

ABERSYCHAN BRYNTEG NURSERY  
SCHOOL, CWMFFRWDOER,  
GARNTEG & VICTORIA PRIMARY  
SCHOOLS

OBJECTION REPORT

JULY 2016

## **Introduction**

At their meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> February 2016, Council Cabinet decided to proceed with the following proposals:

- a) The discontinuation of **Victoria Primary School** with the dispersal of pupils to neighbouring schools (predominantly **Garnteg Primary School**) with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2017
- b) The discontinuation of **Abersychan Brynteg Nursery School** with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2017
- c) The extension of **Garnteg Primary School** with the new provision available with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2017;
- d) The extension of **Cwmffrwdor Primary School**, and at the same time an increase the age range from 4 to 11 years to 3 to 11 to provide nursery provision. The nursery provision and extended provision to be available with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2017;
- e) An adjustment/reallocation to catchment areas as follows:
  - i) current Victoria Primary School to Garnteg Primary School
  - ii) current Abersychan Brynteg Nursery School to Garnteg Primary School

In accordance the Council's Constitution, the above mentioned decisions were subject to a challenge process. Challenges had to be notified to the Chief Executive and the Chief Legal Officer and Monitoring Officer by 12.00 noon on Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> February 2016.

It should be noted that this decision was subject to a challenge but the decision was confirmed on Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> March 2016.

Following that decision, the Council then had to publish these proposals by way of statutory notices. Copies of the statutory notices are attached as an appendix to this objection report.

Anyone wishing to make an objection to these proposals was able to do so. To be considered as a statutory objection, objections had to be made in writing or by email, and sent to the Council within 28 days of the date on which the proposals were published. This is referred to as the objection period.

Notices were published on Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2016 as follows:

- On the council website. Link: <http://www.torfaen.gov.uk/en/EducationLearning/21st-Century-Learning/Latest-News.aspx>
- On or near the main entrance of the schools which are the subject of the proposals
- By providing schools which are the subject of these proposals with copies of the notice to distribute to pupils, parents/carers, and staff(schools may distribute the notice by email)

- By notifying prescribed consultees as listed in the School Organisation Code

In accordance with the Act the Council must publish a summary of the statutory objections and the Council's responses to those objections ("the Objection Report").

### **Statutory Objections**

The objection period ended on Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> March 2016. In all, a total of 770 statutory objections were received as follows:

- The Governing Body of Victoria Primary School
- Nick Thomas-Symonds MP for Torfaen
- Lynne Neagle AM for Torfaen
- William Graham AM for South Wales East
- 68 individual letters from pupils of Victoria Primary School
- 669 Individual letters or e mails from parents/carers, school based staff and other interested parties
- 29 individual letters from family and friends of named children attending Victoria Primary School

These objections can be further summarised in relation to the specific proposals as follows:-

<u>Proposal(s)</u>	<u>Number of Objections</u>
Brynteg, Cwmffrwdroer, Garnteg & Victoria	639
Victoria, Cwmffrwdroer & Garnteg	63
Victoria & Brynteg	46
Victoria only	20
Garnteg only	2
Brynteg only	0
Cwmffrwdroer only	0

The following table provides a summary of those statutory objections and the Council's response to those objections.

