-medium primary school places**

72. Intakes to Albany Primary School, Allensbank Primary School and Gladstone Primary School have fluctuated in recent years. Each of these English-medium schools has a high 'pupil mobility', that is to say that the number of children on roll in each year changes frequently, from month to month.
73. The number of children enrolled at Albany Primary School, Allensbank Primary School, or Gladstone Primary School, who reside in the catchment areas of these schools, is low when compared to the capacities of these schools as parents take up places at neighbouring schools and those further afield.
74. There are a number of factors which affect parental preference. However, a high proportion of parents who reside within the catchment areas of schools but in closer proximity to other schools take up places at the alternative, closer school. Whilst this is the case at Albany, Allensbank and Gladstone Primary Schools, Albany has a low level of surplus places as parents in the wider area state a preference for the school and gain admission.
75. The number of children allocated a place in Reception class at Albany Primary School, Allensbank Primary School, or Gladstone Primary School on offer day for the September 2022 intake totalled 85 compared to the combined capacity of 120 places. The number enrolled in October 2022 had increased to 94 pupils, meaning that the level of surplus in the year group remained above 20%.
76. In the wider area, including the neighbouring primary school catchment areas of Birchgrove Primary School and Ton-yr-Ywen Primary School to the north and Roath Park Primary School to the south, the level of surplus at entry to reception is projected to increase from c13% to c20%, and at a city-wide level projected to increase to c25%.
77. School admissions data for the September 2023 intake to primary education confirms that 69 first preferences have been submitted for the combined total of 120 places available at Albany Primary School, Allensbank Primary School, and Gladstone Primary School. A further 61 first preferences have been submitted for the combined total of 110 places available at St Monica's Church in Wales Primary School, St Joseph's RC Primary School, and St Peter's RC Primary School.
78. The combined level of surplus places between these schools, based on first preferences only, exceeds 40%. Few English-medium schools in neighbouring catchment areas are expected to be fully subscribed for the September 2023 intake.

79. It is anticipated that the number of pupils who will enrol at the above English-medium schools will increase by September 2023 owing to parents' resident in the local area submitting late applications, and that high pupil mobility in the area will mean that the number of pupils in the cohort will fluctuate significantly. However, the combined level of surplus places between these schools is likely to exceed 25%.
80. Changes to English-medium primary school catchment areas could improve the balance of places, by reducing the catchment areas of highly subscribed schools and expanding the catchment areas of schools with high levels of surplus. However, if such changes to catchment areas were undertaken without reorganisation of provision, these changes would not reduce the high level of surplus projected over the wider area. This re-balancing exercise would have little or no impact on how parents take up places and would not provide any greater support to schools with falling pupil rolls.

### **Proposed changes to English-medium and Welsh-medium school places**

81. 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 and retains 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.
82. An expansion of Ysgol Mynydd Bychan and consolidation of English-medium community school provision at an equivalent level, or a marginal reduction to the existing arrangements, is proposed in line with the principles set out at paragraphs 22 and 23.
83. The Council has investigated alternative site options that may be available and centrally located within the existing Ysgol Mynydd Bychan catchment area.
84. There is insufficient space on the existing Ysgol Mynydd Bychan site to allow for expansion and there is no suitable vacant site available in the area local to the school that could accommodate an enlarged Ysgol Mynydd Bychan.
85. 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 and would represent a more effective and efficient use of resources. This would also retain flexibility in the schools estate to respond to any future population changes affecting the area.
86. 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.

## Diversity of school communities

87. 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.
88. Demographic data, including eligibility of pupils for Free School Meals, Ethnicity, home language, acquired level of competency in English or Welsh, and pupil mobility (how many children transfer into and out of a school) differs greatly between Ysgol Mynydd Bychan and each of the English-medium schools.
89. The home addresses of pupils enrolled at Ysgol Mynydd Bychan are clustered around the school sites of Ysgol Mynydd Bychan and Allensbank Primary School. At Ysgol Mynydd Bychan 11% of pupils are from a non White-British background.
90. Whilst 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, demographic data for those pupils and for the school overall is very different to that of Ysgol Mynydd Bychan. Of those pupils who live within the catchment area of Allensbank and are enrolled at the school, 78% are from a non White-British background.
91. 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 reported “Pupil mobility levels of up to 40% across a single academic year” during the previous consultation.
92. 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. 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.
93. 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.
94. The Council's adopted WESP 2022-2031 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 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.

95. Any proposed changes should 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.
96. A summary table for demographic data sets is attached as Appendix 6.

### **School site information**

#### Current Ysgol Mynydd Bychan site

97. Ysgol Mynydd Bychan is located on a 0.2-hectare site on New Zealand Road, Cardiff CF14 3BR.
98. The published capacity of the school is 192 places (Reception - Year 6) arranged over one block, in eight classrooms. The school also operates a 64-place nursery provision.
99. The school currently admits up to 30 pupils per year group; however, seven of the school's eight classrooms are no more than 45m<sup>2</sup> in size and should ordinarily accommodate up to 24 pupils.
100. The site could accommodate a 0.9FE school, utilising each of the eight classrooms, with nursery. Alternatively, the site could accommodate a 0.8FE school plus a specialist class, with nursery.
101. There is not enough space on the site to allow for expansion of the school.
102. This site comprises of one building split into 2 blocks, both of differing ages, although the site has been awarded a Condition rating of B (Satisfactory with minor deterioration) and a Suitability rating of B (Satisfactory but does not support curriculum in some areas) some minor maintenance and cyclical works are required. There are currently no plans for Capital Asset works to be undertaken on this building, however the building does remain under review.

#### Current Allensbank Primary School site

103. Allensbank Primary School is located on a 0.5-hectare site on Llanishen Street, Cardiff CF14 3QE. The school is approximately 0.2 miles from Ysgol Mynydd Bychan.
104. The published capacity of Allensbank Primary School is 315, arranged over separate infant and junior buildings. The school also operates a 48-

place nursery provision and a Speech and Language early intervention class for up to 8 Foundation Phase pupils.

105. At its meeting on 17 June 2021, Cabinet noted that the agreed School Admission Arrangements 2022/2023 as set out in the Admissions Policy 2022/2023 included an Admission Number of 30 for Allensbank Primary School.
106. The site could accommodate a 2FE primary school (up to 420 pupils) plus nursery, or up to 360 pupils plus nursery and Specialist Resource Base/ Early Intervention Class provision. As the intervention class is a provision for children from across the city, this could be relocated if necessary.
107. The school occupies 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 are generally in a satisfactory condition although works to external walls, windows and roofs are underway through the Council's Capital Asset programme. Some internal areas are suffering with an infestation of dry rot, which is currently under investigation and treatment will be on-going until the dry rot is eradicated. The sanitary provision requires some refurbishment, and the site has some drainage issues to be resolved.

