



# CROESYCEILIOG SCHOOL: REDUCING THE 11 – 16 CAPACITY TO 1200 PLACES CONSULTATION REPORT

December 2016



TORFAEN  
COUNTY  
BOROUGH



BWRDEISTREF  
SIROL  
TORFAEN

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# **1. BACKGROUND**

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.

The outcome of this public engagement was reported to cabinet in July 2011. Subsequent to this meeting, Welsh Government asked councils to revise their original Band A proposals (originally submitted in October 2010) against the following prioritisation criteria:

- The level of match funding required by the council increased from 30% to 50%
- The poorest condition of the estate (prioritisation to reside with the council although the independent school survey data will be applied)
- Surplus capacity – the key indicator being surplus places (both as a percentage and as an estimated actual reduction in a number of places)
- Running efficiencies (e.g. reduction in running costs, backlog maintenance)

The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Programme in Torfaen and across Wales is intended to tackle these issues in a strategic rather than piecemeal way.

The revised Strategic Outline Programme was approved by Council in November 2011 with the Welsh Government confirming match funding in principle in December 2011.

The four investment Objectives we will deliver as a result of the overall programme are:

- Improving the effectiveness and outcomes of service to all learners.
- Providing economies and efficiencies in the provision of the service.
- Providing new and enhanced opportunities to all learners.
- Improving learner experience and attractiveness to all learners.

The proposal in relation to Croesyceiliog School is that identified in Band A (2014 to 2019) of the agreed Programme.

This proposal required formal consultation because a reduction in the physical capacity of the school is proposed and the proposed capacity will not be greater than the highest number of pupils on roll at the school at any time in the previous two school years prior to the publication of the proposal. There were 1,314 11 to 16 aged pupils on roll in September 2014 and 1,319 in September 2015, measured against the proposed capacity of 1200 places from September 2018.

In the business cases to support the case for a new school, it was shown that as Croesyceiliog School attracts a number of pupils from out of catchment its capacity should be reduced to 1200 to limit the number of places available to those from out of catchment.

The council is advancing a proposal to build a new Croesyceiliog School on the existing site which building would be ready for occupation in September 2019. Reducing the school's capacity from September 2018 will ensure we have a new school of the right size and help to manage the transition with the new build. It will not affect current learners in the school but will change the annual intake at the school from a 9 form entry (274 places) to an 8 form entry (240 places).

## **2. METHODOLOGY**

The consultation on this proposal was undertaken with prescribed consultees contained within the School Organisation Code 2013. A list of those consultees is attached at Appendix 1 to this report. Their views were sought on the proposal.

In addition, some 3,300 letters were distributed to Croesyceiliog School and its "partner"/feeder primary schools for distribution to pupils and their parents/carers advising of the availability of the consultation document.

Consultation was also undertaken with children and young people. Separate arrangements were made which included seeking the views of school councils.

Given Welsh Government guidance, as well as Croesyceiliog School itself, the "Partner"/feeder primary schools for Croesyceiliog were invited and, encouraged to participate in the consultation and consider this proposal. Specifically, this involved the school councils and pupils of Croesyceiliog Primary School, Llantarnam Community Primary School, Llanyrafon Primary School, Maendy Primary School and Pontnewydd Primary School.

Consultation was conducted through a consultation document and accompanying response form distributed to prescribed consultees.

The consultation ran from Monday 17<sup>th</sup> October 2016 to Monday 28<sup>th</sup> November 2016.

The publication of a consultation document is central to the consultation process prescribed by Welsh Government for school reorganisation. The consultation document outlined the changes being considered, the rationale for these, details of the consultation process and incorporated a response form. Consultees were advised of contact addresses to send in comments by post and via e-mail. An on-line version was also made available through the Council's "My Say" consultation link.

The consultation process was extensively promoted online, via the Torfaen Council website and social media channels and also received coverage in the local press.

### **3. RESULTS AND COMMENTS**

The Local Authority received a number of responses to the consultation exercise.

A file of all the comments and views received during the consultation period has been made available to Elected Members as part of this process and, before any decisions are made.

A list of those who responded to the consultation is summarised at Appendix 2.

8 individual responses/comments were received/made in respect of the proposal. The issues raised which together with the Local Authority responses are summarised below.