<b>REASON FOR OBJECTION</b>	<b>COUNCIL RESPONSE</b>
<b>SAFE WALKING ROUTES/HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT PROVISION</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The council has failed to adequately address the fact that there is no safe walking route from Abersychan to Garnteg or Cwmffrwdroer Primary Schools.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is not anticipated that the proposals will impact significantly on pupils' journeys to school. Garnteg Primary School the proposed catchment area school is located approximately 1 mile from Victoria Primary School and there is already some cross transfer of pupils between the two areas.</li> </ul> <p>£250,000 of investment in Safe</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The local authority has failed to quantify transport arrangements for in catchment pupils.</li>   <li>• The local authority has failed to quantify how long transport will be available.</li>   <li>• The local authority has failed to include the financial impact of using taxpayers money to provide transport.</li> </ul>	<p>Routes in the Community is being delivered in Abersychan which will further improve the situation in the area.</p> <p>Where there is no safe route to the catchment area school the council's transport policy allows free transport to those affected.</p> <p>The council can also confirm that for a route to be considered safe it must provide (amongst other things) pavements for children to walk on, and we are aware that there are roads in the area where that is not so. If the proposal goes ahead it will be necessary for us to consult on safe routes so that we can determine which children can access Garnteg via a safe route and which children we will need to provide transport for.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transport arrangements cannot be accurately quantified until the authority knows which children will be attending which setting if the proposals proceed. Once this is known, an entitlement assessment can be undertaken on an individual pupil basis, which will establish who is entitled to transport.</li>   <li>• Home to school transport remains in place for as long a learner meets the qualifying conditions in the Home to School Transport Policy.</li>   <li>• See answer above in relation to transport arrangements for in-catchment pupils. However, it is expected that the annual revenue costs associated with school transport would be less than the estimated revenue savings arising from the proposed school closures.</li> </ul>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The local authority has failed to make public, the transport reports undertaken in September 2015.</li> <li>Children who are sent to school on buses have a greater responsibility to look after their own equipment and it becomes harder for teachers and parents to communicate.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This is incorrect. As required in the School Organisation Code, the consultation document has made reference to and recognises the need to take into account the impact on pupils journeys to school, school transport and safe walking routes to alternative provision. At the consultation meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2015 at Victoria Primary School, a request was made to provide the specific Traffic Impact assessments (TIA's) in relation to Cwmffrwdor and Garnteg and these were made available the next day on the council website.</li> <li>There are currently 585 pupils attending 12 of the council's primary schools who receive home to school transport provision. We are not aware of any issues in this regard, and see no reason if transport is provided, why it should be an issue if these proposals are implemented.</li> </ul>
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**TRAFFIC CONGESTION/ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is no plan in place to improve the current situation, let alone the increase in congestion that would happen with extra pupils and staff at Garnteg Primary School.</li> </ul> <p>The Local Authority has failed to evaluate the impact of traffic on the community.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Traffic and parking congestion outside schools at the start and end of the day are acknowledged by the council.</li> </ul> <p>A traffic impact assessment was undertaken regarding the Garnteg proposals in the pre-planning stage, and recommendations from that assessment built into the proposed works.</p> <p>Additional parking is proposed within Garnteg Primary School site as a consequence of the establishment of a larger school.</p> <p>The planning application for Garnteg Primary School was approved on 1 February 2016 and traffic issues were considered as part of that process.</p>
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<p>Garnteg is inaccurate as it talks about a 3 classroom extension but the planning application is for 5.</p>	<p>school. The number of additional classrooms is irrelevant from a highways perspective.</p>
<p><b>ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS</b></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The council has not adequately considered the alternative proposal put forward by Victoria parents.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The council does not accept this claim. Whilst the alternative proposal has some interesting aspects to it, officers have concerns about its likely viability: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) The capacity of the resultant school would not increase (215). The council would continue to have 3 smaller schools in the area, contrary to the direction for larger schools set out in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century schools Programme.</li> <li>ii) There is already sufficient alternative nursery provision in the area even with the proposed closure of Brynteg Nursery.</li> <li>iii) Placing a 26 full time equivalent nursery on the playing field would reduce already limited outdoor provision and it may be considered as over-development in planning terms.</li> <li>iv) The proposal does not address the issue of the private lane which dissects the site i.e. there will still be a need for learners to cross the lane.</li> <li>v) The suggested level of refurbishment in the main school building appears limited and there is no detail of how additional space will be created in that building (only changes to existing space). Additional work would add to cost.</li> <li>vi) Funding for adult learning has</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The local authority has failed to engage/meet with Parents and Fairhursts to discuss the alternative proposal or enter into a non disclosure agreement to protect the intellectual property of this company. All requests that were made by the local authority were during the Christmas holidays and not during term time.</li>   <li>• Why not refurbish and extend Victoria Primary School to perhaps accommodate pupils from other schools or relocate the Welsh Medium School.</li>   <li>• If the land belonging to the school cannot be used to extend perhaps a car park leading off the main road can be provided with safe access to the school and at the same time relieve congestion around school at the start and end of the school day.</li>   <li>• The council has failed to adequately consider the options of</li> </ul>	<p>become increasingly difficult, and is likely to be for the foreseeable future. Any new provision in the area would be in competition with existing venues, which would present financial sustainability issues for the existing or new provision, or both.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The alternative proposal was received by the council on Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> December 2015 at 20.36 and, two days before the end of term. All reasonable efforts were made to secure additional information regarding the proposal to make an informed decision. Contact with Fairhursts DG also confirmed that in acting in support of the Parents of Victoria Village Committee on the scoping study they were happy for the information contained within the report to be released for use by third parties in support of the proposals.</li>   <li>• The Victoria site does not have the necessary development potential that other sites have, which is why the council included its potential closure, subject to proper consultation, in the programme submitted to Welsh Government in 2011.</li>   <li>• See answer above. When settling the programme in 2011 the council did not look at any one site in isolation, and developed proposals which it believed, and still believes, represent the best way to tackle the issues caused by, amongst other things, declining population and the deteriorating condition of school buildings</li>   <li>• The council has advanced the proposals to close two schools and</li> </ul>
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<p>amalgamation and federation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The council has failed to adequately consider other options short of closing Victoria Primary School.</li> </ul>	<p>extend two others on the basis that together they best meet the aims set out when council was considering its 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Programme. Nothing has been highlighted during the consultations to alter that view.</p> <p>A number of options for the area were considered in 2010/2011 as the programme was being developed. This included an option to maintain the status quo which would have seen Victoria Primary school retained, but that option was not the preferred option.</p>
<p><b>SURPLUS PLACES</b></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The council is closing an oversubscribed school and there are no surplus places.</li> <li>If Victoria Primary does close and as rumoured houses are built on the site where would the children from these houses go?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There are no surplus places at Victoria Primary School at present, but surplus places are projected in the north Torfaen over the next few years as a whole due to changes in population. The council has to manage that and cannot look at individual schools in isolation.</li> <li>If the proposal does proceed, the council will assess whether there is a viable alternative use for the site by another council service and if not it will be disposed of. If the site is then developed for housing any potential children arising from such a development would be in the catchment area of Garnteg Primary School should that be the parents/carers choice of school.</li> </ul>
<p><b>ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS AT CWMFFRWDOER PRIMARY SCHOOL</b></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How will the council overcome issues with sink holes and drainage at the school.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Cwmffrwdoer site has not been affected by sinkholes. Ground stabilisation works were undertaken on the site (circa 2003) due to old mine workings, which is a common preventative measure in areas where mining once took place. There has</li> </ul>

