

REVIEW OF POST 16 PROVISION IN
TORFAEN

OBJECTION REPORT

MARCH 2017

Introduction

At their meeting held on 17th January 2017, Council Cabinet decided to proceed with the following proposal:

- a) To establish a 6th Form Centre for Torfaen with effect from 1st September 2019
- b) To make a regulated alteration to Croesyceiliog School, Cwmbran High School and St Alban's RC High School by ending 6th form provision with effect from 1st September 2019.

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 noon on Wednesday 25th January 2017. It should be noted that this decision was not subject to a challenge.

Following that decision, the Council then had to publish these proposals by way of a statutory notice. A Copy of the statutory notice is attached as an appendix to this objection report.

Anyone wishing to make an objection to this proposal 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 Thursday 26th January 2017 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). This amounted to some 13,500 copies of the statutory notice being delivered to all of Torfaen's English Medium Primary and Secondary schools for distribution to pupils and their parents/carers.
- 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 Thursday 23rd February 2017. In all, a total of 81 statutory objections were received as follows:

- 72 individual responses from school based staff, parents/carers, current and former students/pupils and other interested parties/members of the public.
- The Head teacher of Our Lady of the Angels RC Primary School
- The Governing Body of Our Lady of the Angels RC Primary School
- The Governing Body of Croesyceiliog (secondary) School (submission 1)
- The Governing Body of Croesyceiliog (secondary) School (submission 2 (Summary of Submissions from School Staff – 3 members))
- The Governing Body of St Alban’s RC High School
- The Head teacher of Padre Pio RC Primary School
- St Alban’s, Pontypool, Parish Advisory Committee
- NASUWT (Torfaen Association)
- St Alban’s RC High School Student Council

In addition to the statutory objections, the Council was also aware of an on-line petition (Change.org:- Oppose Torfaen’s Post 16 Proposals). Also received during the statutory objection period this petition contained 808 signatures (as of 20th February when submitted).

As of 24th February it is noted that the petition had received 964 signatures (See Appendix 2 with a screen shot of the front page of the petition to confirm this).

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

REASON FOR OBJECTION	COUNCIL RESPONSE
EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT/PERFORMANCE	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To date, Coleg Gwent has significantly lower pass rates at “A” level when compared to the schools with 6th forms. <p>There is no empirical evidence to suggest removal of school 6th forms will improve outcomes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Torfaen claim that one of the driving forces behind this proposal is to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welsh Government currently collates school and college performance data differently. <p>(Welsh Government wrote to councils, colleges and others in Autumn 2016 to advise that it is now developing a set of consistent performance measures for learner outcomes in FE and sixth forms.)</p> <p>Despite that difficulty it is possible to say that overall pass rates are broadly comparable. In 2015 the Torfaen pass rate was 99.6%. The Ebbw Vale Learning Zone pass rate was 99.6% and Cross keys was 99.2%.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Welsh Government published Learner Outcomes report shows that

<p>improve retention and stay-on rates and learner outcomes. Retention rates from Coleg Gwent are lower than from sixth forms in the county.</p>	<p>for all qualifications at Coleg Gwent, 93% of learners complete their qualification. School retention rates for those staying on at 6th form are considerably below 93%.</p>
<p>STAFFING</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The college would not offer Teacher's pay and conditions so it isn't a secure option for staff to transfer to work in the college, where they often have zero-hour contracts and limited holidays and pay scale. <p>If staff were employed by Coleg Gwent, they would not have the same terms and conditions as their current jobs offer.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has the council considered the impact on and consequences for those schools affected by this proposal, should they lose quality teachers to either the sixth form centre or 11 – 18 schools elsewhere? • With the proposed removal of sixth forms how will schools appoint specialist teachers to teach their subject when they will be needed at the Post 16 centre? How will the schools successfully deliver the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) element of the Donaldson curriculum? • There is a threat to the employment of teachers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This statement is incorrect. Coleg Gwent does not use any zero hour contracts. Teaching staff are employed on national terms and conditions that apply to all staff in Further Education (FE) colleges in Wales. The national pay scale in FE is broadly comparable to the national scale for school teachers. The annual leave for an FE Lecturer is 46 days per year plus Bank Holidays. • There is always a risk that you will lose staff when you engage in a change management process of this type. We are confident however that teachers will continue to see Torfaen schools and the new centre as attractive employment options and that we will not therefore lose quality teachers or indeed fail to attract new ones where opportunities arise. • We are not aware of any evidence, locally or elsewhere in Wales where similar changes have been introduced, that schools will have difficulty retaining staff and/or appointing new ones as a result of this proposal. • See comments above. <p>Fundamentally the proposal is being advanced because it is in the best interests of learners. It will undoubtedly impact on current staff,</p>