#### Current Gladstone Primary School/ St Monica's Church in Wales Primary School site

108. Gladstone Primary School is co-located with St Monica's Church in Wales Primary School on a 0.5-hectare site on Whitchurch Road, Cardiff CF14 3JL approximately 0.4 miles from Ysgol Mynydd Bychan.
109. Gladstone Primary School was formerly two separate infant and junior schools, with separate buildings. Each school was organised as two forms of entry (2FE), allowing up to 60 pupils in each year group. These schools were amalgamated to a single one form entry (1FE) primary school, allowing up to 30 pupils in each year group, and consolidated in the junior building. St Monica's Church in Wales Primary School transferred from a site on Merthyr Road to share the Gladstone site in 2004.
110. Gladstone Primary School currently occupies the junior building on the shared site.
111. The published capacity of the school, in Reception to Year 6, is 210 places (1FE). However, the capacity could increase to 270 places if resource rooms were used as class bases.
112. St Monica's Church in Wales Primary School currently occupies the infant building on the shared site. The published capacity of the school, in Reception to Year 6, is 146 places (0.6FE). The St Monica's site was transferred from the Council to the Llandaff Diocesan Board of Finance in September 2004.

113. Although the St Monica's Church in Wales Primary School buildings include the relevant facilities to allow a school to operate separately from the neighbouring Gladstone buildings, the buildings would not be sufficient to accommodate a one form entry school.
114. 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.
115. 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 are generally in a satisfactory condition, with the exception of the building formerly used for childcare (St Monica's) and the Boat House (Gladstone) which require 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. 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.
116. The works currently underway are expected to be completed in the 2023/24 school year and will be phased appropriately to minimise disruption to teaching and learners.

### **Proposals to expand Welsh-medium and consolidate English-medium primary school provision**

117. The Council has identified three options which would improve the balance in the availability of school places serving the area. Two of the options would provide an opportunity for the English-medium primary schools to formally collaborate, such as through a federation, or informally collaborate.
118. The Council has investigated the ability of sites to support the reorganisation of provision. The Council has discounted reorganisation of provision on the Albany Primary School site. Albany Primary School is a greater distance from the home addresses of pupils currently enrolled at Ysgol Mynydd Bychan, has a relatively low level of surplus overall of c10%, and each of its classrooms is utilised as a class base.
119. The Council has also discounted locating Welsh-medium provision on the shared Gladstone Primary School and St. Monica's Church in Wales Primary School site and English-medium provision on the Allensbank site as this would have a greater impact on families currently accessing provision and potentially on future intakes.
120. Changes to the organisation, governance and leadership arrangements for the English-medium community schools could be implemented which, if progressed, would allow each school to realise a wide range of benefits,



and to potentially operate a more stable and efficient staffing structure and release funds within its budget for teaching and learning resources. A number of schools across Cardiff have already federated to form a single governing body, or operate a formal collaboration across separate sites, or share sites, buildings and some staffing and services.

121. The reconfiguration of English-medium provision and expansion of Welsh-medium provision would support the continued development of high-quality education for all pupils through:

- Greater opportunities within larger/federated schools for staff to share workload and expertise.
- Greater opportunities to professionally develop staff e.g., NQTs 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 RE, RSE and Digital Competency.
- Greater opportunities to offer a broader range of extra-curricular/enrichment activities.
- 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.
- Enhanced opportunities for pupil activities leading to improvements to the quality of learning for staff and pupils.
- Increased School Council and pupil development opportunities (academically and socially).
- Allowing for cross phase arrangements.
- Allowing for streamlining of policies and structures.
- Supporting 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.
- Providing opportunities to exploit economies of scale and sharing services across the schools.
- Possible easier recruitment of governors with fewer governor vacancies.

122. The options to expand Welsh-medium primary school provision and consolidate English-medium primary school provision are as follows:

#### Option 1

- Transfer Ysgol Mynydd Bychan to the current Allensbank Primary School site.
- Increase the capacity of Ysgol Mynydd Bychan from 192 places (0.9FE) to 420 places (2FE) and increase the number of nursery places at Ysgol Mynydd Bychan from 64 to 96.
- Amalgamate Allensbank and Gladstone Primary Schools:
  - Formally Close Allensbank Primary School.
  - Formally Close Gladstone Primary School.

- Establish a new 420 place (2FE) English-medium Primary School with nursery on the current shared Gladstone Primary School / St Monica's Church in Wales Primary School site.
- Transfer St Monica's Church in Wales Primary School to the current Ysgol Mynydd Bychan site and establish nursery provision at the school.

The proposed changes would take effect from September 2025.

### Option 2

- Transfer Ysgol Mynydd Bychan to the current Allensbank Primary School site.
- Increase the capacity of Ysgol Mynydd Bychan from 192 places (0.9FE) to 420 places (2FE) and increase the number of nursery places at Ysgol Mynydd Bychan from 64 to 96.
- Co-locate Allensbank and Gladstone Primary Schools on a shared site:
  - Transfer Allensbank Primary School to the current shared Gladstone Primary School / St Monica's Church in Wales Primary School site.
  - Reduce the capacity of Allensbank Primary School from 315 places (1.5FE) to 210 places (1FE).
  - Reduce the age range of Allensbank Primary School from 3-11 to 4-11 by discontinuing nursery provision at the school.
  - Increase the number of nursery places at Gladstone Primary School from 64 to 96.
- Transfer St Monica's Church in Wales Primary School to the current Ysgol Mynydd Bychan site and establish nursery provision at the school.

The proposed changes would take effect from September 2025.

### Option 3

- Transfer Ysgol Mynydd Bychan to the current Allensbank Primary School site.
- Increase the capacity of Ysgol Mynydd Bychan from 192 places (0.9FE) to 420 places (2FE).
- Increase the number of nursery places at Ysgol Mynydd Bychan from 64 to 96.
- Transfer Allensbank Primary School to the current Ysgol Mynydd Bychan site.
- Reduce the capacity of Allensbank Primary School from 315 places (1.5FE) to 192 places (0.9FE).

The proposed changes would take effect from September 2025.

123. Options 2 and 3 would allow for consideration to be given to collaboration or formal federation between Allensbank Primary School and Gladstone Primary School. There are clear benefits to collaboration or federation for schools that are based either on the same site or in the same community as it enables them to work together on shared priorities, pool expertise,

make better use of resources and explore ways of doing things more effectively.

124. The impact of each these options is set out in greater detail in attached appendices 7, 8 and 9.

### **Quality and standards**

125. Each of the schools are subject to ongoing monitoring and support through the Central South Consortium and periodic inspection by Estyn.

#### Ysgol Mynydd Bychan

126. The following information has been provided by the Central South Consortium regarding quality and standards at Ysgol Mynydd Bychan.

- The school uses a wide range of self-evaluation processes enabling accurate identification of strengths and areas for development which feed into their School Development Plan.
- Regular self-evaluation and monitoring activities throughout the year enable the school to evaluate progress against agreed priorities in the School Development Plan.
- The school has engaged with education reform and are working on further developing their implemented curriculum in line with guidance and in collaboration with the cluster and other partners.
- The school has responded to the requirements of the ALN reform and fulfils its statutory duties in this respect.
- Grant funding is utilised to provide intervention and support to identified pupils, minimising the impact of Covid on education, standards, and wellbeing.
- The school knows its community well and engagement with wider stakeholders, especially parents, is an intrinsic part of the school's vision. e.g., their regular 'Day to make a difference' initiative where the community work together on a weekend to improve the school and its environment.
- The school is deeply rooted in its community with pupil wellbeing integral and a culture of high expectations and achievement for all pupils' part of its core values.
- The Headteacher and senior leaders provide a culture of distributed leadership, working in partnership with the Governing Body to meet the needs of all pupils, in a safe and nurturing environment.

127. The most recent Estyn inspection in November 2015 judged the school's performance as good (many strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement) with prospects for improvement also judged as good.