	<p>been some minor soil settlement since that date, and on each occasion the Coal Authority has investigated and carried out remedial works allaying any concerns. Extensive ground surveys have been undertaken as part of the pre-planning stage of the proposal for the school, and the work to prepare the site for the new extension designed to take full account of results of those surveys.</p> <p>A drainage survey has also been carried out at the pre-planning stage and no significant issues were identified.</p>
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**SCHOOL ADMISSIONS/CLASS SIZES/SCHOOL SIZE**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will children from the same family be able to attend the same school.</li> </ul> <p>If Torfaen does not offer a guaranteed places policy, why does it indicate that all children can be accommodated in Garnteg? Are places guaranteed or not?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Class sizes will be too big</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Torfaen does not offer a guaranteed places policy particularly given the requirements of the Government Infant class size legislation. Published admission criteria will mean children who reside locally and in the catchment area will be given a higher priority than those who live further away. The admissions criteria also give a higher priority to those pupils with a sibling in the school.</li> <li>• In the event of a school closure we guarantee places at the new catchment school to those who want them. In all other cases the council's normal admissions policy applies.</li> <li>• Government Infant class size legislation restricts foundation phase (i.e. Reception, year 1 or year 2) classes to no more than 30 pupils per class. Whilst there is no legislation requiring a junior (Key Stage 2 years 3 – 6) class size limit, Welsh Government expects the 30 pupils per class teacher to remain the</li> </ul>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The local authority has failed to accurately describe the size of the school, being described as “small” when based on Estyn criteria Victoria is a medium sized school.</li> <li>The local authority has failed to inform stakeholders of the need for all schools to be a minimum of 315 places.</li> </ul>	<p>“target” size for junior classes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Estyn defines a small school as up to 100 pupils and a medium school as up to 300. This was clarified in the consultation report issued on 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2016.</li> <li>The authority has been clear from the launch of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Programme that the target over the length of the programme was to reduce the number of Primary Schools. This included the removal of smaller primary schools with less than 315 pupils reduced from 18 (at the start of the programme) to 1. This size school is also evident in current proposals for new primary schools (Blenheim Road and Llantarnam) as well as the proposal for Cwmffrwdoer.</li> </ul>
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**IMPACT ON WIDER COMMUNITY**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Abersychan and the surrounding area is lacking in facilities for young people. Victoria could be developed to offer sporting provision and create an income source to assist with expenses.</li> <li>It is regrettable that the unequal treatment between the North and the South of the borough must be raised. The decision takes no account of the geography of the area, with a series of densely packed houses separated by hills and valleys (Unlike the south with more modern housing estates and good communications). An earlier response from the authority that there are 3 schools</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is no reason why it should not be possible for the local community to galvanise around the alternative arrangements for education and the wider community activities if Victoria was to close given the relative proximity of the schools in this part of the county borough. Access to community groups/activities could still be provided locally if the demand is there.</li> <li>The council does not agree with the suggestion that there is unequal treatment between the north and the south of the borough. The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Programme is a strategic approach for the whole of Torfaen. The fact that Victoria has served its community is not in question, but neither is the need for change.</li> </ul> <p>The council does not consider access</p>
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<p>in this small area hides the point that each one serves a distinct and longstanding community.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The closure of Brynteg Nursery and Victoria Primary Schools will take the heart out of our village and community.</li> <li>• Children that are schooled outside their local area do not have local friendship groups and are unable to go out and play.</li> </ul>	<p>to be a significant barrier to advancing these proposals.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The council does not dispute that both schools have served multiple generations of families, but the community will still be there. As indicated above, there is no reason we can see that it should not be possible for the local community to galvanise around the alternative arrangements for education in this part of the county borough given the relative proximity of schools. Access to community groups/activities could, as indicated above, still be provided locally.</li> <li>• Parents can express a preference for any school, if places are available, whether local or further afield. Many do so. However if the proposals are implemented it is expected that the vast majority of children will be accommodated locally if that is the parents' wish, meaning local friendship groups could continue.</li> </ul>
<p><b>TRANSITIONAL ARRANGEMENTS</b></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is important to build on those important friendship groups that have built up in school. Will these peer groups be broken down so they can go to a school in huge classes where there are already great demands on teachers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We recognise that with any school reorganisation proposal, transition will be very important for pupils and indeed staff. If the proposals are approved a transition group will be established which will address any issues to allay parental anxieties, build trust and confidence and ensure that pupils transfer in a way which supports their continued learning and wellbeing.</li> </ul> <p>The first step to take if it is decided to proceed will be to establish which primary school parents would like their children to transfer to for September 2017. Once this has been</p>