	<p>but it is entirely possible that some teachers will be interested in employment opportunities in the new centre, or opportunities arising as a consequence of teachers taking jobs in the new centre.</p>
STUDENT CONTINUITY/TRANSITION	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the transition arrangements for those students starting their year 12 studies in September 2018 in their current school 6th forms settings who will then be expected to study in a new building with potentially new teachers in year 13 from September 2019? Those students heading into their second year of studies should be allowed to continue at their chosen institution. • With regards to the Welsh Baccalaureate, how will that be run? Some schools offer 3 challenges in Year 12, some 2, in what order, who will monitor the controlled assessments and the submission of work via WJEC electronic platform Xerte, who will moderate, cross moderate and standardise work? • Will pupils be told that they cannot continue with their courses as Coleg Gwent doesn't offer those particular options? • Currently, 6th form learners (Croesyceiliog) receive excellent quality advice, guidance and support from staff and keep up-to-date with the UCAS application process and the features of a successful personal statement. As a result of regular 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transition is a key focus of all school re-organisation proposals. The significance of the change for those learners in the 2018 year 12 cohort is recognised, and the council, schools and Coleg Gwent will work together to ensure their education is not adversely affected. The process of aligning curriculum offer and teaching approaches will begin early if the decision to proceed is taken, and special attention will be given to supporting this cohort of learners (see also answer below). • The council will be aligning all subjects (including the Welsh Baccalaureate) and course material such that the transition will not have a detrimental effect on those pupils part way through their A-level studies. If the proposal proceeds the process of aligning subjects and course material in readiness for September 2019 is expected to begin in 2017. • See above answer. • All full-time learners will be allocated their own individual personal tutor to support them with UCAS applications and provide guidance through their studies, including comprehensive progress reviews which are captured in an electronic Individual Learning

<p>tracking, monitoring and intervention for all learners, all Year 13 students secured a Post 16 pathway. This was not the case for Coleg Gwent.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School sixth forms are a stepping-stone to university and our future. This would not be the same in a college. <p>A significant cohort of pupils could be disrupted; not least those who have already experienced change because of previous school reorganisation proposals.</p>	<p>Plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We recognise that it will be a big step to have to leave current schools where things are familiar. <p>The council has a good deal of experience with transition arrangements as a result of school reorganisation proposals. Working with Coleg Gwent and the schools we are confident we can keep disruption to a minimum and support learners through the change.</p> <p>The focus and culture of the new centre will be to develop learners' confidence to deal with new people and situations whilst managing studies in a mature and independent way, equipping them for future life. This will be particularly significant for learners who aspire to go to university.</p>
<p>PASTORAL SUPPORT/ETHOS</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the proposed 6th Form Centre there will be a lack of Faith Provision for Students aged 16 – 18 and a lack of Chaplaincy Provision which will be detrimental to the personal and spiritual development of learners. <p>Removal of the sixth form will be likely to cause disproportionate harm to St Alban's and the faith community it serves, albeit this could be eased by locating a new faith school close to the new centre.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will not receive the same level of pastoral care that they would in a school setting. The level of support and care in the secondary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coleg Gwent already provides a multi-faith service to its learners and appreciates the importance of meeting the needs of its students. It has been clear already that it would welcome the opportunity to work closely with the Diocese and St Albans school in this respect. The council will also support that process, and continue to work with the Diocese in terms of it 21st Century Schools Programme aspirations. • Coleg Gwent has a very good record of supporting learners through their transition from school. Every full-time learner will have an allocated