#### Allensbank Primary School

128. The following information has been provided by the Central South Consortium regarding quality and standards at Allensbank Primary School:

- The school gathers and analyses a range of first-hand evidence upon which the school's strategic plan for improvement is based.
- The school knows its strengths and areas for developments, and these are reflected in the school improvement plan. The priorities are identified through a calendar of monitoring activities.
- The school's wider senior leadership team are making the Curriculum for Wales a reality through their wider research and innovation.
- The school leaders and staff work collaboratively with pupils, parents, and governors to create and share a vision for their curriculum.
- The school has engaged in ALN reform and has responded to the statutory requirements.
- The school worked closely with pupils and their families during the pandemic and subsequently to support them in a number of ways, such as developing online teaching; providing wellbeing sessions.
- The school continues to develop parental involvement with effective use of technology which engages parents allowing them the opportunity to communicate in the language of the home.

129. The most recent Estyn inspection of the school in January 2020 judged the school's standards, wellbeing and attitudes to learning, teaching and learning experiences, care support and guidance and leadership and management as good.

#### Gladstone Primary School

130. The following information has been provided by the Central South Consortium regarding quality and standards at Gladstone Primary School:

- The school knows its strengths and areas for developments with the latter incorporated into the school improvement plan. This knowledge is informed by a range of monitoring activities over the course of the academic, many of which the improvement partner has been involved in.
- The school has engaged with curriculum design and is developing a curriculum to reflect the school's community. Two senior leaders have taken the lead with this work and ensured developments are based on informed decisions through visits to other schools; personal professional reading and action research.
- The school has engaged in ALN reform and has responded to the statutory requirements.
- The school worked closely with pupils and their families during the pandemic and subsequently to support them in a number of ways, such as developing online teaching; providing wellbeing sessions and acting as a source of information and advice.
- School leaders work hard to meet the needs of its varied and diverse community and have established a positive supportive ethos in the school. An investment in Thrive and ELSA has helped to provide emotional support for pupils and their families. The school has achieved its Silver Rights Respecting award.
- The headteacher works tirelessly to support all pupils and their families to ensure that no pupil is left behind either academically or pastorally.

131. The most recent Estyn inspection of Gladstone Primary School in November 2022 judged the school's standards, wellbeing and attitudes to learning, teaching and learning experiences, care support and guidance and leadership and management as good.

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

132. The following information has been provided by the Central South Consortium regarding quality and standards at St Monica's Church in Wales Primary School:

- The school knows its strengths and areas for developments with the latter incorporated into the school improvement plan. This knowledge is informed by a calendar of monitoring activities.
- The school has engaged with curriculum design and is developing a curriculum to reflect the school's community.
- The school has engaged in ALN reform and has responded to the statutory requirements.
- The school worked closely with pupils and their families during the pandemic and subsequently to support them in a number of ways, such as developing online teaching; providing wellbeing sessions and supplying food parcels.
- The school, as a Church school, has strong community links, including those with The Table church and works hard to meet the needs of its varied and diverse community. It has invested in Thrive to provide emotional support for pupils and their families.
- The headteacher works tirelessly to support all pupils and their families to ensure that no pupil is left behind either academically or pastorally.

133. The most recent Estyn inspection in April 2019 judged the St Monica's CW Primary School standards, wellbeing and attitudes to learning, teaching and learning experiences, care support and guidance and leadership and management as good.

#### **Additional Learning Needs**

134. There is a Speech and Language early intervention class hosted by Allensbank Primary School. The Council admits up to 8 Foundation Phase children to this city-wide provision who were not making sufficient progress, but who have good prospects for returning to their local mainstream school.
135. Placements last one to three years, depending on progress. Pupils are dual registered at their local school and supported to return at the end of the placement. Pupils continue to attend their local school for at least one day a week, to maintain links with local friends and to prepare for a successful early reintegration to their local school.
136. Consideration would be given to the relocation of the early intervention class should the changes to Allensbank Primary School be taken forward.

The early intervention class would be relocated on an alternative school site with sufficient classrooms to accommodate the existing provision.

137. The level of special educational needs/ additional learning needs in the Welsh medium sector has historically been lower than in the English medium sector. This has been changing over the last five years, with schools reporting an increased incidence of additional learning needs, in all areas of need.
138. Cardiff has invested in specialist provision in the sector, including some capacity to respond to growing demand and to generate more confidence in the availability of specialist provision in the sector.
139. The Council has worked closely with its partners on the Cardiff Welsh Education Forum to develop the new ten-year WESP for the city which includes proposals for the development and delivery of an increased number of primary specialist places to be delivered in specialist resource bases in at least three primary schools that promote to the relevant secondary schools.
140. As the Welsh sector continues to grow it will be important to develop additional provision in anticipation of the need, to ensure Welsh medium education is a genuine choice for learners with complex ALN.
141. The proposed expansion of Ysgol Mynydd Bychan to two forms of entry, and transfer to the Allensbank Primary School site would retain sufficient flexibility in the buildings to allow for the establishment of specialist resource base provision. Separate proposals would be developed for this provision.

### **Nursery Provision**

142. Children in Cardiff are entitled to a part-time nursery place from the start of the term following their third birthday and must attend for a minimum of five half days. Nursery places are not allocated on a catchment area basis. Wherever possible places are offered in a local community school or nursery class within two miles of a child's place of residence. If places are unavailable in local community nursery schools or nursery classes, parents may apply for nursery education place funding with an approved provider that has to demonstrate it is able to meet the relevant quality.
143. It is proposed that the number of nursery places at Ysgol Mynydd Bychan be increased from 64 to 96 to support its growth to a two-form entry school.
144. St Monica's Church in Wales Primary School does not currently offer nursery provision. Pupils transfer to St Monica's Church in Wales Primary School from a range of pre-school settings, including the nursery class at Gladstone Primary School. Some pupils may have not accessed pre-school provision at all.
145. Should the transfer of St Monica's Church in Wales Primary School to the current Ysgol Mynydd Bychan site be taken forward, as outlined in Options

1 and 2, it is proposed that 32 part time nursery places are provided to develop continuity and progression in children's learning from the age of three.

146. The establishment of nursery provision at the school would provide a consistent approach to teaching and planning, to develop continuity and progression in children's learning from the age of three, and to contribute to raising standards across the school.
147. Admissions to the proposed nursery provision would be administered by the Governing Body of the school in accordance with the school's published Admission Policy.
148. An offer of a nursery place at the school would not mean that a child would also be offered a place in Reception. A separate application form must be completed for admission to Reception.
149. The establishment of nursery provision at St Monica's Church in Wales Primary School would be subject to consultation and the relevant statutory processes.
150. At present the Council funds 112 community nursery places between Allensbank Primary School and Gladstone Primary School. Should Options 1 or 2 be taken forward, it is proposed to retain sufficient accommodation to allow for up to 96 English-medium community nursery places at the new school site or on the shared schools' site.
151. 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.

## **Land matters**

### Transfer of St Monica's Church in Wales Primary School to Ysgol Mynydd Bychan site

152. The legal status of school sites of Voluntary Aided schools, such as St Monica's Church in Wales Primary School, is that the school site (except any school fields) is owned by the relevant Trust / Diocese. The Llandaff Diocesan Board of Finance is the registered Proprietor of St. Monica's site.
153. The Ysgol Mynydd Bychan site transferred to the ownership of the Council in 1994 and there are no restrictions on the site that would prevent the proposed reorganisation of provision to locate an alternative school on the site.
154. If the proposals as outlined in Option 1 or Option 2 were to proceed, valuation of the St Monica's and Ysgol Mynydd Bychan school sites would need to be undertaken.