<b>COMMENT</b>	<b>RESPONSE</b>
<p><b>Proposed Capacity of School</b></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are countless houses being built in Cwmbran and this proposal is not future proofed.</li>   <li>• A smaller school will mean smaller classrooms and facilities and will lead to overcrowding.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As well as Health Authority live birth data and parental/admission trends, pupil projections take into account potential pupils from new housing developments.</li>   <p>There are significant and known housing developments within the Croesyceiliog School catchment area, notably South Sebastopol, the Malthouse area of Llantarnam, the former County Hall site and Llanfrecfa Grange and these have been taken into account even before any houses have been built.</p> <li>• Whilst the overall capacity of the school will be reduced, the classrooms and other facilities will be built to the normal dimensions required to appropriately deliver teaching and learning, meeting the needs of those pupils on roll. Space provision in the new building will also take account of the fact the number of learners will be greater than 1200 for time whilst the change to an 8 form entry takes full effect.</li>   <p>The school will not be overcrowded as admissions will be restricted to the published admission number (AN). As the AN reflects the schools ability</p> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A reduced capacity will restrict parental preference, particularly those applying from out of the catchment area.</li> <li>• The proposed reduction in capacity and the reason for it was noted. Our (Pontnewydd Primary School Governing Body) sole concern is that this must not restrict the ability of pupils at our school, as part of the catchment area for Croesyceiliog School, to gain a place there if their parents so choose.</li> </ul>	<p>to accommodate pupils it should not be exceeded unless there are exceptional circumstances which would support such an action.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The reduced capacity will be sufficient to at least cater for demand from the school catchment area. Appendix 4 to this report illustrates the level of pupils currently attending Croesyceiliog School who reside outside of the school catchment - of 1323 in attendance at the time of the exercise (May/June 2016) only 840 (63.5%) resided within the catchment area of the school.</li> </ul> <p>Fewer places will inevitably mean less opportunity for parents/carers to express a preference for a particular school which is not their catchment school.</p> <p>Applications will continue to be able to be made for an “out of catchment” placement, but priority will be given to “in catchment” applications in accordance with the council’s published admission criteria.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Please refer to answer above. Also, whilst Torfaen Council does not operate a guaranteed school place policy, those pupils who reside within the catchment area of the preferred school will be given a higher priority than those residing outside.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Staffing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A reduction in capacity will increase the number of redundancies in the school.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is inevitable that various teaching and non-teaching staff will be affected by such a proposal. The change will be gradual i.e. one form group per year from September 2018, and will need to be managed as part of the annual budget and financial planning review.</li> </ul> <p>As part of that review process, and</p>

	<p>wherever possible, the Council will seek to secure alternative suitable positions within Torfaen Schools for staff at risk of redundancy. This has previously been achieved for other school reorganisation proposals by negotiating a local agreement with the relevant professional associations, and it is expected that this would continue for this proposal as well as others arising from the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Programme.</p>
<p><b>Costs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the reduction in capacity and the consequent staff redundancies just a cost cutting exercise?</li> <li>• The council don't want to spend money!</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The purpose of the proposal is to provide the right size school in the right place to serve its immediate community and overall manage down surplus places within the county borough to meet targets set by Welsh Government.</li> <li>• The council are proposing to invest some £30M in this proposal alone. Significant investment has already been made in schools and will continue as the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Programme moves forward.</li> </ul>
<p><b>The Consultation Process</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The consultation document is too detailed. It really needs to be set out in layman's terms, in a manner that is straightforward and understandable.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The information we provide in consultation documents relating to school organisation proposals has to conform to requirements of Welsh Government's School Organisation Code. Sometimes that information can be quite technical, and for that reason (amongst others) we always provide contact details, phone and email, if people have any queries.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Investment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why have the last 3 new builds all been in the South of Torfaen? There is a disproportionate amount of investment in the south when</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Programme is a long term strategic plan that will see investment across the whole of the county borough.</li> </ul>