<p>schools is very high for all students and their families.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In a larger setting there is a real risk of students getting lost in the system or dropping out of courses. There have been recent news reports about mental health issues in teenagers and the lack of support available to them in a college environment. Will such student needs be catered for? • A sixth form in school creates and promotes a culture of high aspiration and high expectations for all learners, not just the sixth form. Many younger learners who begin secondary school do not expect to stay on at sixth form, yet see sixth form learners succeeding in school and look up to them as role models. This will be lost if the proposal proceeds. • Has the possibility of school rivalry been considered in the bringing together of several schools? Pupils could be singled out and/or bullied. Will the proposed centre have policies in place to combat any 	<p>Personal Tutor to help them with the transition to the new centre and support them throughout their time there. In addition, a Head of Learner Services will oversee all pastoral support and will be able to signpost to specialist support where necessary. The tutorial programme will consist of regular 1:1 progress reviews and a programme of extra-curricular activities designed to develop wider skills.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal Tutors will take a special interest in learners' academic progress and their general well-being. Tutors will be led in this by the Director of Learner Services and Support who is responsible for post 16, and by the student services leader. Learners will be encouraged to talk to their tutors, student services or campus Head of Learner Services about issues as they arise so that they can help to sort them out at an early stage. In addition there will be a wide range of support available for specific skills development. • The benefits of mentoring and 'buddying' are recognised and could continue in 11-16 schools, as they do in existing 11-16 schools in the county borough and more widely. • Coleg Gwent operate a student charter and expects that students treat all staff and fellow students with respect and courtesy at all times.
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<p>potential behaviour issues of this nature?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools with sixth forms allow students to study in a familiar environment surrounded by teachers and students they know. Sixth forms are smaller and offer more structure and support than colleges and hence a more academic environment for study. • The proposed capacity is too large, and represents a daunting prospect for 16 year olds used to an environment of familiar, fewer and younger children. 	<p>The student charter is designed to ensure that the college can provide students with the best opportunity to succeed in an environment that is safe, healthy and most of all enjoyable. The charter also explains what students can expect from staff.</p> <p>Coleg Gwent also has a policy of Promoting Positive Behaviour, based on the establishment of high expectations and respect for all.</p> <p>Coleg Gwent is committed to equal treatment of all regardless of sex, gender, race or faith. Racist, sexist, disablist, homophobic or other abusive language will not be tolerated and will be dealt with in accordance with Coleg Gwent's disciplinary procedures.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taking responsibility for their own learning is an important part of being a successful post 16 student. Students are expected to make every effort to work hard and complete all work required to the best of their ability and, within agreed deadlines. This would include making full use of study time on site and using the study areas and IT resources appropriately. There are also a range of on-line support materials available to extend and support learning outside the classroom. • Whilst the age range of the centre will not be as wide as current arrangements, the majority of students already attend schools of 1000+ pupils. It will provide the opportunity to keep existing friendship groups and to develop new ones with learners of a similar age.
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sixth form students are an integral and valued part of the school community. A sixth form gives a visibility to further education raising aspirations in a way that college, a separate entity, would not. • A college environment is not appropriate for all 16 – 18 year olds. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 11 – 16 schools can also achieve excellent progression rates to further education, and the links that will need to grow between the new centre and other schools/providers in the region will be key to achieving that. • Learners who enrol at the new centre can expect to be well supported. In both of the tertiary partnerships that involve Coleg Gwent, the level of learner satisfaction is very high and outcomes are good. This is helped in part by the transition process from school is worked on jointly and is focussed on the needs of the young person.
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INVESTMENT