155. The Council may purchase the vacated St Monica's CiW School site at valuation or may exchange the school sites.

#### Allensbank Primary School and Gladstone Primary School

156. Each of the schools' sites lie within the ownership of the Council and there are no restrictions that would prevent the proposed reorganisation of provision to locate an alternative school, or alternative schools, on either site.

#### **Governance Arrangements**

157. 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 2 FE English-medium primary school.
158. Under Options 2 and 3, there is an expectation that the two schools 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. The Council and the Central South Consortium would provide support and guidance to each Governing Body to facilitate this.

#### Dissolution of Governing Bodies and establishment of a new Governing Body

159. A proposal 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.
160. The most important reason for considering the amalgamation of two existing schools, by the establishment of a new school and closure of two existing schools, must be the benefits it would bring for children and young people in the existing schools by enhancing educational provision.
161. There are many clear operational benefits to larger schools, compared to smaller schools. The key governance aspects of establishing a single school, to replace two existing schools, are:
- Following determination of the proposed establishment of a new school, and closure of the existing schools, a new temporary governing body would be established. The new governing body would, in time, replace the individual governing bodies and would have responsibility for the strategic oversight and planning of the new school.
  - The existing governing bodies of all schools would continue to operate, and retain their existing responsibilities, until the existing schools formally close.
  - The new Governing Body would consider its name and would have responsibility for the budget and staff of the new school, and through a greater financial base have greater stability in its budget.



162. Overall, a larger school has a larger and more financially stable budget and is therefore able to implement a more efficient and effective leadership and staffing structure and exploit economies of scale. A larger school is more able to strengthen the overall education of pupils in the combined communities presently served by the two smaller schools. A larger school also allows for:
- Greater opportunities for staff to share workload and expertise.
  - Greater opportunities to professionally develop staff e.g., NQTs who can observe their parallel teacher.
  - A greater number to teachers to lead on Areas of Learning, plus RE, RSE and Digital Competency.
  - The sharing of good practice, preparation materials and resources.

### Federation

163. Federation is a formal and legal agreement by which a number of schools (between two and six) share governance arrangements and have a single governing body using the process set out in The Federation of Maintained Schools (Wales) Regulations 2014. Federations can involve a mix of maintained community and community special schools which are either nursery, primary or secondary schools.
164. 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.
165. 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.
166. There are many reasons for federating. Schools generally use federation to build on informal partnerships already in place and to strengthen the overall education of pupils in their communities, however others have been approached by their LA to help a struggling school and small schools in danger of closure or unable to recruit high quality staff have federated to secure their future. The most important reason for considering federation must be the benefits it would bring for children and young people in the federating schools by enhancing educational provision.
167. One of the advantages of federation is that schools that federate keep their individual identity. However, the existing governing bodies are dissolved and replaced by a new, single governing body which has oversight of and equal responsibility for all schools within the federation.
168. There are clear benefits to federation for schools that are based either on the same site or in the same community as it enables them to work together on shared priorities, pool expertise, make better use of resources

and explore ways of doing things more effectively. School federation is a formal way of implementing collaboration and promoting closer working relationships.

169. The key aspects of a federation are:

- The existing governing bodies of all schools would be dissolved if the proposals to establish a federation proceed following consultation. A new single governing body would replace the individual governing bodies and would have responsibility for the strategic oversight of all schools in the federation.
- Each school retains its name, category, budget and staff. Moving forward the schools would be able to explore the advantages of sharing resources.
- Each school would continue to have its own Estyn inspection, although these can be coordinated.

170. However, there are disbenefits of retaining two separate schools, in a federation, when compared to a single school, including a less efficient and effective leadership and staffing structure compared to a single larger school. As federated schools are less able to exploit economies of scale, than a single larger school, less of its resources are available to teaching and learning. There is a greater level of duplication of roles and services in two schools than in one. Whilst a federated governing body has responsibility for two separate school budgets, it is not able to pool this budget.

171. There are two processes to establish a federation:

- A federation led by the Local Authority.
- A federation led by the Governing Body.

172. Both processes involve full engagement with the schools and governing bodies and significant work on the purpose and vision of the Federation. It is advised that a joint committee/working group be established to work with the Local Authority on federation consisting of representatives from each school/ governing body.

173. To date, Cardiff has not implemented any local authority led federations, however Welsh Government advises that local authorities should consider federation as an option within their strategic plans for effective and efficient school provision in/across communities. Welsh Government also advises that the federation of schools by local authorities should never come as a surprise to the schools involved and expects local authorities to fully engage with schools and their stakeholders as early as possible to discuss their proposals and address any concerns.

174. The process for federations led by the Local Authority and the Governing Body is broadly the same, with the respective parties leading the federation making the final decision. If a federation model were to be taken forward, at least 125 school days (approximately two school terms) is required which commences at the start of a six-week consultation process

with key stakeholders. As significant work is required before the consultation process begins, a realistic timescale for the federation process is between nine and twelve months.

### Collaboration

175. Collaboration is where two or more governing bodies arrange for some of their functions to be discharged jointly under The Collaboration Between Maintained Schools (Wales) Regulation 2008. There are clear benefits to this arrangement for schools that are based either on the same site or in the same community as it enables them to work together on shared priorities, pool expertise, make better use of resources and explore ways of doing things more effectively.
176. However, there are disbenefits of retaining two separate schools in collaboration, when compared to a single school, including a less efficient and effective leadership and staffing structure compared to a single larger school. Such schools are less able to exploit economies of scale, than a single larger school, or federated schools, and less of their resources are available to teaching and learning. There is a greater level of duplication of roles and services in two schools, than in one school or in federated schools.
177. Schools already collaborate informally with other schools on key areas such as Curriculum for Wales, assessment procedures and transition arrangements. However, formal collaboration under the regulations results in more streamlined decision making which will benefit schools and make it more attractive to work together as it enables them to share, benchmark and develop good practices that individual schools may find difficult to sustain.
178. Some examples of the types of issues on which governing bodies could collaborate on are:
- Raising standards by sharing curriculum delivery, school leadership and joint action to tackle key issues such as inclusion.
  - Continuing professional development opportunities.
  - School Council and pupil development opportunities.
  - Cross phase arrangements.
  - Exploiting economies of scale and sharing services across the schools.
179. There are no timescales attached to forming a collaboration. Schools and governing bodies who decide to form a collaboration can do so by agreement at their respective governing body meetings. The collaborating governing bodies must form a joint committee to oversee the work of the collaboration. The collaborating governing bodies will also agree the joint committee's constitution, membership and terms of reference annually, along with any delegated powers.

## Funding of proposals

180. 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.
181. Cardiff 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 1 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.
182. 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 Cardiff Council is ring-fenced to support expansion in Welsh-medium education provision and would allow for investment in school buildings to support increased intakes.
183. There is no additional or ring-fenced revenue or capital funding to support the process of organisational change. Any change must be funded by Council resources.

