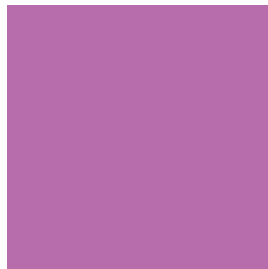
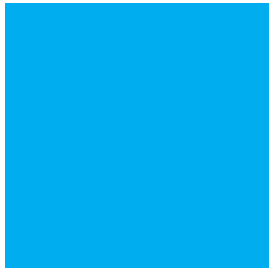


**21ST CENTURY SCHOOLS
EDUCATION AND INCLUSION SERVICES
RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**



OUTLINE BUSINESS CASE (OBC)

YSGOL GYFUN CWM RHONDDA



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Foreword

I am pleased to submit to Welsh Government (WG) this Outline Business Case (OBC) that relates to a new Welsh medium secondary school for Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhondda in Rhondda Cynon Taf (RCT).

In Rhondda Cynon Taf, improving education has been a number one priority and, as such, the vision of **Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council's (RCTCBC's) Directorate of Education and Inclusion Services Education Strategic Plan, for the years 2022 to 2025**, is to:

'Inspire and support excellent leadership and professional practice, so that all pupils in Rhondda Cynon Taf make good progress and become ambitious, capable, creative, and ethically informed.'

This vision will be achieved through the delivery of the following five strategic priorities:

1. Developing a highly skilled educational workforce and excellent leadership at all levels.
2. Supporting educational settings to deliver a transformational curriculum, high quality teaching and learning and improved outcomes for all.
3. Ensuring equity and support for vulnerable pupils and their families.
4. Enhancing the wellbeing of our pupils and the workforce.
5. Delivering 21st Century learning environments and innovative services for our pupils and communities.

These strategic priorities can only be achieved if the schools in Rhondda Cynon Taf are vibrant, self-improving, well-governed and effectively led communities of good practice, focusing not on institutions but on meeting the needs and aspirations of all pupils through high quality learning, recognising the importance of the teacher and other school staff. They are reflective of RCTCBC's wider priorities and are set within the context of both local and national recovery and reform.

Building on the success of RCTCBC's Band A and Band B 21st Century Schools and Education Programme, this project will make a vital contribution towards delivering the priorities. It forms an integral part of RCTCBC's Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme, delivering high standard education in modern, well-managed, nurturing learning facilities, ensuring the best possible breadth and depth of curriculum for all pupils, and in turn, delivering improved outcomes.

The children and young people of Rhondda Cynon Taf deserve nothing less than an education that is fit for the 21st Century.

Paul Mee
Chief Executive, RCTCBC

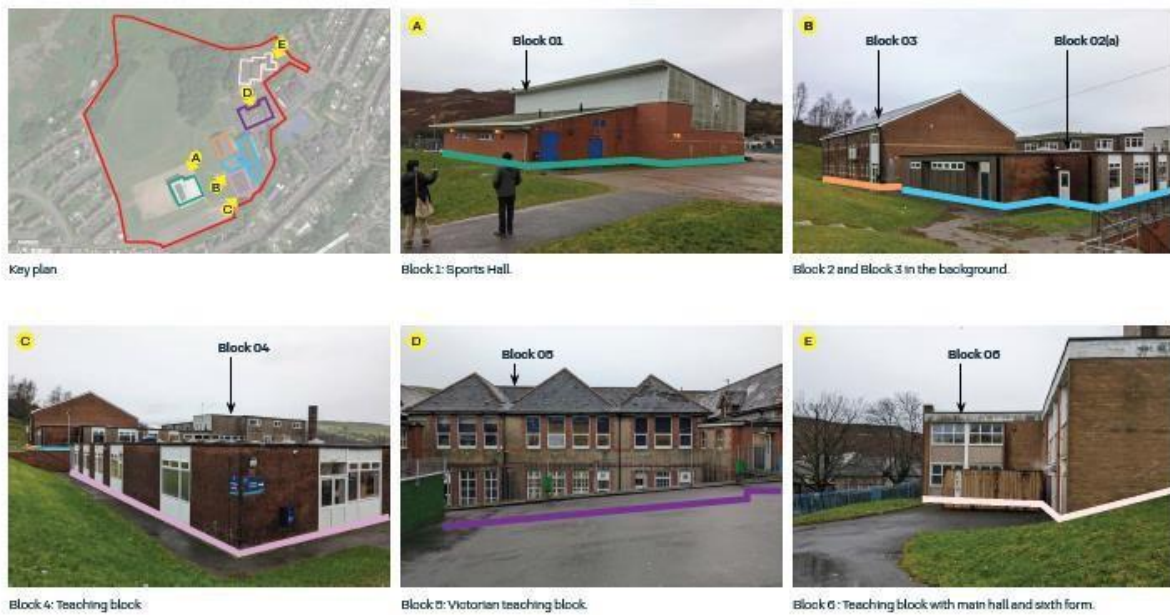
1. Executive Summary

This Outline Business Case (OBC) focuses on transforming Welsh medium secondary education in the Rhondda. The proposal focuses on the development of new teaching facilities for 750 pupils (ages 11-16) and 150 sixth form pupils, accumulating to 900 pupils for Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhondda (YGCR). The proposal for the new school at SOC stage remains valid and unchanged.

Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhondda is in the village of Cymmer, southwest of Porth, Rhondda Cynon Taf. A Welsh medium secondary school, who's vision is "Dyheu. Dysg. Daioni." / "Aspiration. Learning. Wellness."

The existing school site is made up of seven buildings varying in construction methods, across several level changes.

- **Block 01** – New Sports Block
- **Block 02** – Teaching block, split over four levels (possibly CLASP construction built circa 1960/70)
- **Block 03** – New three storey teaching block
- **Block 04** – Single storey specialist teaching block (possibly CLASP construction built circa 1960/70)
- **Block 05** – Victorian teaching block
- **Block 06** – Teaching block with main hall and sixth form
- **Block 07** – Former Caretaker's house



There are currently 625 pupils on roll, 559 aged 11-16 and 66 sixth form pupils aged 17-19 (PLASC 2025)

It is proposed that a new school will be built on the existing school site, and it will open during the 2030 academic year.