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The investment should be put towards improvement of existing school premises. • The proposals are purely for financial reasons; this is not about improving education for young people in Torfaen. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This was considered as part of the options appraisal process but was discounted, not least because it would not address the issues mentioned below. • The proposals are both educationally and financially/economically driven. <p>Bringing the smaller 6th forms together, which is at the heart of this proposal, will improve overall viability, protect future provision for learners in a way the current set up cannot and increase provision for those who to date have not engaged as fully with Post 16 education as the council would like to see.</p> <p>Financially/economically, in recent years, the LA has experienced year on year grant funding reductions and these have presented a serious challenge to schools to maintain provision. The financial economies and efficiencies gained through bringing provision into a single</p>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children in the north of the county will yet again be disadvantaged and discriminated against because they live in a socio economically deprived area. Unsurprisingly all funding is spent in the south of the borough. 	<p>setting will remove unnecessary duplication and spend associated with small class sizes.</p> <p>In one sense the new model of delivery will cost just as much to run because the entirety of the grant will continue to support delivery. However, the proposal optimises the use of that money, which is better for learners.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The 21st Century Schools Programme (of which the proposed sixth form centre is a part) is a long term strategic plan that will see investment across the whole of the county borough. <p>There has been significant investment in the north of the borough in recent years including, but not limited to: £9,000,000 at Abersychan and West Monmouth Schools; £13,000,000 at Ysgol Gyfun Gwynllyw; £15,000,000 at Blaenavon Heritage Primary; c£3,000,000 at Padre Pio RC Primary School; and with a significant programme of investment currently underway at Garnteg and Cwmffrwdor Primary schools.</p>
CHOICE	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is currently a vast choice of 'A' levels and vocational studies within Torfaen and the addition of the 6th Form Centre will not bring any educational value to the students of Torfaen. What subjects will students be able to study at the 6th Form Centre? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A wide range will be on offer and this will be more sustainable than small class offerings in current provision. <p>Neither the schools nor the council can predict what the grant position will be in 2019 and, as a consequence, what subjects could be on offer in either delivery model (school based or 6th form centre). What we can say is that the discussions we have had to date with Coleg Gwent, and which will feature</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A college may be the educational environment of choice for many students but likewise, a school is the educational establishment of choice for many other students. The removal of school based 6th form will remove that choice. • When 6th forms were removed from West Monmouth School, there were great plans for Pontypool College. Years later, the college could no longer accommodate “A” levels and pupils were forced to travel further afield to Cross Keys. Can you guarantee this will not happen again? 	<p>in future transition discussions with them and schools, have focussed on the subjects which are considered important by universities (the so called facilitating subjects). This does not mean that other subjects will not be on offer, but whichever delivery model goes forward will increasingly need to focus on those subjects which give learners the best possible chance to progress into higher education, training or employment, especially if the funding available for Post 16 education continues to shrink.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proposal will see the choice of English Medium school based 6th forms removed, but it is necessary to ensure that learners are afforded the best possible curriculum offer going forward given the past, present and anticipated funding environment. • The relationship between the council and the college will be critical, and the arrangement will be similar to the one established in Blaenau Gwent when its school based 6th forms closed and were replaced by the Learning Zone also operated by Coleg Gwent. That partnership model has since been used elsewhere in Wales because it offers an appropriate level of involvement, oversight and scrutiny of the operation of the 6th form provision whilst respecting that colleges have their own governance structures. <p>Welsh Government will also remain a critical partner going forward. As it provides the grant through which post 16 delivery is funded, it will arguably hold the most significant influence over future provision.</p>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Torfaen is proposing a post 16 model that is not operating or indeed proposed by neighbouring authorities. The retention of successfully performing sixth forms will almost certainly lead to Torfaen pupils travelling outside Torfaen which has apparently not been factored into the business case for closing the sixth forms. • The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child was ratified by the UK in 1991. Article 14 (freedom of thought, conscience and religion) of the Convention states that children have the right to think and believe what they want and to practise their religion. Furthermore, it states that the Convention respects the rights and duties of parents in providing religious and moral guidance for their children. It is my view that your proposals contravene this article by removing parental choice. • Will there be the same choice and opportunities at the proposed centre for extracurricular activity such as for example, music, drama and productions? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The model is being used elsewhere, i.e. Blaenau Gwent and Merthyr, and the impact in both cases has been an increase in post 16 participation and outcomes. The council recognise that some learners may choose to go elsewhere for their post 16 education. However it does not expect any significant drift, and the intention overall is to increase numbers as a result of improved 'stay on' rates and reduced 'drop out' rates. • The council does not consider that the proposal contravenes the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. • Coleg Gwent has a specific enrichment programme (CGExtra) which will be available to all learners.
COSTS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why does the council actually want this college to go ahead? Will it actually save much money given the build costs and redundancy payments the council will need to fund? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Saving money is not at the core of this proposal – but making it stretch further is. The objectives of this proposal are to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • improve the effectiveness and outcomes of service to all learners