## Financial appraisal of proposals

184. The funding formula for schools is driven by per pupil funding and a number of lump sum allocations per school. Funding per pupil is generally higher in smaller schools due to the costs of the headteacher and other fixed costs absorbed over a low number of pupils.
185. A reduction in the number of schools in Cardiff would therefore allow for a reduction in the number of lump sum allocations to schools, and these funds would be redistributed to schools through the funding formula.
186. Larger schools are also generally able to secure better value for money through economies of scale in a number of areas including managing contracts and potentially in their staffing structure. Some of the benefits of a single larger school can be realised through formal federation of governing bodies or collaboration agreements between schools, with more efficient staffing structures.
187. The amount of funding per pupil at Allensbank Primary School, Gladstone Primary School, St Monica's Church in Wales Primary School and Ysgol Mynydd Bychan is higher than the average funding per pupil across Cardiff's 98 primary schools of £3,891 in 2022/2023.
188. The below table sets out the budgetary position of the above schools.

School	Balance brought forward April 22	Governor Approved Budget 2022/23	Budget projection Jan 2023
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Allensbank	£23,757	-£132,301	-£93,000
Gladstone	£84,651	0	-£60,000
St Monica's	£41,804	0	-£2,000
Ysgol Mynydd Bychan	£170,220	£86,286	£100,000

189. The Welsh Government Capital Grant scheme does not provide any additional financial resources for the restructuring of staffing structures of schools affected by reorganisation of provision. These costs would be met by the Council.
190. The expansion of Ysgol Mynydd Bychan 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.
191. The proposed expansion of Ysgol Mynydd Bychan may result in the school operating some smaller classes, or some mixed-age 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 on roll 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.
192. In a period of falling intakes city-wide, the expected increased intakes to Ysgol Mynydd Bychan would likely reduce the take up of places at other schools in the local area or in neighbouring areas for a number of years. Almost all applicants who have failed to gain admission to Ysgol Mynydd Bychan in recent years have taken up places at other Welsh-medium primary schools. The number of pupils taking up places at these schools may reduce as a consequence of the proposals; however, the Council must increase intake to Welsh-medium provision city-wide and the indirect impact of increasing intakes to Welsh-medium schools would be a reduced intake to English-medium schools city-wide.
193. Should a proposal to transfer Allensbank Primary School to the shared Gladstone Primary School/St. Monica's Church in Wales Primary School site proceed, and the Speech and Language Intervention Class be relocated, the delegated budget of £115,710 for this class would be transferred to another host school.
194. It should be noted that the number of pupils on roll at Allensbank Primary School and Gladstone Primary School has fallen in recent years, coinciding with reducing intakes to primary education city-wide which are projected to continue until at least 2025/2026. In this context, the number of staff employed by schools may reduce, whether or not any proposals to reorganise provision are progressed.

## Option 1

195. 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 c£98k per year based on the removal of lump sum allowances provided to schools.
196. This option amalgamates Allensbank and Gladstone Primary Schools and combining their budget would allow for a redistribution of financial resources to schools through the reduction in the number of lump sum allocations to schools.
197. 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 to 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.
198. Option 1 would result in the displacement of an existing Headteacher and restructuring of leadership. The anticipated efficiencies in the new school's budget, compared to the two existing budgets combined, could be c£100,000 to £114,000 per year plus on-costs, based on the midpoint of existing leadership salary ranges and the implementation of a new leadership structure of one Headteacher and two Deputy Headteachers.

## Option 2

199. The governing bodies, or single governing body if federated, could identify efficiencies in leadership, staffing or fixed costs due to sharing of a site.
200. Proposals to locate Allensbank and Gladstone (Option 2) on a single shared site, but as separate schools, could also result in the displacement of an existing Headteacher and restructuring of leadership, should the Governing Bodies decide to federate and seek to proceed with this.
201. Federations of one form entry schools in Cardiff have implemented differing leadership structures; however, the anticipated salary efficiencies in the school's budget, compared to the two existing budgets combined, could be between c£43,000 and c£77,000 per year plus on-costs, depending on the new leadership structure implemented.
202. Whilst this would also provide a less costly leadership structure overseeing the English-medium provision, the formula funding to these schools is c£98,000 greater each year, compared to amalgamation, as each school would still receive lump sum allocations. There is no greater cost to the Council overall, but this sum would not be available for ring-fencing to the schools nor for distribution to schools city-wide through the funding formula as per Option 1.

### Option 3

203. The proposal to transfer Ysgol Mynydd Bychan to the Allensbank Primary School site, and to transfer Allensbank Primary School to the Ysgol Mynydd Bychan site (Option 3) would not result in the displacement of an existing Headteacher and restructuring of leadership although this could be considered at a later stage by the Governing Body. Should the Governing Body pursue a federation in future, the federated schools could reduce leadership costs by c£43,000 and c£77,000 per year plus on costs.
204. The formula funding to these schools is £98,000 greater each year, compared to amalgamation of Allensbank and Gladstone in Option 1, as each school would still receive lump sum allocations. These lump sums would not be available for ring-fencing to the schools nor for distribution to schools city-wide through the funding formula as per Option 1.

### Summary comparison

205. The table below details the relative changes in the proportion of the formula funding allocation to these schools, that could be redistributed to schools if proposals to amalgamate or federate, and changes to the leadership structure(s) were progressed.

School	Leadership costs as percentage of school's total formula allocation*	Yearly in-school leadership cost efficiencies vs current	Potential financial redistribution to schools – five years
Allensbank Primary School	10.9%	N/a	
Gladstone Primary School	13.9%	N/a	
Combined Allensbank & Gladstone	12.2%	N/a	
New 2FE school – based on comparable Cardiff schools	8.0%	£100,500 - £113,902	£502,500 - £569,510
Federated school, Cardiff – lean leadership structure	9.9%	£66,934 - £76,854	£334,670 - £384,270
Federated school, Cardiff – alternative leadership structure	10.6%	£42,726 - £50,368	£213,630 – £251,840

\*Calculated based on mid-point of salary ranges

### **Admission arrangements**

206. The relevant changes to the Council's policy on the admission of children to schools as a direct result of these proposals relate to the proposed changes in the Published Admission Number of Ysgol Mynydd Bychan, from 30 to 60, and to the potential establishment of a new two form entry English-medium primary school with a Published Admission number of 60 places.
207. Consultation on the 2025/26 admission arrangements for community schools would take place in Autumn 2023 – Spring 2024 in accordance

with the requirements of the Admissions Code. This consultation would include any proposed changes to Published Admission Numbers.

208. A review of community primary school catchment areas would be undertaken to consider the balance the number of places available and the projected demand for places and progress against the WESP targets. Any proposed changes to school catchment areas would be subject to consultation at the appropriate time.
209. Any change to the St Monica's Church in Wales Primary School admission arrangements arising out of the establishment of nursery provision at the school would be subject to consultation by the Governing Body of the school at the appropriate time.
210. Detailed information about admission arrangements is in the Council's Admission to Schools booklet published on the [Council's website](#).