Accommodation will consist of:

- Modern, flexible learning environments for all pupils, a main hall, dining area, sports hall, and specialist teaching and learning areas to cater for the needs of all pupils.
- Dedicated internal and external facilities within the school boundary that the local community will be able to safely use, both during and after the school day.
- Enhanced outdoor spaces to support the full range of curriculum activities.
- Improved traffic management systems including on-site pupil bus drop off, and on-site staff and visitor parking.

The estimated capital cost is £77.5 million.

The new school for Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhondda will:

- Deliver a noteworthy improvement in the quality of the educational provision, having a significant positive impact upon the educational performance of the pupils and staff morale.
- Be built to net zero carbon in operation and meet embodied carbon targets, with a BREEAM rating of 'Excellent'.
- Be built in accordance with current requirements of planning and building control legislation and will be fully accessible and compliant with the Equality Act 2010.
- Deliver a fully accessible and fully integrated community school. Dedicated facilities will be designed within the site so that the local community will be able to safely use the facilities, both during and after the school day.
- Deliver external areas that would allow pupils and staff to experience a greater breadth of teaching and learning experiences, in line with the Curriculum for Wales.
- Provide sustainable and attractive Welsh Medium education opportunities to support **Welsh Government's Cymraeg 2050: A Million Welsh Speakers** and **RCTCBC's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP)**.

2. Strategic Case

The Strategic Outline Case

The SOC was submitted on 1st May 2025, with approval to proceed to OBC received on 30th July 2025. The purpose of the Strategic Case is to assess the strategic fit of the proposal from a local, regional, and national perspective and to set out the case for change. This OBC notes any changes since the submission of the Strategic Outline Programme (SOP) and Strategic Outline Case (SOC), whilst reflecting on comments highlighted with the addendum response.

Strategic Objectives

All current and relevant local policies, and strategies have been taken into consideration. RCTCBC's strategic objectives for this project, as outlined at SOC stage, remain valid and continue to align with our key strategies, as follows:

- **RCTCBC's Corporate Plan 2024-2030, 'Working with our Communities'** which sets out the following four wellbeing objectives:

- **People and Communities** – Supporting and empowering our residents and communities to live safe, healthy, and fulfilling lives.
- **Work and Business** – Helping to strengthen and grow our economy.
- **Nature and the Environment** – A green and clean RCT that improves and protects our environment and nature.
- **Culture, Heritage, and Welsh Language** – Recognising and celebrating our past, present and future.

The Corporate Plan sets out a vision for Rhondda Cynon Taf where ***‘All people, communities, and businesses can grow and live in a healthy, green, safe, vibrant, and inclusive County Borough where they can achieve their full potential in all aspects of their lives and work, both now and in the future’.***

School modernisation is a key priority for RCTCBC, and an integral part of the Council’s strategies, including:

- **RCTCBC’s Think Climate, Making RCT Carbon Neutral by 2030**, for the years 2022 to 2025.
- **RCTCBC’s Invest Programme**, which also includes investment in priority areas of Leisure, Play Areas, Highways and Transport Infrastructure, Housing Towns and Recycling.
- **RCTCBC’s Directorate of Education and Inclusion Services Education Strategic Plan for 2022 to 2025.**
- **RCTCBC’S Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) for 2022 to 2032.**

This project builds on the success of RCTCBC’s Band A and Band B 21st Century Schools and Education Programme. It forms an integral part of RCTCBC’s Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme, delivering high standard education in modern, well-managed, nurturing learning facilities, ensuring the best possible breadth and depth of curriculum for all pupils, and in turn, delivering improved outcomes.

Wider Context

All current and relevant national and regional policies, and strategies have been taken into consideration. RCTCBC’s strategic objectives for this project, as outlined at SOC stage, remain valid and continue to align with all current and relevant national and regional policies, and strategies, as follows:

- **Welsh Government’s Programme for Government: 2021 to 2026.**
- **Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.**
- **Welsh Government’s Net Zero Carbon Strategic Plan: 2022.**
- **Cymraeg 2050: A Million Welsh Speakers.**
- **Community Focused Schools in Wales.**
- **Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act 2021.**
- **Welsh Government’s Our National Mission: High Standards and Aspirations for All.**
- **Medr – Tertiary Education and Research (Wales) Act 2022.**
- **Welsh Government’s Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme.**

- **Central South Consortium Joint Education Service (CSCJES) Business Plan: Empowering Schools to Improve Outcomes for All Learners, for the years 2022 to 2025.**
- **Future Wales: The National Plan 2040**

Education: Case for Change

Investment Objectives

To enable the best use of funds available, RCTCBC has agreed key Investment Objectives (IOs) that meet the current and relevant national, regional, and local legislation, policies, and strategies and provide the best opportunity to deliver more value to individuals, communities, businesses, and the wider economy to support education and training.

The IO's for this project remain unchanged from the submission of the SOC. The IOs are:

- **Supporting Delivery of the Curriculum for Wales**
- **Inclusion and Equality**
- **Enhancing the Wellbeing of our Pupils and Workforce**
- **Sustainable Facilities Fit for the 21st Century**

The agreed options for this project were measured against the Council's IOs and Critical Success Factors (CSFs) to determine the most suitable option to progress. The agreed list of options and CSFs for this project are summarised in the Economic Case.

Benefits

The outcomes and benefits which were highlighted in the SOC have been revisited and remain valid and unchanged. A Qualitative Benefits Table can be seen at ***Appendix A – Qualitative Benefits Table.***

Risks

A Risk Assessment Ranking of Shortlisted Options can be seen at ***Appendix B – Risk Assessment Ranking.*** A Risk Assessment of the Preferred Option can be seen at ***Appendix C – Risk Assessment Preferred Option.***

Constraints

The major constraint is managing expectations within the funding limit, given that the construction industry is experiencing unprecedented volatility in costs, supply shortages and increased project durations.

Dependencies

This project builds on the success of RCTCBC's and Welsh Government's Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme, delivering high standard education in modern, well-managed, nurturing learning facilities, ensuring the best possible breadth and depth of curriculum for all pupils, and in turn, delivering improved outcomes.