<p>compared to the north and is at risk of creating a divide in quality of education that is received by pupils across the authority.</p>	<p>There has been significant investment in the north of the borough including but not limited to: £9,000,000 investment at Abersychan and West Monmouth Schools; £13,000,000 at Ysgol Gyfun Gwynllyw; £15,000,000 at Blaenavon Heritage Primary School; and significant programme of investment now underway at Garnteg and Cwmffrwdroer primary schools.</p>
<p><b>Pupil specific concerns</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Concern was raised regarding the social implications for pupils; that friendships that had evolved from reception would potentially be broken when applying for a secondary school place.</li> <li>At Croesyceiliog Primary School It was felt that “in catchment” and “out catchment” pupils are all pupils of Croesyceiliog Primary and therefore should be afforded the opportunity to go to the feeder comprehensive.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Croesyceiliog Primary School is a partner school to and in the cluster of Croesyceiliog Secondary School and transitional arrangements should not be impacted if the proposal proceeds for the majority of pupils.</li> </ul> <p>However, it is recognised that with any school reorganisation proposal, transition will be very important for all pupils and indeed staff. We have undertaken a number of school reorganisations recently and the transition plans have been implemented very successfully with little if any disruption.</p> <p>If the current proposal is approved a transition group will be established which will address any issues to try to allay parental anxieties, build trust and confidence and ensure that pupils transfer in a way which supports their continued learning and wellbeing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There will be an opportunity for all Croesyceiliog Primary School pupils to apply for the same secondary school if they so wish. Admission will however depend on where they are resident when the application is made and places will be offered in line with the council’s admission</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children should be able to go to the school of their choice, rather than where they live.</li> </ul>	<p>policy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Please refer to the above bullet point.</li> </ul>
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## 4. ESTYN RESPONSE

The report received during the consultation period, and based on the consultation document is provided below in its entirety.

### **Estyn response to the proposal to make a regulated alteration to Croesyceiliog School on its existing site by reducing the 11 – 16 capacity to 1,200 places.**

This report has been prepared by Her Majesty’s Inspectors of Education and Training in Wales.

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

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

#### **Introduction**

The proposal is by Torfaen County Borough Council.

The proposal is to make a regulated alteration to Croesyceiliog School on its existing site by reducing the 11 – 16 capacity to 1,200 places.

#### **Summary**

The proposal is part of Torfaen Borough Council’s 21st Century Schools programme. One of its aims is to achieve greater economy and efficiency through appropriate sized schools, collaboration and better use of resources to improve the cost effectiveness of the education system.

It is Estyn’s opinion that the proposal is likely to at least maintain the current standards of education in the area.

#### **Description and benefits**

The local authority has given a clear rationale for the expected benefits when compared with the status quo in relation to finance, projected pupil numbers, surplus places and the quality of the learning environment.

The proposer notes appropriately the advantages of the proposal, which include ensuring that the proposed new Croesyceiliog School will allow enough capacity for the pupils within the catchment whilst retaining some surplus spaces for parental choice. By reducing the school's capacity to 1,200 pupils, the proposal will limit the number of out of catchment and out of county pupils attending the school. The plan notes that this will also help to reduce the number of surplus places within the local authority as more pupils will attend their actual catchment school. This forms part of the local authority's broader plan to ensure that there is the right number of school places in the right places.

The proposer has identified appropriately the disadvantages of the current proposal, which focus on the impact of the reduction in the capacity of Croesyceiliog on the staff currently employed at the school and the impact on out of catchment and out of county pupils who may wish to attend in the future.

The proposer has suitably considered the impact of the proposal on pupil travel arrangements. It intends to continue to support home to school travel in line with the council's transport policy.

The proposer has appropriately shown how the proposal will affect surplus places across the Torfaen County Borough local authority. The proposal aims to reduce the projected number of surplus places in the 11-16 English medium secondary school sector between 2018 and 2020, based on current admission trends.

Croesyceiliog is an English medium school which teaches Welsh as a second language. There would therefore appear to be no impact on the Welsh language arising from this proposal.

The proposer has considered appropriately the outcomes of the most recent Estyn inspection reports and school's categorisation in relation to the National School Categorisation system on the quality of leadership and pupil outcomes for all the local authority's English medium secondary schools. These include Croesyceiliog, Abersychan, Cwmbran High, West Monmouth and St Alban's Roman Catholic High schools. However, the proposer has not commented on how the proposal will impact on the quality of education outcomes and provision in each of these schools.

The proposer does not outline clearly the likely impact of the proposal on standards, wellbeing and curriculum delivery. However, it is the view of the proposer that the proposal would not impact unfavourably on the current standards and provision at Croesyceiliog or the other secondary schools in the local authority. This is a reasonable assertion.

The proposer has undertaken an appropriate equality impact assessment, which considers the impact of the proposal on vulnerable groups including those with a disability. However, the proposal makes no reference to the effect of the proposal on pupils with special educational needs.

### **Local Authority response to Estyn comments**

It is an expectation that any proposals impact at least equally if not better on the standards of provision and education currently provided. It is therefore noted that, in Estyn's opinion, "the proposal is likely to at least maintain the current standards of education in the area".

The impact of the proposal is not expected to affect pupils with special educational needs. This means that for ages 11 – 16, children's needs will continue to be met in mainstream settings or at schools with a specialist resource base provision (Abersychan and Cwmbran High Schools). Crownbridge School will continue to provide specialist provision for those pupils with specific learning needs (aged 3 – 19).