### **Learner Travel Arrangements**

211. There are no plans to change the Council's transport policy for school children.
212. Any pupils affected by the proposals would be offered the same support with transport as is provided throughout Cardiff in line with the same criteria that apply across Cardiff.
213. There are no pupils enrolled in the schools named in this report who are in receipt of free home to school transport on the grounds of the home to school travel distance. The implementation of the proposed expansion of Ysgol Mynydd Bychan and relocation of English-medium provision is not expected to change this.
214. Should the Council not proceed with proposed changes, and an increase in the take up of places consistent with the WESP targets be achieved, the Council may be unable to accommodate all children in the catchment areas of the four WM schools within two miles of their home address unless changes to catchment areas and/ or alternative additional provision serving these areas are progressed.
215. The Council's transport policy for school children can be viewed on the Council's website [www.cardiff.gov.uk/schooltransport](http://www.cardiff.gov.uk/schooltransport)

### **Impact of reorganisation on travel arrangements for current pupils**

216. The maximum distances between the above school sites is c0.5 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.
217. The below table indicates the average walking distance from home to school for pupils enrolled at each of the schools, and the differential in walking distance to alternative school sites. The average increase in



distance from home to school, should proposals proceed is, however, significantly lower than 0.5 miles.

218. The impact of transferring Ysgol Mynydd Bychan to the Allensbank site would result in current pupils having a marginal reduction in travel distance.
219. The impact of transferring Allensbank to the shared Gladstone/ St Monica's site would result in current pupils having an increase of 0.08 miles.
220. The impact of transferring St Monica's Church in Wales Primary School to the Ysgol Mynydd Bychan site would be an average travel distance increase of 0.2 miles.

<b>Table:</b> Average safe walking distance for school pupils indicated to respective school sites Source: PLASC 2022				
<b>School attended</b>	<b>Allensbank PS site</b>	<b>Gladstone PS site</b>	<b>St Monica's PS (C.W) site</b>	<b>Ysgol Mynydd Bychan</b>
Allensbank Primary School	1.05mi	1.13mi (+0.08mi)	1.16mi (+0.11mi)	1.02mi (-0.03mi)
Gladstone Primary School	0.95mi (+0.23mi)	0.72mi	0.70mi (-0.02mi)	0.91mi (+0.19mi)
St Monica's C.W Primary School	1.40mi (+0.21mi)	1.21mi (+0.02mi)	1.19mi	1.39mi (+0.2mi)
Ysgol Mynydd Bychan	0.70mi (+0.04mi)	0.84mi (+0.18mi)	0.89mi (+0.23mi)	0.66mi

221. The logistical impact on current families, in respect of the length and time taken for journeys from home to school, is therefore expected to be marginal.
222. Families wishing to access Welsh-medium provision in the south of the Ysgol Mynydd Bychan catchment area are often unable to gain admission to the school and the nearest alternative places are a significantly greater distance away. It is therefore anticipated that the proposed changes in each option would have a marginal impact on future applicants for admission to English-medium community or Church in Wales primary schools, but a greater positive impact on those within the Ysgol Mynydd Bychan catchment area seeking admission to a Welsh-medium school.

### **Implications for secondary school provision**

223. 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.
224. Proposals to respond to changes in demand will be brought forward in good time to ensure that there are sufficient places to meet the demand for Welsh-medium places.

225. A proposal to expand and redevelop Cathays High School to meet demand from within its catchment and the wider area was agreed by Cabinet in October 2021 subject to further decisions including the Charity Commission's consent in relation to the Maindy site being held in a charitable trust.
226. Cathays High School presently serves a catchment area comprised of the primary school catchment areas of Albany Primary School, Allensbank Primary School and Gladstone Primary School. This catchment area is less populated than other school catchment areas in Cardiff, some of which extend over a much greater geographical area and have pupil populations which exceed their current or planned capacity.
227. Consultation on changes to English-medium community secondary school catchment areas would therefore be required at the appropriate time, in order to provide a suitable and sustainable balance in the supply of and take up of places.

### **Local Member consultation**

228. Local Members for Cathays, Gabalfa, Heath, Llandaff North and Plasnewydd will be consulted on the proposals.

### **Reason for Recommendations**

229. To balance provision for Welsh-medium and English-medium community primary school provision to serve Cathays and parts of Gabalfa, Heath, Llandaff North and Plasnewydd.

### **Impact of the proposals on the Welsh Language**

230. In 2017, the Welsh Government published its Welsh language strategy Cymraeg 2050: A Million Welsh Speakers in accordance with Section 78 of the Government of Wales Act 2006. The strategy supports 'the promotion and facilitation of the use of the Welsh language'. Its long-term aim is for Wales to have one million Welsh speakers by 2050.
231. The strategy names Welsh-medium immersion education as the 'principal method for ensuring that children can develop their Welsh language skills, and for creating new speakers' (Cymraeg 2050: A Million Welsh Speakers, pg21). Therefore, the availability of Welsh-medium education will be key to meeting the target of one million Welsh speakers.
232. The national target is to:
- *Increase the proportion of each school year group receiving Welsh-medium education from 22 per cent (based on 7,700 seven-year-old learners in 2015/16) to 30 per cent (about 10,500 in each year group) by 2031, and then 40 per cent (about 14,000 in each year group) by 2050.*

233. There is recognition within the strategy that planning will be different for different regions within Wales depending on the characteristics of their populations. It identifies areas with a high population density but lower percentage of Welsh speakers as areas with particular potential for growth.
234. The Council is committed to a 'truly bilingual Cardiff' including the growth of the Welsh-medium education sector across each phase in order to increase the number of people of all ages becoming fluent in both Welsh and English with the confidence and desire to use all their languages in every aspect of their lives.
235. Underpinning this vision are the following principles:
- Applying the principles of the '15-minute neighbourhoods' to ensure that all learners have access to Welsh-medium education within a reasonable distance of their homes.
  - Every child in the city can choose to be educated in Welsh or English with the benefits of a bilingual education actively promoted to all parents from their child's birth.
  - Learners with additional learning needs (ALN) will receive equal linguistic opportunity.
236. To achieve this vision the Council will deliver:
- More nursery children/ three-year olds receiving their education through the medium of Welsh.
  - More reception class children/ five-year olds receiving their education through the medium of Welsh.
  - An increase in the provision of Welsh-medium education for pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) in accordance with the duties imposed by the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018.
237. The Council's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan sets out a series of ambitious commitments to build on the progress achieved to date. The WESP commits the Council 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. It is anticipated that there would be a positive impact on the Welsh Language as a result of these proposals.
238. The proposals seek to align with the Bilingual Cardiff Strategy and strongly support the Welsh Government's strategy for the Welsh language by contributing to meeting the targets set out in the Cymraeg 2050 strategy.
239. The proposals directly respond to the following WESP Outcomes:

- Outcome 1 – More nursery children/ three-year-olds receive their education through the medium of Welsh.
  - Outcome 2 - More reception class children/ five-year-olds receive their education through the medium of Welsh.
240. The proposals may also secure an opportunity to provide facilities which respond to Outcome 6 - An increase in the provision of Welsh-medium education for pupils with additional learning needs (ALN).
241. Schools serve a diverse range of communities and largely reflect their local population; however, it is acknowledged that the Welsh-medium schools are at present less diverse than English-medium schools. Targets and workstreams within Cardiff's adopted WESP seek to address this.
242. The proposals would have a greater impact on the population closer to the schools than on the city as a whole.
243. The Council works closely and constructively with partners on its Welsh Education Forum, which includes representatives of nursery, primary, secondary and further education, childcare, RhAG and the Welsh Government. The Forum actively informs the planning of Welsh-medium places, to continue to drive the Council's plan to sustainably increase the number of learners within Welsh-medium schools and those learning Welsh in English-medium schools.
244. The Council, and its partners on the Welsh Education Forum, are committed to driving the increase in number of pupils educated through the medium of Welsh, to meet the targets within Cardiff's WESP, and to meet the targets set out in the Welsh Government's Cymraeg 2050 strategy.
245. The Council monitors birth rates, the yield from proposed housing and the patterns of take-up in Welsh medium provision at primary and secondary age, with a view to bringing forward appropriate plans to meet any increased demand.
246. The Council must ensure that the expansion of school provision is brought forward in a strategic and timely manner, which does not compromise existing provision. Significantly or rapidly expanding Welsh-medium primary school provision would, inevitably, have an impact on the take-up of places in other schools, and in turn on the ability of schools to balance budgets and to attract or retain staff.
247. The Council's aspirations for increasing the number of Welsh speakers, and the Welsh Government's Cymraeg 2050, propose a significant change. Cymraeg 2050 sets national targets of educating 40% of learners in Welsh-medium schools, and a further 30% of learners being educated in English-medium schools being fluent in Welsh. At present, c17% of Cardiff children entering primary education are educated in Welsh-medium schools or classes.