The key stakeholder's dependent on the success of this project includes, but are not limited to:

- Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhondda
- RCTCBC
- Welsh Government
- Local community groups

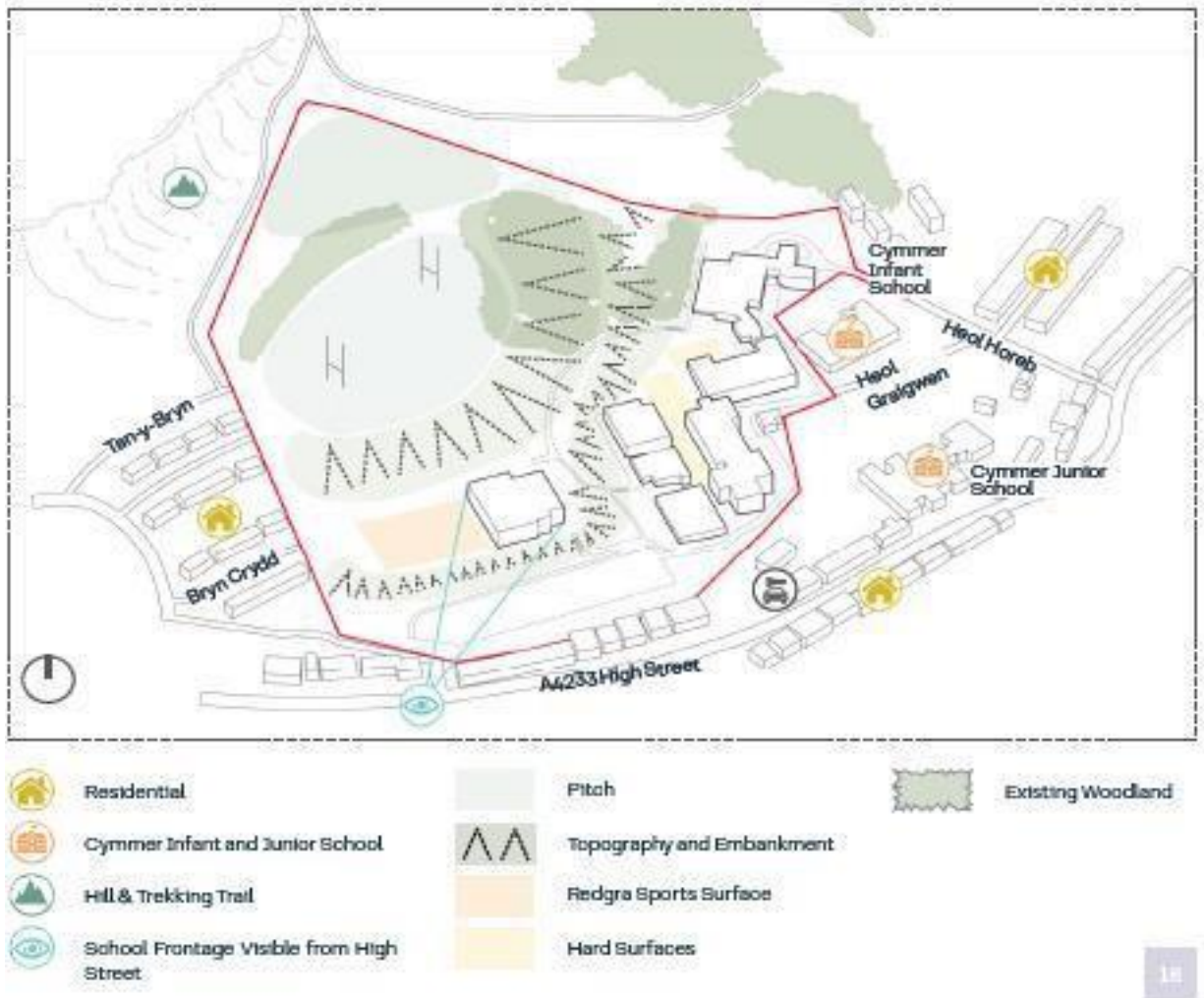
Demographics/School Information

Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhondda is a Welsh medium secondary school, located in Cymmer, Porth.

The school is made up of seven buildings varying in construction methods, across several level changes.

The existing school site is bordered by residential streets, and vegetation to the north. Cymmer Primary School is adjacent to the northeast and southeast side boundaries.

The below image shows the existing overview of the school site.



To note, the above drawing names Cymmer Infants and Cymmer Juniors as separate schools. The school names should read Cymmer Primary School.

There are currently 625 pupils, 559 aged 11-16 and 66 sixth form pupils (PLASC 2025) accessing Welsh medium education at Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhondda.

There are 5 Welsh medium associated primary schools within the cluster of Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhondda, they are:

- Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Bodringallt
- Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Bronllwyn
- Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Llwyncelyn
- Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Llyn y Forwyn
- Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Ynyswen

A recent condition survey has been undertaken which graded the Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhondda school site as C (Poor) and with a backlog maintenance figure circa £4.097million. The report includes the following comment:

'The overall mechanical and electrical services are functioning but are near the end of their expected life span. Some buildings need significant investment.'

Some buildings on the school site are known to contain asbestos which is currently managed appropriately on site.

Data Analysis

Table 2.1 that follows outlines the total number of pupils who accessed their education in Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhondda between the academic years 2018 and 2023, based on data derived from the PLASC.

Table 2.1						
Total Number of Pupils who Accessed their Education in Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhondda (between the academic Years 2018 and 2023, Years 7-13.						
	Academic Year (PLASC)					
	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Total	745	739	747	714	699	681

- The data demonstrates a decrease in the number of pupils who accessed their education in Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhondda between the academic years 2018/19 and 2023/24.
- The current capacity of the school is 1023, so there are 398 surplus capacity spaces, totalling 38.9%.

Table 2.2 that follows outlines the number pupils who accessed their education in associated Welsh medium schools between the academic years 2018/19 and 2023/24.

Table 2.2						
Total number of pupils who accessed their education in all Welsh medium associated primary schools (Between the Academic Years 2018/19 and 2023/24)						
	YGG Bodringallt	YGG Bronllwyn	YGG Llwyncelyn	YGG Llyn y Forwyn	YGG Ynyswen	Total
2018/19	120	236	306	198	282	1,142
2019/20	120	244	311	182	289	1,146
2020/21	134	237	316	178	275	1,140
2021/22	132	227	328	180	277	1,144
2022/23	141	220	335	173	264	1,133
2023/24	131	233	345	166	229	1,104

Over the previous five academic years, between the academic years 2018/19 and 2023/24, the total number of pupils who accessed their education in Welsh medium associated primary schools has varied however a decrease is seen overall.