	<p>established the transition process will enable staff in the schools involved to look at learners and their friendship groups when planning for the changes ahead.</p>
<p><b>SOCIAL INCLUSION AND COMMUNITY</b></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What about school events, sports day, Christmas plays and school trips. How will these be organised with such big classes.</li> <li>• The local authority has failed to ensure that pupils have access to clubs and wrap around activities due to the reliance on buses to attend school.</li> <li>• The local authority has failed to consider the impact of reduction of opportunity for community engagement with school staff.</li> <li>• The local authority has failed to consider the impact of reduction of opportunity for parents to engage face to face with teachers and other school staff.</li> <li>• There is a real concern that the best interests of children and the community are not served by this decision. This cannot be the way to meet the objective of ensuring that all children regardless of financial circumstances have ready access to education in a way that empowers them to achieve their potential.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• These will continue to be organised as schools do now regardless of the number of pupils on roll.</li> <li>• This will need to be considered as part of the transitional arrangements when it is known which children will be eligible for transport to the new catchment school and their (and others) interest in out of school hours activity.</li> <li>• The council sees no reason why this should be affected if the proposals proceed.</li> <li>• Again, the council sees no reason why this should be affected if the proposals proceed.</li> <li>• We understand why some people may be reluctant to accept our opinion, but it is also Estyn's opinion that the proposal is likely to at least maintain the current standards of education and provision in the area. It is also of the opinion that the proposal is unlikely to have a negative impact on any other schools or education provider in the area. In addition it is their view that the impact of revised admission arrangements will lead to very little disruption to pupils' learning. The proposal identifies the support that pupils and their families will receive</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Victoria offers a much needed “wraparound” which provides breakfast and after school clubs for a large number of pupils. Will this be available elsewhere?</li> <li>• Victoria Primary is situated on the main route to Blaenavon – a world heritage site and therefore should remain in full view to the public, visitors and tourists to the area.</li> </ul>	<p>to transfer from the discontinued schools to the extended schools appropriately.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Both Garnteg and Cwmffrwdor Primary Schools provide breakfast clubs and a variety of after school clubs (as detailed in the respective consultation documents).</li> <li>• If a decision to close Victoria Primary School is made a separate process will determine the future of the buildings/site. If change was proposed the planning process would then have to be followed which would allow for representation to be made on this matter.</li> </ul>
<b>STAFFING ISSUES</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If Torfaen keep closing schools, where will newly qualified teachers work?</li> <li>• What will happen to the staff if the schools close?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The council will continue to employ newly qualified teachers but ultimately the number of teachers (newly qualified and qualified) is tied to the number of children we need to provide education for, and the pupil funding that secures, and not the number of schools. The number of children is reducing in Torfaen.</li> <li>• Wherever possible the council will seek to secure alternative suitable positions within Torfaen Schools for staff who want it. This has previously been achieved for other school reorganisation proposals by negotiating a local agreement with the professional associations, and it is expected that this would continue for these proposals as well as others arising from the 21st Century Schools Programme.</li> </ul>
<b>EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school (Victoria) has a very high standard with a very wide and varied curriculum.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The council has to ensure where it proposes to close a school that the alternative provision must be at least</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is little research to suggest that larger schools provide a better form of education. According to Estyn, Victoria is a medium sized school, yet Blaenavon Heritage VC Primary is larger and has seen a lower result in their teacher assessment figures.</li>   <li>• Brynteg is a Band B School for performance, but you want to send children to Cwmffrwdoer which is Band C so a worst performer.</li>   <li>• This proposal is directly in breach of policy to ensure primary schooling is offered in the most appropriate area to serve the community.</li> </ul>	<p>equal to or where possible better than that currently provided. If this was not the case and pupils were at risk of being disadvantaged the proposal would not proceed.</p> <p>In response to the proposed closure of Victoria Primary (and Abersychan Brynteg Nursery), it is Estyn’s opinion that these proposals are likely to at least maintain the current standards of education and provision in the area and is unlikely to have a negative impact on any other schools or education provider in the area.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Estyn defines a small school as up to 100 pupils and a medium as up to 300. Large schools tend to perform better than small schools in terms of learner outcomes and inspection outcomes. Further, Estyn’s report, “school size and educational effectiveness” (December 2013) reported that large primary schools defined as those having more than 300 pupils, were found to perform better.</li>   <li>• Comparisons cannot be made at this stage in terms of 3 – 4 year old provision, given there is no current facility at Cwmffrwdoer Primary School for such provision. Should the proposal be implemented the new nursery provision will be subject to the same Estyn Inspection requirements as that currently for Brynteg Nursery.</li>   <li>• It is the council’s view that if these proposals proceed, there will be sufficient places and appropriate provision in the area to serve the community.</li> </ul>
<p>BUILDING CONDITION/MAINTENANCE</p>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Victoria is a good strong building built to last with its backlog maintenance less than Cwmffrwdor. It seems more needs to be done there and Victoria should be retained.</li> <li>Victoria has been “fit for purpose” to provide an excellent education and has been updated with funds from the council up to last year. Why has it suddenly become “unfit for purpose”? How can the council explain the increased spend?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An option to retain and refurbish existing schools was considered in 2010/11 but was discounted because it does not address the fundamental issue the council has with provision in the North of the county borough, which is the number of smaller schools, the declining population and the need to make improvements to its buildings.</li> </ul> <p>With the existing site made up of 3 separate parcels of land, and a lane not owned by the council running between these plots, the site is not suitable to develop.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The school has been identified in an independent survey commissioned by Welsh Government as a building condition category C (condition C – poor). The school requires significant investment just to bring it back to its “as built” condition, before any investment/improvements are made in the school to support a curriculum that is fit for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.</li> </ul> <p>In terms of updating the premises, the authority has a duty of care to ensure that there is a safe learning environment for pupils and staff at all times regardless of proposals that may impact on the future of a building, and at the same time ensure no child is disadvantaged in terms of teaching and learning.</p>
<b>FINANCIAL VIABILITY</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Victoria is not running at a loss and the school is full with siblings joining in the future.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The school out turned with a surplus of £67,676 at the end of 2014/15 financial year which is 8.65% of total funding. Governors approved a surplus of £24k for the end of 2015/16 financial year which is 3.3% of total funding. The authority is currently working with the school to</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I object to £8M being spent on just 2 extensions. The “alternative proposal” put forward is more feasible and would save £4M.</li> <li>There is a concern that the proposals do not offer “best value for money” and that the business justification case provided by Torfaen CBC to the Welsh Government has not been fully scrutinised.</li> </ul>	<p>produce medium term financial forecasts.</p> <p>Estyn’s research has shown that inspection team judgements for value for money closely aligns with the judgements for standards and say that it follows that a higher proportion of large schools are judged to be giving good or better value for money than small or medium-sized schools.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The “alternative proposal” while presenting some interesting aspects, and even if it could be achieved for half the current proposed investment, still does not address the fundamental issue of a number of smaller schools in the area and a declining population.</li> </ul> <p>The investment in Garnteg and Cwmffrwdoer is, in the view of the council, the best way forward for primary school provision in the area.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is the view of the council that these proposals do offer the best value for money. The council is confident that the business justification cases for both Cwmffrwdoer and Garnteg have been fully scrutinised by Welsh Government who have confirmed an “in principle” agreement for funding.</li> </ul>
<b>SAFEGUARDING</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is concern about pupil safety at larger schools. The teachers in Victoria know the majority of all pupils names and in a lot of cases are aware of their family members. I bring to your attention the recent safety issue at Croesyceiliog Primary School where two pupils were left outside.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The council does not share this concern, and is satisfied that the wellbeing and welfare of learners can be maintained at the alternative provision.</li> </ul>