248. This proposal seeks to increase the number of Welsh-medium primary school places available in the area and seeks to implement the change in such a way that the potential for negative impact on existing schools is limited.
249. There is a risk that provision of additional Welsh-medium primary school places may inhibit the growth at other local schools; however, Cardiff's WESP sets out a commitment to develop and implement targeted promotion in conjunction with Bilingual Cardiff to increase take up of Welsh-medium places in areas with low demand.

### **Wellbeing of Future Generations**

250. In line with the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act, the Council is committed to providing local schools for local children, together with encouraging use of sustainable modes to travel to schools, such as walking and cycling. Each school project takes into account key transport issues when they are being designed and the firm need to provide safer routes to encourage walking, cycling and other active travel modes to schools.
251. With the current investments in ICT across the city, student movements may be further reduced as mobile technology develops further allowing for flexible teaching methods. These have the potential to result in a more efficient Travel Plan and further contribute to the Council's targets to reduce its carbon emissions.

### **Financial Implications**

252. The purpose of this report is to consider a recommendation to hold public consultation on revised proposals for primary school provision to serve Cathays and parts of Gabalfa, Heath, Llandaff North and Plasnewydd. Consideration of these proposals and future consultations would not create any financial commitments at this stage.
253. The report provides a high-level overview of the potential revenue implications across several options. Whilst each schools' budget is predominantly predicated on the basis of pupil numbers, consideration of the potential impact on the delegated schools' budget should be undertaken. This includes potential reduction in the formula funding lump sum if schools were combined, alongside staffing efficiencies, particularly in relation to leadership roles. These efficiencies would remain within delegated schools' funding and could be redistributed to the benefit of all Primary Schools. Additionally, some of the options could result in greater future financial stability particularly in light of low numbers on roll (NOR) numbers in single form entry schools, which are more adversely impacted by small changes in admission numbers.
254. Additional consideration will need to be given to funding of redundancies in the case of school closures, depending on the option taken forward. Redeployment may be able to mitigate some costs, but full financial

evaluation will be needed once future school organisation and employee establishments have been finalised.

255. Any schools' deficit balances will need to be mitigated so far as possible prior to write off should schools close. Any remaining deficit will need to be funded from reserves or balances to be identified within Education.
256. Any capital costs arising through these options will need to be prioritised within the Asset Renewal programme. As noted in the report planned works to existing category C schools are already included within the programme. Any works in relation to Welsh-medium sites can initially utilise the capital grant provided from Welsh Government any additional requirement must be found within existing budgets. Any future proposals will require a full financial evaluation and the necessary capital funding will need to be identified before any schemes can progress, including any adaptations to existing schools. It should also be noted that any maintenance or repairs to buildings with less than a years' expected operation must be treated as revenue expenditure and will need to be funded through the SOP Revenue Reserve.
257. The decision maker should have assurance on the overall affordability of any projects or schemes taken forward and should also consider the impact on sustainability of other schools within the localities identified, including pupil numbers and financial risks.
258. Specific VAT advice will need to be sought in relation to land swap and works in relation to diocese/trust owned land.

### **Legal Implications**

259. Under the Education Act 1996, the Council has a general statutory obligation to promote high standards of education and to provide sufficient school places for pupils of compulsory school age. Parents have a right to express a preference for the school they wish their child to attend under section 86 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, but this does not provide a right to attend a certain school, as applications can still be refused where this would prejudice the provision of efficient education or the efficient use of resources.
260. A local authority can make school organisation proposals, including making 'regulated alterations' to a community school or maintained nursery school under sections 42-44 of the Schools Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013. Some of the proposals set out in this report constitute proposals which must be published as well as 'regulated alterations' and must be considered having regard to the provisions of the 2013 Act and the School Organisation Code 2018, which sets out factors to be considered in respect of different proposals, the statutory procedures, legal requirements and guidance.

### Closure of Allensbank and Gladstone Primary Schools, replaced with a new two form entry Primary School

261. The options of closure and opening of these maintained schools, and establishment of a new two form entry school, constitute proposals for which there must be publication under section 48 the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013.

### Transfer of schools and/ or change of age ranges or forms of entry

262. This report confirms that none of the options proposed would see any school move more than 1.609344 kilometres (one mile) from a current main school entrance. Therefore, whilst this does not constitute a regulated alteration the other proposals would, including any alteration in the age range to include a nursery or a reduction or permanent expansion of capacity.

### Relocation of St Monica's and expansion of age range to include a nursery class.

263. The proposals regarding the alteration of St Monica's Church in Wales Primary School age range and its potential relocation must be proposed by the School's Governing Body and this report is intended to note these proposals as part of the wider context of proposed school organisation.

### Consultation Requirements

264. Where an increase in a school's capacity is proposed, the Council must have regard to evidence of current or future need/demand in the area for additional places, with reference to the school's language category (and religious character / gender intake if applicable). In the case of Welsh medium provision this would include an assessment of the demand for Welsh-medium education (conducted in accordance with any regulations made under section 86 of the 2013 Act). Consideration must also be given to whether the proposals will improve access for disabled pupils in accordance with requirements under the Equality Act 2010. Where a school's closure is proposed, the consultation must include details of any alternative to closure considered, reasons they were discounted, details on the impact of the proposals on the local community and schools staff and such information on the Code requires regarding details on proposed alternative provision.
265. The Council is required, prior to publishing its proposals, to undertake a consultation on its proposals in accordance with section 48 of that Act and the School Organisation Code 2018. The recommendations seek authority to carry out that statutory consultation.
266. Case law has established that the consultation process should:
- (i) be undertaken when proposals are still at a formative stage;
  - (ii) include sufficient reasons and information for particular proposals to enable intelligent consideration and response;