Table 2.3 that follows shows the projected pupil data for Years 7-13 for Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhondda, between the academic years 2024/25 and 2028/29.

Table 2.3					
Projected Number of Pupils for Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhondda (between the academic Years 2024/25 and 2028/29, for Years 7-13.					
	Academic Year (PLASC)				
	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29
Total	625	652	654	650	647

The data in Table 2.4 that follows demonstrates an assumed further decrease in the number of pupils accessing their education in the Welsh medium secondary school between the academic years 2024/25 and 2028/29, based on the projected pupil numbers for the associated primary schools.

Table 2.4						
Projected number of pupils who will access their education in Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhondda associated schools (Between the Academic Years 2024/25 and 2028/29), Nursery – Year 6						
	YGG Bodringallt	YGG Bronllwyn	YGG Llwyncelyn	YGG Llyn y Forwyn	YGG Ynyswen	Total
2024/25	134	232	346	155	223	1090
2025/26	130	234	349	158	209	1080
2026/27	120	241	356	149	194	1060
2027/28	117	236	355	146	173	1027
2028/29	108	234	344	136	158	980

The data demonstrates an assumed further decrease in the number of pupils accessing their education in the associated Welsh medium primary schools between the academic years 2024/25 and 2028/29.

This project focuses on improving the offer for Welsh medium education for Secondary age pupils in Rhondda Cynon Taf. The new school will provide enhanced facilities to assist with the delivery of Welsh in line with RCTCBC's WESP.

As part of our Band B programme, we have already significantly extended YGG Aberdar and Ysgol Rhydywaun (works completed in summer 2022) as well as the opening of YGG Awel Taf in Rhydyfelin. An associated primary school of Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhondda, YGG Llyn Y Forwyn recently opened in January 2025, and has capacity for 210 learners plus 30 nursery places, also an onsite 30 place Cylch Meithrin allowing for future growth. The value of the investment can already be seen in the increasing pupil numbers. There are currently 166 students on roll (Nursery – Year 6) at Llyn y Forwyn, increasing from the projected figure of 155, shown above.

This supports a number of outcomes from Rhondda Cynon Taf's WESP, in particular Outcome 3 '*More children continue to improve their Welsh language skills when transferring from one stage of their statutory education to another*' and Outcome 4 '*More learners study for assessed qualifications in Welsh (as a subject) and subjects through the medium of Welsh*', and Outcome 5, '*More opportunities for learners to use Welsh in different contexts in school*'.

At SOC stage, an addendum query was received on the size of the new school, and pupil numbers. It was queried whether the school's capacity is required to reduce from 1023 to 900. Given the numbers on roll, and the pupil projection figures, we feel a capacity of 900 pupils would be sufficient and will allow us to contribute towards the Cymraeg 2050 targets and support the outcomes in our Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP). Therefore, the capacity of the new school remains unchanged at OBC stage.

Built Environment

The following areas have been revisited and the information at provided at SOC stage remains valid:

- Local Development Plan (LDP).
 - RCTCBC are preparing a Revised Local Development Plan for the period 2022 to 2037. This process formally began in April 2022. The Revised LDP will replace the current LDP for Rhondda Cynon Taf (2006 to 2021)
- Active Travel
- Llwybr Newydd – The Wales Transport Strategy 2021
- Community Use of Facilities.
- Sport and Outdoor Facilities.
- Environment (Wales) Act 2016.
- Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.
- Net Zero Carbon:
 - As required by all new schools delivered in Wales from 2022, funded under the Welsh Government's Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme, this project will achieve NZC in operation as a baseline and embodied carbon targets.
 - A NZC Quantification Template can be seen at **Appendix E – Net Zero Carbon Quantification Template**

Proposal

As outlined at SOC stage, several sites to accommodate a new school for Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhondda were appraised by officers within the Senior Leadership Team of Education and Inclusion Services and Corporate Estates using the following criteria:

- Ownership.
- Has an adequate site area.
- Has satisfactory access which is capable of being improved.

- Is free from any visual incumbents.
- Is a viable development opportunity subject to a detailed feasibility study.

On applying the appraisal criteria to the vacant sites and following several site visits undertaken by officers from RCTCBC's 21st Century Schools Team and Corporate Estates Team, it was deemed there are no viable areas that are large enough nor have suitable access within the catchment area of the school to accommodate a new school for Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhondda. Therefore, the preferred location for the new school is on the existing school site, Heol Graigwen, Cymer, Porth CF39 9HA

The image that follows shows an aerial drone view of the current school site.



Since the submission of the SOC, the main Contractor (Kier Construction) has been appointed, under a Pre-Construction Services Agreement (PCSA) to provide specialist support throughout the design process, with a particular focus on buildability, efficiency, and cost of the preferred option.

As such, several Client Engagement Meetings (CEMs) have taken place involving various key stakeholders to introduce the project and consider the feasibility work that has been undertaken to date.

Due to the notable constraints of the site, the overall site size is circa 57,000m², with up to 50% taken up by banks, slopes and woodland. The aim of the CEMs is to develop the design of the new school within a fixed pre-construction programme, aligned to the construction budget and to agree a strategic approach to statutory applications and pre-app consultations. During the CEM sessions, the project team have evaluated options and the option for a one phase build is achievable, subject to early demolition of three buildings with accommodation in existing school buildings to be refurbished/repurposed to ensure continued delivery of the full curriculum.