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- Torfaen will hand responsibility for Post 16 education to Coleg Gwent; They will not be accountable at all for the education of Torfaen students Post 16, however they and their residents will be paying 50% of the cost

- The closure of St Alban's 6th Form will have an impact on the whole school.

- provide economies and efficiencies in the provision of the service
- provide new and enhanced opportunities to all learners
- improve learner experience and attractiveness to all learners.

The entirety of the post 16 grant will continue to be used for post 16 delivery, but it will stretch further because the proposed delivery model will be more cost efficient. That is particularly important in an environment where the amount of grant has been shrinking and is likely to do so again in the future.

The £20,000,000 investment in a new centre is part of the council's overall 21st Century School Programme and will benefit from a 50% grant contribution from Welsh Government.

- The council will finance the centre jointly with Welsh Government. The council will also be responsible for the design and build the centre, which on completion will be leased to Coleg Gwent to run on behalf of the council through a partnership agreement between the two organisations which will ensure the best possible scope and standard of provision for learners in the county borough. Ultimately Torfaen and Coleg Gwent are both held accountable for any provision they make by Estyn, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education & Training in Wales, and Welsh Government.
- The council provides support to the school under various financial,

	<p>human resources and related service level agreements and will support the school through the change management process. The council and school also work closely to financially plan the school's budget over the medium-term, and where schools follow council advice and guidance the costs of redundancy and early retirement will be met by the council.</p>
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THE CONSULTATION PROCESS