## **5. CONSULTATION WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

The Head teachers of Croesyceiliog School and its five "partner"/feeder primary schools were contacted at the start of the consultation period (Friday 14<sup>th</sup> October 2016) and invited to carry out consultation with their respective school councils and pupils.

A reminder to these schools was sent on Monday 14<sup>th</sup> November 2016 in relation to this particular aspect of the consultation process.

Attached at appendix 3 of this report are the outcomes of the consultation with those children and young people who responded to the consultation, the issues from which appear in the table starting on page 4.

## Appendix 1 - Distribution List for the Consultation Document and Consultation Report

- The Governing body of each school maintained by Torfaen LA
- The Headteacher of each school maintained by Torfaen LA
- The School Council of each school maintained by Torfaen LA
- The Diocesan Director of Education of the Roman Catholic Church
- The Diocesan Director of Education of the Church in Wales
- The Board of Mission of the Church in Wales
- Awdurdod Cynwysterau, Cwricwlwm ac Asesu Cymru (the Qualifications, Curriculum and Assessment Authority for Wales)
- The Welsh Joint Education Committee
- The Welsh Language Commissioner
- The Higher Education Funding Council for Wales
- Welsh Government (Welsh Ministers)
- ESTYN
- Pan - Gwent Chief Education Officers (Caerphilly, Newport, Monmouthshire, Blaenau Gwent, to distribute to schools in their areas as appropriate)
- The Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership
- Children & Young People's Partnership
- Coleg Gwent
- The Careers Service
- Torfaen Association of school Governors
- The Parent Teacher Association of Wales
- The Welsh Primary Schools Association
- The Welsh Secondary Schools Association
- Libraries; (Blaenavon, Cwmbran and Pontypool)
- Other Directorates of Torfaen County Borough Council
- Schools Library Service
- Blaenavon Community Council
- Cwmbran Community Council
- Pontypool Community Council
- Ponthir Community Council
- Henllys Community Council
- Croesyceiliog and Llanyrafon Community Council
- DCELLS (Welsh Government)
- National Council for Education and Training in Wales
- All relevant Professional Associations (NUT;NASUWT;ATL;UCAC;UNISON;GMB)
- Local AM – Lynne Neagle
- Local MP – Nick Thomas-Symonds
- AMs and MPs for other authorities in Pan-Gwent area
- All Elected Members of Torfaen County Borough Council
- Parents/Carers of all pupils affected by proposals
- RhAG (Parents for Welsh Medium Education)
- Registered Private/Voluntary Early Years Settings/Providers in Torfaen
- Torfaen Voluntary Alliance
- Communities First Partnership Board
- CYDAG (Cwmdeithas Ysgolion Dros Addysg Gymraeg)
- Mudiad Ysgolion Meithrin
- Education Achievement Service (EAS)
- The relevant Regional Transport Consortium
- The Police and Crime Commissioner for the area

Appendix 2 – Summary of responses received during the consultation period

The following have responded to the consultation:

- Five individual members of the public
- ESTYN
- Croesyceiliog Primary School pupils
- Pontnewydd Primary School Governing Body.