<p>inaccurately in the consultation report.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The council has not adequately considered the opinions of children that will be affected by these closures.</li> <li>• Parents have not had the opportunity to voice their opinions during the initial stages as they were informed of the possible closure via parents of another local primary school who had already received glossy documentation.</li> </ul>	<p>Play Service who undertook the consultation. In addition, all the children's views were recorded and set out as an appendix to the report.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All the views of children, either recorded through the consultation events held at schools, or in the form of the letters received during the consultation period, have been acknowledged and were made available to all elected members for consideration ahead of any decisions being made.</li> <li>• Parents/carers have been allowed a full 42 days to respond to the proposals contained in the consultation document which is in line with the consultation requirements set out in the Welsh Government's School Organisation Code. Public meetings were also held as part of the consultations.</li> </ul> <p>In addition, the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools programme has been well documented, with the council taking the decision to include every school as part of it in October 2010. The council sought the views of all interested parties on its programme during a series of roadshows that were held across the county borough in March 2011.</p> <p>Since then the council has provided regular updates on the programme via the website or in "Torfaen Talks" the council newspaper which is distributed to all households within the county borough.</p>
<p><b>NEW HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS</b></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Torfaen Local Development Plan highlights plans for the development of new dwellings. The document</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pupil projections take into account potential pupils from new housing developments, as well as Health</li> </ul>