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The consultation process was not meaningful, as the outcome was perceived by stakeholders as a forgone conclusion. The plan is for the Centre to be placed near the Morrison Supermarket in Cwmbran. When was it planned to consult with residents in the area, particularly Southville and Northville who already have problems with amongst other things parking. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The consultation process conformed to the requirements of the School Organisation Code 2013, and was a genuine attempt to establish views and suggestions for alternatives to resolve the issues we are seeking to address. <p>All the comments made during the consultation process were made available to Elected Members before decisions were made to proceed with the proposal.</p> <p>Where objections have now been received they have been logged and included in this Objection Report that will be considered by the council's cabinet committee.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The consultation period ran for 6 weeks in November/December 2016 and was undertaken with prescribed consultees contained within the School Organisation Code 2013. The consultation process was promoted on line, via the Torfaen Council website and social media channels and received coverage in the local press. <p>In addition, some 13,500 letters were delivered to all of Torfaen's English Medium Primary and Secondary</p>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The United Nations Convention on the rights of children (Article 12) requires the council to seek the views of children and young people most affected by these proposals. Has this been done? 	<p>Schools for distribution to pupils and their parents/carers advising of the availability of the consultation document.</p> <p>If the proposal proceeds further consultation will be necessary as part of the planning application process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yes. All English medium schools, via their school councils were invited to contribute to the process. <p>The support of the council’s Strategic Services Unit was also offered, with the Lead Engagement Officer and Participation & Research Officer making themselves available to help facilitate arrangements with individual school councils.</p> <p>Where schools contributed, their comments were provided in full in the consultation report.</p>
LOCATION/ACCESS/TRANSPORT	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The lack of provision for Key Stage 5 is solely an issue for pupils in the north of the borough, yet the proposed site for the centre is in the south in an already congested area of Cwmbran. There is insufficient parking which will only add to these problems including residents and those using the shopping centre. The described catchment area for the proposed centre and its location means it will require students to travel significantly more miles to complete their education. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigations are already underway to identify highway improvements that would be necessary, or could in any event be introduced, if the site in Cwmbran is developed. This work is part of the master planning relating to the potential development of the whole site and its relationship to the main shopping centre. Some students will inevitably have to travel further should the proposal proceed (particularly those in the north of the borough who attend St Alban’s RC High School). For others, the proposed centre is significantly closer than the current arrangements (Coleg Gwent, Cross Keys Campus), and is supported by direct bus services to the centre of Cwmbran.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proposed location is close to public transport hubs (bus and train) which are likely to attract increased opportunities for anti-social/undesirable behaviour and/or exploitive persons attracted to an accessible large concentration of potential new customers. The security measures to counter these would need to be significant. • The proposed location is next to a major distraction from academic activities, which will probably trigger a rise in pupils absenting themselves from studies. It is likely to lead to an increase in pupils in the town centre, before, during and after lessons. • The Post 16 provision at St Alban's is perfectly geographically situated centrally in the borough, for ease of access for all Torfaen pupils. • The Learner Travel Measure (Wales) policy places a statutory obligation on Local Authorities to provide transport for learners between the ages of 5-16 years old. Students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The council and Coleg Gwent take their responsibilities to keep learners safe very seriously. It is not expected that the proposed siting of the new centre will introduce significant additional risks, but it is an issue that will require ongoing attention just as it does at all other educational sites in the county borough. <p>Coleg Gwent operate an identity card scheme which means access to its buildings are restricted to card holders, and a similar system is being proposed for the new centre.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance at registration and lessons will be compulsory. Coleg Gwent will expect students to be punctual at all times. Full details of the absence procedure will be conveyed to learners as part of the enrolment process. <p>It is also recognised that many post 16 students undertake part time paid employment, however the expectation would be that this should not be taken on during the timetabled day and recommend this should not exceed 10 hours per week in term time.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whilst Pontypool is geographically central to Torfaen, it is not central to the pupil population. Cwmbran has been selected because it is central to the pupil population and has very good public transport links to all parts of the county borough and further afield. • Free transport is currently provided if a student lives more than 3 miles from the school or college campus if their parents/carers (or students themselves) are in receipt of Income
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<p>between the ages of 16-18 years old are not entitled to financial assistance under the current policy however they must remain in education until they reach 18 years old. Please confirm whether there are any plans to remove the student travel grant currently available to post 16 students?</p>	<p>support/Income Based Jobseekers Allowance or who qualify under regulations governing child tax credits. Those 16 – 18 aged students who live the required distance but whose parents/carers (or themselves) are not in receipt of the above mentioned benefits will be provided with an annual grant (currently £146) towards the cost of transport.</p> <p>There is no legal requirement to provide transport to Post 16 aged pupils/students, and as a discretionary provision it is subject to regular review. However, there are no plans at this point in time to change current policy.</p>
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COMMUNITY IMPACT

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The status of a Sixth form and the work they carry out in the community enhances the reputation of their school. Schools cultivate a strong sense of belonging and a strong extra-curricular programme. Will this role be diminished in a college setting? • The closure of St Alban's 6th form will have a detrimental impact on the town of Pontypool, which TCBC have adequately failed to assess, if at all. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We do not believe it will be diminished. All full-time learners will participate in a structured programme of Skills Activities. These will include specific community based/voluntary activities and form part of an accredited programme that learners work towards. Learners will be encouraged and supported to attend periods of work experience with local employers to improve their employability prospects and build their confidence. • It is reasonable to expect there may be an impact on the local economy. The possible extent of that impact is not easily quantifiable, but in this instance it is considered secondary to the need to address the significant issues we face with post 16 education in Torfaen. Failure to change our approach to delivering post 16 education could have a more significant impact in the longer term on the economic wellbeing of
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	Torfaen and the businesses that operate within it.
ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is noted that the Welsh medium School will retain its 6th form but no consideration to the faith requirements of St Alban’s RC High School students. Does this not fuel discrimination? • Has the council considered alternative options such as in Newport where a collaborative model has been adopted in recent years to enable schools to retain their sixth form status whilst making some necessary savings for the council? A wider range of courses are available where students can attend courses in other collaboration schools, which in turn retains the experience and expertise of the staff in those schools without the need for redundancies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proposal does not extend to Welsh medium provision because it would not be possible to re-create the immersion considered necessary to support use of the welsh language in a predominantly English speaking environment. The challenge of providing faith support is considered achievable (See earlier section on “Pastoral Support/Ethos”). • This formed part of an option (to maintain the status quo i.e. a mix of 11 -16 and 11 – 18 schools and an FE college) that was considered but was dismissed, because: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the inequality in provision across Torfaen would continue; • small 6th forms are unable to offer all subjects due to lack of student numbers; • small 6th forms are uneconomical to run. <p>The opportunity to develop cross-site delivery has existed for a long time, together with the increasing incentive to do so as a means of managing the budgetary pressures. It has not happened in any significant way. Even if it were to do so now (about which there is considerable doubt), the economies and efficiencies are not likely to be anywhere near as great as the single centre approach being proposed.</p> <p>Other options considered but ultimately discounted were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retaining and extending 6th Form provision for academic curriculum