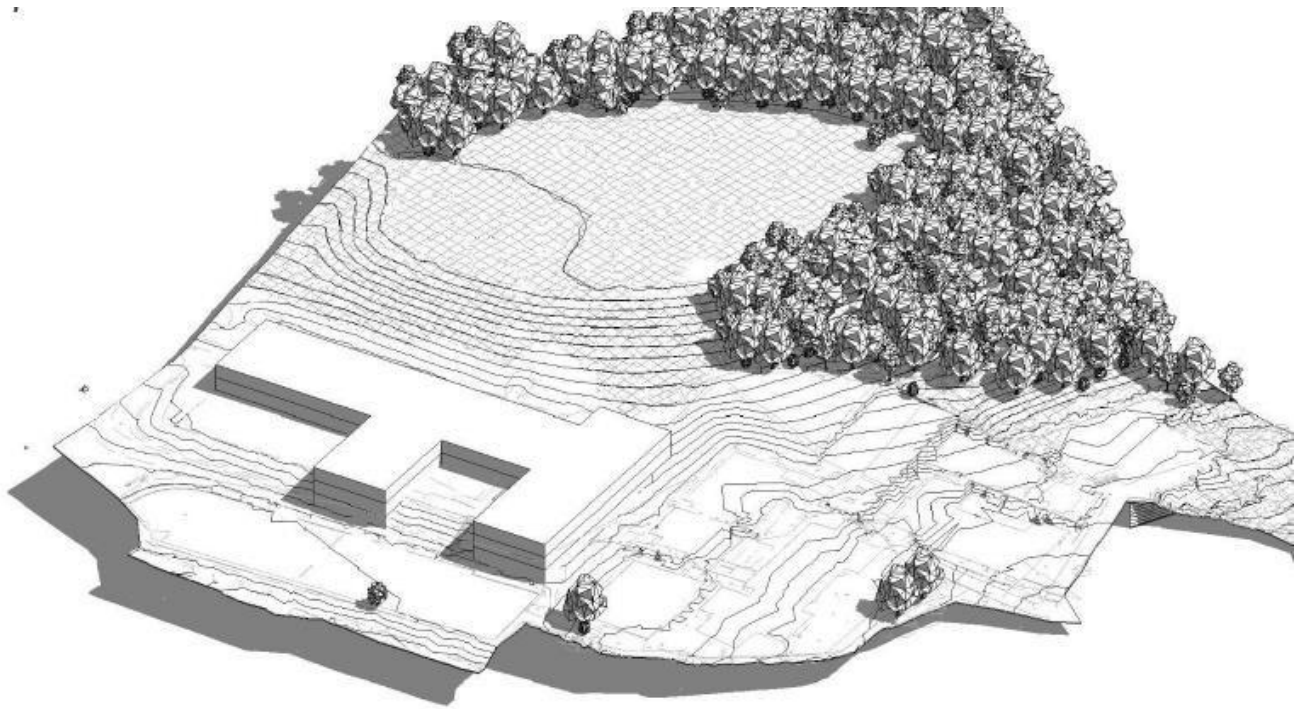
A site analysis of the existing site is included, as below:



To note, the above drawing names Cymmer Infants and Cymmer Juniors as separate schools. It should read Cymmer Primary School.

Concept Site Plan

A concept site masterplan has been developed since the SOC submission and is shown below:



The developing design of the new school site features a striking main school building with extensive external areas, including informal hard and soft play and social areas, three Multi Use Games Areas (MUGAs), an all-surface sports pitch along with an indoor sports hall. Despite large changes in site levels, the architect can design a

proposal which accommodates the whole school within one building, thereby negating the need to travel externally between several blocks, which is a large constraint of the current provision.

Community use is integral to the existing school and its relationship with various stakeholders. The developing design shows direct access to the sports hall and internal and external changing rooms. The sports hall is sized as larger than that within the New Area Guidelines for Schools in Wales and the proposal would be to include provision for spectators and to facilitate the ever-growing Community netball groups to compete at a 'Club' level. The Area Guidelines for Schools in Wales schedule recommends a 4-court sports hall for 900pupils to be circa 594m². However, it notes that a community sports hall, if funding allows, for school use and formal club-level use outside school hours, designed to good practise larger dimensions, typically 20m x 34.5m (with four courts) x 7.5m high if new. To meet the local and school demand, we aim to construct the sports hall to circa 690m².

MUGAs have also been positioned in a location to enable secure community access outside of school access. This will also be the same for internal facilities that may be used by the community for example community classrooms, activity studio and sports hall.

The school have extremely strong links with Rhondda Schools Rugby and the Welsh Rugby Union. Rhondda Schools Rugby has a significant local following, and the organisation use the school as their base, training young players from across the Borough every week. This in turn supports the ambitions of the Welsh Rugby Union who support the aspiring pupils in GCSE, AS and A Level Physical Education, as well as extra-curricular with strength and conditioning by using the multi-use gym as well as the internal and external facilities. The improved sports facilities and the inclusion of a multi-gym will support the retention of Sixth Form pupils in Welsh medium education and is a unique selling point and an incentive for pupils to remain as opposed to opting for Sixth Form College BTEC Sport/Rugby academy provision.

As the site masterplan becomes more tangible as the project progresses through RIBA Stage 3, the landscaping scheme will begin to be developed with an emphasis on the maximisation of green space and encouraging learner interactions with nature, and to compliment hard surfaced areas for the encouragement of creative outdoor plan as well as the opportunity to use these areas for outdoor study groups for subjects such as Art, Dance and Drama.

Active Travel

As outlined at SOC stage, RCTCBC will proactively implement an Active Travel Plan to promote access to and throughout the external environment, including, the sports facilities and pitches, as well as wider links to local community, including opportunities to enhance the local pedestrian and cyclist routes locally.

The promotion of active travel will also feature heavily within the design of the new school, with cycle/scooter storage being introduced for staff, visitors and pupils within the site design.

The existing school has difficulty in encouraging active travel amongst learners due to the location from which they travel each day. A significant number of pupils arrive on school transport (around 68%) as they travel from villages as far as Maerdy at the top

of the Rhondda Fach (approx. 7.6miles) and Blaenrhondda at the top of the Rhondda Fawr (approx. 10. Miles). RCTCBC will undertake an assessment of the safe walking routes, and where identified, upgrades to these routes will be undertaken, in addition to scooter and cycle racks being included within the school facilities. We will work with the school to encourage the use of these sustainable modes of transport as part of the Active Travel Plan.

As a part of the detailed design work required, a Traffic Impact Assessment will be undertaken focussing on both the immediate and surrounding area of the school. This assessment will look at the current capacity of the highway, and the impact of any increase in traffic flow, on not just the highway but also on pedestrian and cycling routes.

Llwybr Newydd – The Wales Transport Strategy 2021

The launch of Llwybr Newydd – the Wales Transport Strategy 2021 aims to shape the transport system in Wales over the next 20 years. The following 3 headline priorities will be considered in the new school development.

Priority 1 – Bring services to people to reduce the need to travel.

Priority 2 – Allow people and goods to move easily from door to door by accessible, sustainable, and efficient transport.

Priority 3 – Encourage people to make the change to more sustainable transport.