<p>highlights the intention to develop land within close proximity to both Victoria Primary and Brynteg Nursery, on High street, Abersychan in order to build 24 dwellings. There has been a discrepancy in figures for projected school intakes so has this been taken into account?</p>	<p>Authority live birth data and parental/admission trends.</p> <p>The particular development on High Street falls within the revised catchment area of Garnteg Primary School should the proposals proceed. In forecasting potential pupils, the Education Service uses Supplementary Planning Guidance which calculates for primary aged children, some 29 pupils per 100 dwellings. This development could therefore generate an additional 7 primary aged pupils.</p>
<p><b>EARLY YEARS PROVISION</b></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Future nursery provision has not been fully considered in the event of the removal of Abersychan Brynteg Nursery.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• With the proposed addition of a further 52 part time equivalent places along with existing provision in the council maintained and registered private/voluntary early years settings, the council, having reviewed the timing of these proposals, is confident that there will be sufficient places to meet current and forecasted demand.</li> </ul>
<p><b>WELSH LANGUAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENTS</b></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some parents may choose to consider nearby Welsh Language Schools given the impact the proposed closures would have on parental preference. This could increase the Welsh language demand and should be considered as part of the duty on the local Authority to measure (and respond to) demand through its Welsh in Education Strategic Plan.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The proposals are not expected to have a significant impact on the demand for Welsh Medium education. Nonetheless, the authority has a statutory duty to provide Welsh Medium education where it is requested. Applications to Ysgol Bryn Onnen will be a matter for parental preference, which will determine demand for places. Parents/carers seeking a Welsh Medium primary school setting will be provided for at that setting or one of the other settings in Torfaen.</li> </ul>



## Appendix 1 – Statutory notices in relation to these proposals

### **Torfaen County Borough Council, Civic Centre, Pontypool, Torfaen NP4 6YB**

Notice is given in accordance with section 43 of the School Standards and Organisation Act 2013 and the School Organisation Code that Torfaen County Borough Council, having consulted such persons as required, propose to discontinue Abersychan Brynteg Nursery School, High Street, Abersychan, Pontypool, Torfaen NP4 7DG.

The school is currently maintained by Torfaen County Borough Council.

Torfaen County Borough Council undertook a period of consultation before deciding to publish this proposal. A consultation report containing a summary of the issues raised by consultees, the proposer's responses and the views of Estyn is available on:

<http://www.torfaen.gov.uk/en/EducationLearning/21st-Century-Learning/Latest-News.aspx>

It is proposed to implement the proposal on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2017.

It is intended that pupils currently attending Abersychan Brynteg Nursery School (including those already admitted at the time of the proposed closure) will be accommodated predominantly at Garnteg Primary School, Hillcrest, Garndiffaith, Pontypool, Torfaen, NP4 7SJ.

Currently there is a sufficient supply of places to meet demand and the proposal to establish a nursery unit at Cwmffrwdroer (26 FTE) will provide additional places and choice. The 21st Century Schools Programme includes the closure of Abersychan Brynteg Nursery School, which with the addition of a nursery unit at Cwmffrwdroer will rebalance the supply and demand situation for Early Years providers in both the private and public sector. The Council, having reviewed the timing of these proposals, is confident that there will be sufficient places to meet current and forecast demand.

Within a period of 28 days after the date of publication of these proposals, that is to say by 30<sup>th</sup> March 2016 any person may object to the proposals.

Objections should be sent to Alison Ward, Chief Executive Officer, Torfaen County Borough Council, Civic Centre, Pontypool, Torfaen, NP4 6YB. Email: [primaryreview@torfaen.gov.uk](mailto:primaryreview@torfaen.gov.uk)

Signed: Alison Ward, Chief Executive Officer

For the Torfaen County Borough Council

Date: Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2016

## **Explanatory Note**

(This explanatory note does not form part of Notice but is offered by way of explanation)

This statutory notice is the outcome of discussions to discontinue Abersychan Brynteg Nursery. The proposal arises from the Authority's 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Programme. This is a strategic plan to create a generation of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools across the Borough. Consultation meetings were held with staff, governors, parents/carers and other interested parties in December 2015.

This proposal along with a similar one to discontinue Victoria Primary School are also aligned with others in the North of the Borough to alter Cwmffrwdroer Primary and Garnteg Primary Schools by increasing their capacity and in the case of Cwmffrwdroer, to increase the age range from 4 to 11 to 3 to 11 to accommodate a nursery. Consultation in relation to these latter proposals was undertaken during June/July 2015.

Proposals as they affect Garnteg Primary School, Cwmffrwdroer Primary School and Victoria Primary School are subject to separate statutory notices, all of which were published at the same time i.e. 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2016.

In terms of future admissions, the proposal would also see catchment areas amended with the current Abersychan Brynteg Nursery School (and Victoria Primary School) catchment area being re designated to Garnteg Primary School. The revised catchment areas would then apply for all new admissions to Garnteg Primary School from September 2017.

It should be noted that as is the case now, home to school transport is not provided for nursery aged children.