- (iii) provide adequate time for consideration and response; and;
  - (iv) ensure that the product of consultation is conscientiously taken into account when the ultimate decision is taken.
267. The School Organisation Code sets out further detailed requirements and guidance in relation to the statutory consultation, including the requirement for publication of a consultation document (and the contents of that document), a minimum 42 days consultation period including at least 20 school days, and a list of statutory consultees, including parents, pupils, governing bodies, religious bodies, the Welsh Ministers and Estyn. Following the public consultation, the Council is required to issue a consultation report, setting out the issues raised by consultees and its response to those issues. At that stage, a further report is to be submitted to the Cabinet to decide how to proceed.
268. The proposals in relation to use of the land and buildings on the school sites will be subject to agreement by the school governing body and any associated terms and conditions and subject full due diligence in respect of titles to land to be undertaken by Legal Services, prior to committing to any contract for works.
269. If the proposals are taken forward, the admission arrangements, including admission numbers and catchment areas, will need to be determined, following consultation, in accordance with the School Admission Code and the Education (Determination of Admission Arrangements) (Wales) Regulations 2006.
270. In considering the proposals, the Council must have regard to its public sector equality duties under the Equality Act 2010 (including specific Welsh public sector duties). Pursuant to these legal duties, Councils must in making decisions have due regard to the need to (1) eliminate unlawful discrimination, (2) advance equality of opportunity and (3) foster good relations on the basis of protected characteristics. The Protected characteristics are: age, gender reassignment, sex, race – including ethnic or national origin, colour or nationality, disability, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, sexual orientation, religion or belief – including lack of belief. An Equalities Impact Assessment should be carried out to identify the equalities implications and due regard should be given to the outcomes of the Equalities Impact Assessment.
271. The Council must also be mindful of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 and the Welsh Language Standards and consider the impact of its proposals upon the Welsh language. The proposal to increase the Welsh medium education provision should have a positive impact on the use of the Welsh language and support the aims of the Council's approved Welsh in Education Strategic Plan and Bilingual Cardiff Strategy.
272. The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 requires the Council to consider how the proposals will contribute towards meeting its wellbeing objectives (set out in the Corporate Plan). Members must also be satisfied that the proposals comply with the sustainable development



principle, which requires that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

273. Further legal advice will be provided as proposals are progressed.

### **HR Implications**

274. The following sets out the HR implications that cover the range of the options:

#### Relocation

275. Proposals to relocate a school would require high levels of staff and trade union consultation, clear communication plans and arrangements for the transition from one school site to another. Staff involvement in the development of building specifications or designs should be secured.

#### Increased Number on Roll

276. Proposals to increase the capacity of a school would require the relevant Governing Body to consider the workforce requirements in readiness for the expansion. The Governing Body would be encouraged to undertake this work in line with the School Organisation Planning HR Framework. HR People Services would provide advice, support and guidance to the Governing Body for the workforce planning process and consequential recruitment processes.

#### School Closure

277. In the period leading up to a proposed school closure, the Council would work with the Headteacher and Governing Body to ensure that staff continue to be supported and motivated during what may be a potentially difficult situation. Full consultation with staff and trade unions would need to begin immediately following the outcome of this report. A school closure places school staff at a potential risk of redundancy, and this would need to be managed in line with the School Redeployment and Redundancy Policy.

#### New School

278. The creation of a new school which is established as a result of the agreed proposals presents opportunities for recruitment and redeployment. Under the Staffing of Maintained Schools (Wales) Regulations 2006 the Temporary Governing Body of a new school is responsible for the appointment of staff. The Council will advocate that the new temporary governing body operates a ring-fenced recruitment process to those staff affected by the school closures.

279. The first matter which the Temporary Governing Body must consider is the new school's leadership arrangements and the structure of the staff within

the school. Timely creation of the Temporary Governing Body is crucial to this. The Staffing of Maintained Schools (Wales) Regulations 2006, as amended, allow for ring fenced recruitment to Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher posts in school reorganisation situations. Whilst this is a matter for the Temporary Governing Body to determine, as is usual in these circumstances the Council would advise the Temporary Governing Body to advertise nationally for both Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher positions and to put in place a robust recruitment process to appoint high quality leadership. HR People Services would work with the Temporary Governing Body to support the recruitment process.

### Redeployment

280. 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.
281. 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.
282. Full support would be offered to the school staff and Governing Bodies by HR People Services throughout the reorganisation. This would involve attendance at consultation meetings, meetings with school staff where appropriate and the circulation of a Frequently Asked Questions document.

### Property Implications

283. The Strategic Estates Department recognise that a public consultation is required for the delivery of both Welsh medium and English medium education in the urban areas of Cathays, parts of Gabalfa, Heath, Llandaff North and Plasnewydd. A number of existing Education sites have been listed and included as consultation options.
284. Currently and working in conjunction with the legal department, Estates can provide details of the specific land ownerships for each site outlined. This work has already started but the relevant information on each title is currently being worked through and details will be shared with the Education delivery team if any of the options considered does not conform with the permissions the Council have within its legal ownership.
285. Strategic Estates will continue to support the Education department in all land matters in order to discharge its statutory function.

### Traffic and Transport Implications

286. The Council has been committed to ensuring that every school in Cardiff has an Active Travel Plan by 2022. 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 Plans officers have been working with schools to develop these and all four schools have Active Travel Plans in place for their current sites.

287. All new (including reorganised) schools need to have a plan in place from the outset of their operation.
288. 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.
289. Following a reorganisation of the schools, the Council will monitor conditions outside the school's 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.
290. 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.
291. The construction of the new Cycleway 1.2 along Cathays Terrace, Whitchurch Road and Allensbank Road will provide a new cycling facility directly linking to the current sites of Allensbank Primary School, Gladstone Primary School and St Monica's Church in Wales Primary School.
292. Where it is identified that some pupils will be eligible for school transport due to their additional learning needs (e.g., for SRB pupils), the facilities for drop-off and pick-up of pupils will be reviewed to identify any necessary improvements.

### **Impact Assessments**

293. An initial Single Impact Assessment has been carried out and is attached as Appendix 10. This includes an Equality Impact Assessment, Child's Rights Impact Assessment and Welsh Language Impact Assessment. The views of stakeholders would be sought as part of the consultation and the assessment would be reviewed as part of the post consultation analysis.

294. The Council would also seek the views of the school communities and the wider community to inform a Community Impact Assessment, ahead of and during the consultation period.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Cabinet is recommended to

1. authorise officers to consult on proposals outlined in paragraph 122, to be implemented from September 2025.
2. note the proposal for the extension of the age range of St Monica's Church in Wales Primary School to include a nursery class of 32 part time places, and transfer of the school to the site presently occupied by Ysgol Mynydd Bychan, from September 2025.
3. note that the statutory consultation process on the proposed establishment of nursery provision and transfer of St. Monica's Church in Wales Primary School is to be undertaken by the Governing Body of the school and instruct officers to provide all reasonable assistance in this regard.
4. authorise the Director of Education & Lifelong Learning to formally respond on behalf of the Council to the public consultation issued by the Governing Body of St Monica's Church in Wales Primary School in due course.
5. note that officers will bring a report on the outcome of the consultation to a future meeting to seek authorisation as to whether to proceed to publish proposals in accordance with section 48 of The School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013.

<b>SENIOR RESPONSIBLE OFFICER</b>	<b>Melanie Godfrey</b> Director of Education & Lifelong Learning
	17 March 2023

*The following appendices are attached:*

- Appendix 1: Cardiff's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan
- Appendix 2: Cabinet Report, 17 June 2021
- Appendix 3: Projections and forecasts
- Appendix 4: Welsh-medium catchment area map
- Appendix 5: English-medium catchment area map
- Appendix 6: School census analysis - demographic data
- Appendix 7: Site configuration Option 1
- Appendix 8: Site configuration Option 2
- Appendix 9: Site configuration Option 3
- Appendix 10: Single Impact Assessment

*The following Background papers have been taken into account*  
School Organisation Code 2013