The school is in walking distance of Porth town centre, which supports the Town Centre First principle. The significant re-development of Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhondda will allow the school to continue to form a valuable part of the community where parents/carers, staff and pupils congregate to socialise and shop, supporting the local economy. The newly developed Porth Transport Hub is just a short walk from the school site and will encourage the use of sustainable modes of transport for staff, pupils and visitors alike.

Welsh Medium Education Provision

RCTCBC's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) is a long-term language planning tool which sets the direction for the strategic planning, delivery and growth in Welsh medium and Welsh language education over the next 10 years (2022-2032). Through the WESP, and effective strategic planning and investment, RCTCBC aims to contribute significantly to achieving the vision of one million people in Wales being Welsh speakers by 2050, as set out in **Cymraeg 2050**.

There are seven outcomes within RCTCBC's WESP, some of which are relevant to this project are namely:

- Outcome 3: More children continue to improve their Welsh language skills when transferring from one stage of their statutory education to another.
- Outcome 4: More learners study for assessed qualifications in Welsh (as a subject) and subjects through the medium of Welsh.
- Outcome 5: More opportunities for pupils to use Welsh in different contexts in school.
- Outcome 7: Increase the number of teaching staff able to teach Welsh (as a subject) and teach through the medium of Welsh.

The aim is to embed positive habits and attitudes towards the Welsh language through purposeful planning to promote the use of the Welsh language amongst pupils inside and outside schools. Facilitating the use of the Welsh language across the Curriculum and in wider contexts in schools, to ensure a continuum of linguistic progression to support pupils in the transition between year groups, offers all pupils the opportunity to become fully bilingual and aligns with the Curriculum for Wales.

In addition, the redevelopment of Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhondda will be a fully accessible and fully integrated community school. A dedicated area will be designed within so that the local community will be able to access facilities, both during and after the school day. Use of the facilities could include opportunities for the school or third parties to offer Welsh learning classes for adults. This would contribute towards the Welsh Government's ambitious goal of creating a million Welsh speakers in Wales by 2050.

3. Economic Case

Introduction

The purpose of the Economic Case is to document the options that have been considered within the scope identified in the Strategic Case in accordance with the Capital Investment Manual and requirements of HM Treasury's Green Book (Central Government Guidance on Appraisal and Evaluation). This section of the OBC notes any changes since the submission of the SOP and SOC.

Investment Objectives (IOs)

To enable the best use of funds available, RCTCBC has agreed key IOs that will meet all current and relevant national, regional, and local legislation, policies, and strategies and provide the best opportunity to deliver more value to individuals, communities, businesses, and the wider economy to support education and training.

The IOs for transforming and reorganising education provision in Rhondda Cynon Taf have been formulated through discussion and debate with RCTCBC's Directorate of Education and Inclusion Services Senior Management Team and 21st Century Schools Team. They are:

1. Supporting Delivery of the New Curriculum for Wales.
2. Inclusion and Equality.
3. Enhancing the Wellbeing of our Pupils and Workforce.
4. Sustainable Facilities Fit for the 21st Century.

Critical Success Factors

The Critical Success Factors (CSFs) for this project are as follows:

1. Business Needs – The solution must satisfy the existing and future needs of pupils. In line with the Curriculum for Wales, flexible facilities will be created to support different styles of teaching and learning to improve wellbeing and achieve better outcomes.

2. Strategic Fit – The solution must provide a holistic fit and synergy with other key elements of the national, regional, and local strategies. The solution must focus on the delivery of sustainable and effective educational assets that will meet existing and future demand for places.

3. Benefits Optimisation – The option must provide the best solution to ensure that future demand and provision of service can be delivered to meet the required performance standards. For example, improved levels of attainment, increased levels of participation, and enabling resources/facilities to be used by the local community where demand exists.

4. Achievability – The solution must be delivered within the appropriate timeframe. Delivery timescales must be acceptable to all partners and stakeholders.

5. Affordability – The solution is affordable. Wherever possible, the solution must release revenue resources from the removal of surplus places, and the removal or refurbishment of uneconomical buildings that adversely impact upon teaching and learning.

Longlist of Options

The longlist of options for this project were generated by a consensus of RCTCBC's Directorate of Education and Inclusion Services Senior Management Team and 21st Century Schools Team at SOC stage. Each longlist of options was evaluated against this project's IOs and CSFs. This resulted in the longlist of options either being discounted, carried forward for further consideration within the shortlist of options or identified as the preferred way forward. These options have been revisited in the context of the OBC and in essence remain valid except for the Scope Solution Option.

The Scope Solution Option has been revisited following the submission of the SOC. This has resulted in removing the following:

- Build a new school for Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhondda on a new site with 21st Century facilities.

As stated within the SOC, whilst the Scope Solution Option to build a new school for YGCR on a new site with 21st Century facilities, would deliver a significant improvement in the quality of the educational provision, having a significant positive impact upon the educational performance of the pupils and staff morale, it does not fully meet this project's IOs and CSFs. As outlined at SOC stage, several sites to accommodate a new school for Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhondda were appraised by members of Education and Inclusion Services and Corporate Estates Senior Leadership Teams using the following criteria:

- Ownership.
- Has an adequate site area.
- Has satisfactory access which is capable of being improved.
- Is free from any visual incumbents.
- Is a viable development opportunity subject to a detailed feasibility study.

On applying the appraisal criteria to the vacant sites and following several site visits undertaken by officers from RCTCBC's 21st Century Schools Team and Corporate Estates Team, it was deemed there are no viable areas that are large enough nor have suitable access within the catchment area of the school to accommodate a new school for Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhondda. Therefore, the preferred location for the new school is the existing school site, Heol Graigwen, Cymer, Porth CF39 9HA.

Therefore, this Scope Solution Option to build a new school on a new site has been removed. Likewise, the following Implementation Solution has been removed. Deliver the new school during the 2031 academic year.

Table 3.1 that follows outlines the updated longlisted options for this project.