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The future of education in Torfaen will be subject to more reorganisation when the unitary authorities in the area are amalgamated and any move now will lead to further change and expense in a few years' time. 	<p>in schools and keeping vocational curriculum at FE College.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Combining all academic and vocational offerings on a single site. The future shape of reorganisation of local government is still uncertain but if we do not act now to secure a sustainable model of post 16 education in the county borough learners will end up being significantly disadvantaged.
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ADDITIONAL LEARNING NEEDS/SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Autistic pupils will experience upset and disruption if they have to move; Will Dyslexic pupils get the same support that they currently receive? 	<p>Provision for students with any additional need will be catered for, under the remit of the Equalities Act 2000 and the existing and future Additional Learning Need (ALN) Code of Practice.</p> <p>Coleg Gwent already supports pupils in line with its statutory responsibilities, and will provide a broad curriculum and increased opportunities for all pupils with additional needs.</p> <p>Each student that discloses an additional learning difficulty on application will have the opportunity to discuss their needs with a member of staff and there will be plenty of opportunities to engage in visits and activities that aid transition.</p> <p>Coleg Gwent believe that the support provided within the adult environment offers most, if not all, ALN students with excellent opportunities to grow and to prepare for work and life.</p> <p>All local authorities will have new statutory duties under the proposed</p>
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	<p>ALN Bill which will mean that pupils are to be supported from 0-25 years. Pupils will therefore have access to specialist provision through Coleg Gwent.</p>
<p>HOUSING</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are several current housing projects being completed in Cwmbran, along with a number of future projects. Do these proposals take this into account or will it result in larger classes or poor teaching environments (porta cabins) to accommodate additional students. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The council has been aware of a number of housing developments in Cwmbran both current and planned for a number of years and despite some “false starts” have been forecasting numbers and building them into pupil projections. In terms of projected numbers the council use Supplementary Planning Guidance to calculate potential pupils. <p>Clearly we will not know the age of the children or, if they are “new” children moving into Torfaen or existing children already on roll at a school or college (who may not want to move), or want Welsh Medium or faith based education rather than English medium.</p> <p>Nevertheless we are confident that the proposed capacity of the new centre will meet the needs of Torfaen as a whole for the foreseeable future without the need for additional accommodation or overcrowding of classrooms.</p>

Appendix 1 – Statutory notice in relation to this proposal

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

Notice is given in accordance with section 42 of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and the School Organisation Code that Torfaen County Borough Council, having consulted such persons as required, proposes to make a regulated alteration to Croesyceiliog School, Woodland Road, Croesyceiliog, Cwmbran, Torfaen NP44 2YB, Cwmbran High School, Ty Gwyn Way, Fairwater, Cwmbran, Torfaen NP44 4YZ and St Alban's RC High School, The Park, Pontypool, Torfaen, NP4 6XG so that the age range of the pupils they can admit is amended to 11 – 16 years and that the 6th form provision is removed.