A Welsh version of this notice can be obtained by telephoning 01495 766910 or by visiting the Council's website: [www.torfaen.gov.uk](http://www.torfaen.gov.uk)

END OF NOTICE

## **Torfaen County Borough Council, Civic Centre, Pontypool, Torfaen NP4 6YB**

Notice is given in accordance with section 43 of the School Standards and Organisation Act 2013 and the School Organisation Code that Torfaen County Borough Council, having consulted such persons as required, propose to discontinue Victoria Primary School, Lower Harpers Road, Abersychan, Pontypool, Torfaen NP4 8PW.

The school is currently maintained by Torfaen County Borough Council.

Torfaen County Borough Council undertook a period of consultation before deciding to publish this proposal. A consultation report containing a summary of the issues raised by consultees, the proposer's responses and the views of Estyn is available on:

<http://www.torfaen.gov.uk/en/EducationLearning/21st-Century-Learning/Latest-News.aspx>

It is proposed to implement the proposal on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2017.

It is intended that pupils currently attending Victoria Primary School (including those already admitted at the time of the proposed closure) will be accommodated predominantly at Garnteg Primary School, Hillcrest, Garndiffaith, Pontypool, Torfaen, NP4 7SJ.

The council is proposing to increase the capacity of Cwmffrwdoer and Garnteg Primary Schools to 315 and 420 places respectively and these proposals are therefore closely aligned to this proposal and that to discontinue Abersychan Brynteg Nursery School.

Home to School Transport will continue to be provided in accordance with current policy and prescribed mileage criteria (1 ½ miles from the school before September 2015 and 2 miles after). Where there are no safe walking routes and the home address is under the prescribed mileage, transport will be provided as is the case now.

Within a period of 28 days after the date of publication of these proposals, that is to say by 30<sup>th</sup> March 2016 any person may object to the proposals.

Objections should be sent to Alison Ward, Chief Executive Officer, Torfaen County Borough Council, Civic Centre, Pontypool, Torfaen, NP4 6YB. Email: [primaryreview@torfaen.gov.uk](mailto:primaryreview@torfaen.gov.uk)

Signed: Alison Ward, Chief Executive Officer

For the Torfaen County Borough Council

Date: Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2016

## **Explanatory Note**

(This explanatory note does not form part of Notice but is offered by way of explanation)

This statutory notice is the outcome of discussions to discontinue Victoria Primary School. The proposal arises from the Authority's 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Programme. This is a strategic plan to create a generation of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools across the Borough. Consultation meetings were held with staff, governors, parents/carers and other interested parties in December 2015.

This proposal along with a similar one to discontinue Abersychan Brynteg Nursery School are also aligned with others in the North of the Borough to alter Cwmffrwdroer Primary and Garnteg Primary Schools by increasing their capacity and in the case of Cwmffrwdroer, to increase the age range from 4 to 11 to 3 to 11 to accommodate a nursery. Consultation in relation to these latter proposals was undertaken during June/July 2015.

Proposals as they affect Garnteg Primary School, Cwmffrwdroer Primary School and Abersychan Brynteg Nursery School are subject to separate statutory notices, all of which were published at the same time i.e. 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2016.

In terms of future admissions, the proposal would also see catchment areas amended with the current Victoria Primary School (and Abersychan Brynteg Nursery School) catchment area being re designated to Garnteg Primary School. The revised catchment areas would then apply for all new admissions to Garnteg Primary School from September 2017.

Home to School Transport will continue to be provided in accordance with current policy and prescribed mileage criteria (1 ½ miles from the school before September 2015 and 2 miles after). Where there are no safe walking routes and the home address is under the prescribed mileage, transport will be provided as is the case now.

A Welsh version of this notice can be obtained by telephoning 01495 766910 or by visiting the Council's website: [www.torfaen.gov.uk](http://www.torfaen.gov.uk)

END OF NOTICE

## **Torfaen County Borough Council, Civic Centre, Pontypool, Torfaen NP4 6YB**

Notice is given in accordance with section 42 of the School Standards and Organisation Act 2013 and the School Organisation Code that Torfaen County Borough Council, having consulted such persons as required, propose to alter Cwmffrwdoer Primary School, Waunddu, Pontnewynydd, Pontypool, Torfaen NP4 6QZ, so that the capacity of the school is increased to 315 places and the age range extended from 4 to 11 to 3 to 11 to accommodate a nursery.

The school is currently maintained by Torfaen County Borough Council.

Torfaen County Borough Council undertook a period of consultation before deciding to publish this proposal. A consultation report containing a summary of the issues raised by consultees, the proposer's responses and the views of Estyn is available on: <http://www.torfaen.gov.uk/en/EducationLearning/21st-Century-Learning/Latest-News.aspx>

It is proposed to implement the proposal on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2017.

The current number of pupils at Cwmffrwdoer Primary School is 202, the pupil capacity of the school is 210 and the proposed capacity once the proposal is implemented will be 315.

The admission number for Reception year and each year group up to and including Year 6 at Cwmffrwdoer Primary School in the first school year in which the proposal has been implemented will be 45. There will also be 26 (full time equivalent) nursery places.

Within a period of 28 days after the date of publication of these proposals, that is to say by Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> March 2016 any person may object to the proposals.