<u>Table 3.1 Longlisted Options</u>	
<u>Option</u>	<u>Finding</u>
<i>Scope Solution Option</i>	
Business as Usual Maintain current Welsh medium secondary school provision at Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhondda.	Discounted.
Do Minimum Demolish the Victorian building at Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhondda and rebuild in the same footprint. Enhanced external areas, including the provision of a 3G sports pitch and improved parking and drop off areas.	Discounted.
Most Ambitious Redevelop Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhondda in a phased approach with 21st Century facilities.	Preferred.
<i>Service Solution Option</i>	
Business as Usual Provision at Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhondda remains as is, with future repairs and redecorations dealt with on a priority basis.	Discounted.
Do Minimum Demolish the Victorian building at Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhondda and rebuild in the same footprint. Enhanced external areas, including the provision of a 3G sports pitch and improved parking and drop off areas.	Discounted.

Most Ambitious Build a new Welsh medium secondary school with 21st Century facilities.	Preferred.
<i>Service Delivery Solution Option</i>	
Business as Usual RCTCBC continue to project manage future repairs and redecorations of the school.	Discounted.
Do Minimum RCTCBC to manage the design and construction of the Victorian teaching block and associated external works.	Discounted.
Most Ambitious RCTCBC to commission and project manage a consultant team to redevelop Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhondda, to design and build new school facilities.	Preferred.
<i>Implementation Solution Option</i>	
Business as Usual Ongoing.	Discounted.
Do Minimum Deliver the project by September 2032.	Discounted.
Most Ambitious Deliver the project during the 2030 academic year.	Preferred.
<i>Funding Solution Option</i>	
Business as Usual This project is funded entirely using RCTCBC funds.	Discounted.
Do Minimum This project is funded entirely using RCTCBC funds.	Discounted

<p>Most Ambitious This project is funded through a combination of RCTCBC funds and external funding via Welsh Government's Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme.</p>	<p>Preferred.</p>
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Shortlist of Options

Within the SOC each of the key dimensions enabled a rational shortlist of options to be compiled for further economic appraisal, which enabled the preferred option to be selected. These options have been revisited in the context of the OBC and in essence remain valid. Table 3.2 that follows outlines the short list of options for this project.

Table 3.2: Short List of Options			
	Business as Usual	Do Minimum	Most Ambitious
Scope Solution	Maintain current Welsh medium secondary school provision at Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhondda.	Demolish the Victorian building at Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhondda and rebuild in the same footprint. Enhanced external areas, including the provision of a 3G sports pitch and improved parking and drop off areas.	Redevelop Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhondda in a phased approach with 21st Century facilities.
Service Solution	Provision at Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhondda remains as is, with future repairs and redecorations dealt with on a priority basis.	Demolish the Victorian building at Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhondda and rebuild in the same footprint. Enhanced external areas, including the provision of a 3G sports pitch and	Build a new Welsh medium secondary school with 21st Century facilities.

		improved parking and drop off areas.	
Service Delivery Solution	RCTCBC continue to project manage future repairs and redecorations of the school.	RCTCBC to manage the design and construction of the Victorian teaching block and associated external works.	RCTCBC to commission and project manage a consultant team to redevelop Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhondda to design and build new facilities.
Implementation Solution	Ongoing.	Deliver the project by September 2032.	Deliver the project during the 2030 academic year.
Funding Solution	This project is funded entirely using RCTCBC funds.	This project is funded entirely using RCTCBC funds.	This project is funded through a combination of RCTCBC funds and external funding via the Welsh Government's Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme.

The shortlist of options has been re-named (Options One to Three):

- **Option One – Business as Usual:**
 - Maintain current Welsh medium secondary school provision at Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhondda.
 - Provision at Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhondda remains as is, with future repairs and redecorations dealt with on a priority basis.
 - RCTCBC continue to project manage future repairs and redecorations of the school. ○ Ongoing.
 - Funded entirely using RCTCBC funds.

- **Option Two – Do Minimum:**
 - Demolish the Victorian building at Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhondda and rebuild in the same footprint. Enhanced external areas, including the provision of a 3G sports pitch and improved parking and drop off areas. ○ Demolish the Victorian building at Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhondda and rebuild in the same footprint. Enhanced external areas, including the provision of a 3G sports

- pitch and improved parking and drop off areas. ○ RCTCBC to manage the design and construction of the Victorian teaching block and associated external works.
- Deliver the new school by September 2032.
- Funded entirely using RCTCBC funds.

- **Option Three – Most Ambitious:**

- Redevelop Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhondda in a phased approach with 21st Century facilities.
- Build a new Welsh Medium secondary school with 21st Century facilities. ○ RCTCBC to commission and project manage a consultant team to redevelop Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhondda, to design and build new facilities. ○ Deliver the project during the 2030 academic year.
- This project is funded through a combination of RCTCBC funds and external funding via the Welsh Government's Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme.

Economic Appraisal

Each of the shortlisted options has been subject to a detailed economic appraisal to determine which offers the best value for money solution. In determining value for money, it is important to assess all the main costs and benefits including the wider consequences beyond education. The economic appraisal also assesses the key risks associated with each of the shortlisted options as this is a significant factor in deciding which option provides the best way forward.

This section provides a detailed overview of the main costs and benefits associated with each of the shortlisted options. Importantly, it indicates how they were identified and the main sources and assumptions.

The paragraphs that follow outline the findings of the economic appraisal and recommend a preferred option. The following have been taken into consideration:

- Cost Benefit Analysis.
- Sensitivity Analysis.
- Qualitative Benefits Analysis.
- Risk Assessment Analysis.

Cost Benefit Analysis

The Cost Benefit Analysis considers the costs and benefits (i.e., those which can be measured financially) of each of the shortlisted options over the lifetime of the asset. For these purposes, the useful life of the asset is assumed to be 30 years. The Cost Benefit Analysis is completed on today's prices (i.e., constant prices) and excludes the impact of taxation. In accordance with the HM Treasury Greenbook Option One and Two have been subject to an appraisal period of 30 years (as they are business as

usual or refurbishment options). Option Three is a new build solution and therefore has been subject to 60-year appraisal period.

Net Present Value is a single figure which represents the relationship between costs and benefits at today's value. The full version of the Cost Benefit Analysis can be seen at **Appendix F – Cost Benefit Analysis**.

Table 3.3 that follows summarises the results.