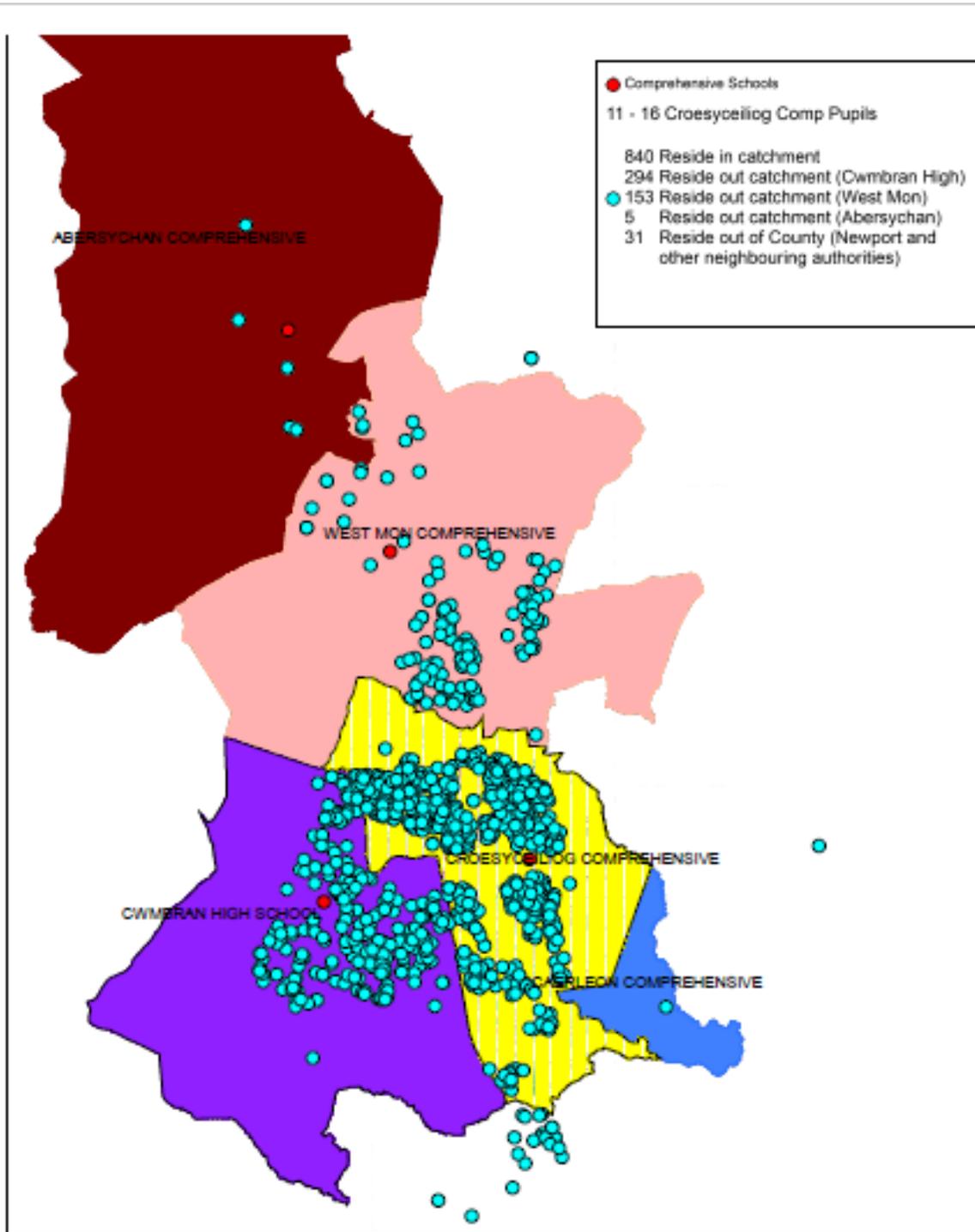
### Appendix 3 – Results of consultation with pupils

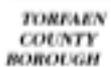
#### Croesyceiliog Primary School – 15<sup>th</sup> November 2016

Year 6 pupils were asked what they thought of the idea of reducing the intake of the Comprehensive by 30. Their comments were recorded as follows:-

- We discussed the proposed idea and there was widespread agreement that it was a bad idea; nobody in the class was in favour of this.
- Reasons cited centred on social implications that friendships that had evolved from reception would potentially be broken.
- Others noted that in catchment and out of catchment pupils are all pupils of Croesyceiliog Primary and therefore should be afforded the opportunity to go to the feeder comprehensive.
- They also felt that children should be able to go to the school of their choice regardless of where they live.
- A few understood the reasoning but only 1 pupil actually agreed with the reduction. It actually caused one or two to become quite upset at the idea of leaving their friends.
- It was because the council didn't want to spend money.

Appendix 4 – Location of Croesyceiliog School 11 – 16 Pupils (May 2016)



 		<p>Drawing Title</p> <p><b>Croesyceiliog Comprehensive Pupils</b></p>			
<p>Drawn</p> <p>O.S./</p>	<p>Date</p> <p>13/10/2016</p>	<p>Scale</p> <p>Not to Scale</p>	<p>File Ref</p>	<p>Area</p>	
<p><small>Reproduced from Ordnance Survey with permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationary Office (C) Crown copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown copyright and may lead to prosecution proceedings. LE20128 No LA 13002428 2014</small></p> <p><small>Allyddynnyd o Fapanh Ordnance Survey gyda phermitio o'r Cofreolwr o'r Menter y Stationary Office (C) Crown copyright. Dim awgrymion heb awgrymion yn hysbysu Cofreolwr y Ddeddf a gall arwain at wneud new adroddio eidd.</small></p> <p><small>RHEF Y TIR YDDEDD LA 13002428 2014</small></p>					

Alison Ward LLB  
Chief Executive