It is further proposed that the 6th form provision previously accommodated at the above mentioned schools shall transfer to a 6th Form Centre to serve the whole of Torfaen. The new provision will be able to accommodate up to 1000 post-16 students and the proposed location is in Cwmbran town centre on a site adjacent to the Morrison Store.

Croesyceiliog School and Cwmbran High School are currently maintained by Torfaen County Borough Council. St Alban's RC High School is a Voluntary Aided School.

Torfaen County Borough Council undertook a period of consultation before deciding to publish these proposals. 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 1st September 2019

The proposed capacity for Croesyceiliog School after these proposals are implemented is 1200 pupil places. The proposal in relation to Croesyceiliog is subject to a separate statutory notice (further information can be found on the Torfaen council website via the above link). From September 2018 the proposed admission number for the school will be 240 for pupils aged 11 (Year 7).

For Cwmbran High School the proposed capacity is approximately 1300 pupil places (based on the existing building and its accommodation). The capacity for St Alban's RC High School is yet to be determined and may be subject to further proposals by the Diocese and Governing Body, but based on the current admission number (145) would be at least 725.

The admission numbers for year 7 and each year group up to and including Year 11 in the first school year in which the proposals have been implemented will be:-

240 (8 form entry) at Croesyceiliog School

260 (8/9 form entry) at Cwmbran High School

145 (5 form entry) at St Alban's RC High School

Pupils/students will be provided with transport in accordance with the council's Transport Policy. At present, the council provides free transport for 11 – 16 aged pupils who attend their relevant secondary school if they reside more than 3 miles walking distance to that school. The relevant school is the catchment school or the nearest school. This distance criterion is also applied to transport provision for post – 16 students at present.

Within a period of 28 days of the date on which these proposals are published, that is to say by Thursday 23rd February 2017 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: secondaryreview@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.

The local authority will submit the proposals to Welsh Ministers for approval together with any other proposals that it considers are linked to these proposals.

Signed: Alison Ward, Chief Executive Officer

For the Torfaen County Borough Council

Date: Thursday 26th January 2017

Explanatory Note

This statutory notice is the outcome of discussions to bring forward proposals to change the way that post 16 education is delivered in Torfaen. The proposals arise from the Authority's 21st Century Schools Programme. This is a strategic plan to create a generation of 21st Century Schools across the Borough.

Consultation in relation to this proposal was held during November and December 2016.

This proposal will see Torfaen County Borough Council build a purpose built 6th form centre in Cwmbran which will open in September 2019 and cost £20M. It will be run by Coleg Gwent on behalf of the council through a partnership agreement between the two organisations which will ensure the best possible scope and standard of provision for learners in the county borough.

The 6th form centre will replace English Medium school 6th forms and benefit post 16 learners from across the county borough, including those with additional learning needs. It will deliver a mix of A & AS level courses and the Welsh Bacallaureate along with a range of complementary Level 2 & 3 qualifications.

Welsh medium post 16 provision would continue at Ysgol Gyfun Gwynllyw.

The main driving forces behind these proposals are:

- the need to improve retention and stay - on rates and learner outcomes
- the need to transform post 16 education in line with Welsh Government's vision
- the need to replace 6th forms with a more efficient and sustainable delivery mode
- Linkages with other projects within the council's 21st Century Schools Programme, most notably the provision of a new school for Croesyceiliog School costing £30M.

Further information on these and other school reorganisation proposals can be found here:

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

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

END OF NOTICE

Appendix 2 – CHANGE.ORG:- OPPOSE TORFAEN’S POST 16 PROPOSALS

Petitioning [Chief Executive Alison Ward](#) and [7 others](#)

Oppose Torfaen's Post-16 Proposals

 **Sophie Toovey** Abersychan, United Kingdom



Torfaen want to close down the sixth forms and replace them with a new-build £20m college based in Cwmbran. This is unfair given the academic success of the sixth forms, unnecessarily disruptive when results are so good already, and will potentially lead to the loss of 30-40 jobs and disadvantage students living in the north of the borough. Sixth forms make schools better;

Sign this petition

964 supporters

36 needed to reach 1,000