Objections should be sent to Alison Ward, Chief Executive Officer, Torfaen County Borough Council, Civic Centre, Pontypool, Torfaen, NP4 6YB. Email: [primaryreview@torfaen.gov.uk](mailto:primaryreview@torfaen.gov.uk)

Torfaen County Borough council will publish a summary of any such objections made (and not withdrawn in writing) within the objection period, together with their observations thereon, within the period of 28 days after the end of the objection period.

Signed: Alison Ward, Chief Executive Officer

For the Torfaen County Borough Council

Date: Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2016

## **Explanatory Note**

(This explanatory note does not form part of Notice but is offered by way of explanation)

This statutory notice is the outcome of discussions to increase the capacity of Cwmffrwdoer Primary School and also increase the age range from 4 to 11 to 3 to 11 in order to accommodate a nursery provision. The proposals arise from the Authority's 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Programme. This is a strategic plan to create a generation of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools across the Borough. Consultation meetings were held with staff, governors, parents/carers and other interested parties of the affected schools during June 2015.

This proposal along with a similar one to increase the capacity of Garnteg Primary School are also aligned with others in the North of the Borough to discontinue Abersychan Brynteg Nursery and Victoria Primary Schools which were subject to a period of consultation that concluded on 4<sup>th</sup> January 2016.

Proposals as they affect Garnteg Primary School, Abersychan Brynteg Nursery School and Victoria Primary School are subject to separate statutory notices, all of which were published at the same time i.e. 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2016.

Home to School Transport will continue to be provided in accordance with current policy and prescribed mileage criteria (1 ½ miles from the school before September 2015 and 2 miles after). Where there are no safe walking routes and the home address is under the prescribed mileage, transport will be provided as is the case now.

A Welsh version of this notice can be obtained by telephoning 01495 766910 or by visiting the Council's website: [www.torfaen.gov.uk](http://www.torfaen.gov.uk)

END OF NOTICE

## **Torfaen County Borough Council, Civic Centre, Pontypool, Torfaen NP4 6YB**

Notice is given in accordance with section 42 of the School Standards and Organisation Act 2013 and the School Organisation Code that Torfaen County Borough Council, having consulted such persons as required, propose to alter Garnteg Primary School, Hillcrest, Garndiffaith, Pontypool, Torfaen NP4 7SJ, so that the capacity of the school increases to 420 places.

The school is currently maintained by Torfaen County Borough Council.

Torfaen County Borough Council undertook a period of consultation before deciding to publish this proposal. A consultation report containing a summary of the issues raised by consultees, the proposer's responses and the views of Estyn is available on: <http://www.torfaen.gov.uk/en/EducationLearning/21st-Century-Learning/Latest-News.aspx>

It is proposed to implement the proposal on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2017.

The current number of pupils at Garnteg Primary School is 251 (excluding nursery), the pupil capacity of the school is 248 and the proposed capacity once the proposal is implemented will be 420.

The admission number for Reception year and each year group up to and including Year 6 at Garnteg Primary School in the first school year in which the proposals have been implemented will be 60.

Within a period of 28 days after the date of publication of these proposals, that is to say by 30<sup>th</sup> March 2016 any person may object to the proposals.

Objections should be sent to Alison Ward, Chief Executive Officer, Torfaen County Borough Council, Civic Centre, Pontypool, Torfaen, NP4 6YB. Email: [primaryreview@torfaen.gov.uk](mailto:primaryreview@torfaen.gov.uk)

Torfaen County Borough council will publish a summary of any such objections made (and not withdrawn in writing) within the objection period, together with their observations thereon, within the period of 28 days after the end of the objection period.

Signed: Alison Ward, Chief Executive Officer

For the Torfaen County Borough Council

Date: Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2016

## **Explanatory Note**

(This explanatory note does not form part of Notice but is offered by way of explanation)

This statutory notice is the outcome of discussions to increase the capacity of Garnteg Primary School. The proposal arises from the Authority's 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Programme. This is a strategic plan to create a generation of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools across the Borough. Consultation meetings were held with staff, governors, parents/carers and other interested parties of the affected schools during July 2015.

This proposal along with a similar one to increase the capacity of Cwmffrwdoer Primary School are also aligned with others in the North of the Borough to discontinue Abersychan Brynteg Nursery and Victoria Primary Schools which were subject to a period of consultation that concluded on 4<sup>th</sup> January 2016.

Proposals as they affect Cwmffrwdoer Primary, Abersychan Brynteg Nursery and Victoria Primary Schools are subject to a separate statutory notice published at the same time i.e. 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2016.

Home to School Transport will continue to be provided in accordance with current policy and prescribed mileage criteria (1 ½ miles from the school before September 2015 and 2 miles after). Where there are no safe walking routes and the home address is under the prescribed mileage, transport will be provided as is the case now.

A Welsh version of this notice can be obtained by telephoning 01495 766910 or by visiting the Council's website: [www.torfaen.gov.uk](http://www.torfaen.gov.uk)

END OF NOTICE