Table 3.3: Net Present Value Ranking (Including Optimism Bias)			
Option	Positive/Negative	Net Present Value (-£ Million)	Ranking
Option One – Business as Usual	Negative	£88.2	1 st
Option Two – Do Minimum	Negative	£134.5	2 nd
Option Three – Most Ambitious	Negative	£190.7	3 rd

The Cost Benefit Analysis suggests that Option One – Business as Usual is ranked the highest. However, it is only Option Three – Most Ambitious that delivers all this project's IOs and CSFs, and gives us a fully accessible Welsh medium secondary school, therefore Option Three – Most Ambitious remains as RCTCBC's preferred way forward.

Sensitivity Analysis

The sensitivity of these results has been assessed by adjusting key assumptions and considering their effect. The following variations were tested:

- The building running costs in Option One have been increased by 10.0%.
- The total construction costs for Options Two and Three has been increased by 5.0%.
- A 5% cost reduction has been applied to Option Three due to more efficient energy usage. (The new school will be built to NZC in operation with a BREEAM rating of 'Excellent')

The full version of the Sensitivity Analysis can be seen at **Appendix G – Sensitivity Cost Benefit Analysis**. Table 3.4 that follows summarises the results.

Option	Positive/Negative	Net Present Value (-£ Million)	Ranking
Option One – Business as Usual	Negative	£94.5	1 st
Option Two – Do Minimum	Negative	£137.4	2 nd
Option Three – Most Ambitious	Negative	£193.8	3 rd

The Sensitivity Analysis suggests that Option One – Business as Usual is ranked the highest. It is only Option Three – Most Ambitious that delivers all of this project’s IOs and CFSs, delivering a fully accessible Welsh medium school, therefore Option Three – Most Ambitious remains as RCTCBC’s preferred way forward.

Qualitative Benefits Analysis

A workshop was held involving RCTCBC’s Education and Inclusion Services Senior Management Team and 21st Century Schools Team. The aim of the workshop was to inform the economic appraisal of the shortlisted options and specifically undertake the non-financial benefit appraisal. At the workshop, there was a discussion of the IOs, shortlisted options, and non-financial benefit criteria. An exercise was undertaken to weight the benefit criteria and then to score the shortlisted options against them.

The Qualitative Benefits Analysis can be seen at **Appendix A – Qualitative Benefits Table**.

Table 3.5 that follows summarises the results.

Benefit		Weighting
1.	Provides a quality of experience to young people and raises achievement and success for both pre and post 16 provisions.	24
2.	Improves breadth and depth of curriculum creating greater choice for pupils.	22

3.	Increases participation in learning.	22
4.	Providing education and learning which meets the needs of the individual and local community.	20
5.	Improves the quality of the physical learning environment.	12
Total		100

Each shortlisted option was allocated a score from 0 to 9 against each benefit criterion, in agreement with the workshop attendees. These scores were then multiplied by the allocated weighting and ranked accordingly. Table 3.6 that follows summarises results.

Table 3.6: Scoring of Shortlisted Options Against Benefit Criteria			
Option	Raw Score	Weighted Score	Ranking
Option One – Business as Usual	9	188	3 rd
Option Two – Do Minimum	30	590	2 nd
Option Three – Most Ambitious	50	1,000	1 st

The Qualitative Benefits Analysis suggests that Option Three – Most Ambitious scored and ranked the highest.

It is only Option Three – Most Ambitious that delivers all this project’s IOs and CFSs, so it is therefore Option Three – Most Ambitious which remains as RCTCBC’s preferred way forward.

Risk Assessment

An essential element of the economic appraisal is an assessment of the key risks associated with the shortlisted options. In identifying these main risks, it is important to consider the business risks to the organisation (i.e., quality of services provided and financial viability) and the service risks associated with the change (i.e., poor design and wrong assumptions).

In considering the key risk areas for this project, risks have been grouped under seven key areas, as outlined in table 3.7 below. These have been ratified by RCTCBC’s Directorate of Education and Inclusion Services’ Senior Management Team. These risks have been revisited since the submission of the SOC and remain valid for the purposes of this OBC.

Table 3.7: Risk Assessment		
Number	Risk Area	Risk Definition

1.	Change Requirements	Requirements change due to quality and/or standard changes in policy during the lifespan of the project.
2.	Physical Issues	Site issues including difficulty acquiring suitable sites, developing existing sites or gaining planning consents.
3.	Funding	Difficulties in securing capital funding causing delays to planned developments.
4.	Performance Failure	Failure to improve performance in key areas leads to loss of reputation and future funding.
5.	Poor Management	Inadequate management due to ineffective governance, lack of appropriate resources or poor project management.
6.	Stakeholder Reaction	Stakeholder reaction causes delay or abandonment of key developments within the project.
7.	Staffing	Staffing difficulties in sustaining the proposed solution due to recruitment and retention problem.

Each shortlisted option was then assessed to determine a risk score. Each risk was scored for impact (scale 1 (*low*) to 5 (*high*)) and for the likelihood of the risk occurring (scale 1 (*low*) to 5 (*high*)). The impact and likelihood scores were then multiplied to give an overall score for each risk and then accumulated to provide an overall risk score. Details of the risk scores can be found in Table 3.8 below.

A Risk Assessment Ranking of Shortlisted Options can be seen at **Appendix B – Risk Assessment Ranking**.

Option	Risk Score	Ranking
Option One – Business as Usual	58	2nd
Option Two – Do Minimum	78	3rd
Option Three – Most Ambitious	49	1 st

In the Risk Assessment Option Three – Most Ambitious ranked the lowest.

Option Three – Most Ambitious delivers all this project’s IOs and CFSs, so therefore, Option Three – Most Ambitious is RCTCBC’s preferred way forward.

4. Commercial Case

Introduction

The purpose of the Commercial Case is to identify the proposed procurement route in respect of the preferred way forward, as set out in the Economic Case. This section of the OBC notes any changes since the submission of the SOP and SOC.

Procurement Approach

The decision on the proposed procurement approach is taken according to the broader learning outcomes RCTCBC is seeking to achieve and it is not entirely focused on price alone. The procurement approach is reflective of RCTCBC's wider priorities, central to which will be sustainable and ethical procurement approaches.

In summary, the scope of this project is redeveloping Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhondda for 900 pupils (including 150 sixth form pupils) progressing with the detailed design of the school site. It is proposed to create modern and accessible facilities suitable for the Curriculum for Wales. It is proposed to open during the 2030 academic year.

This project will deliver:

- Net zero carbon in operation and achieve embodied carbon targets.
- BREEAM rating of Excellent'.

This project will be managed and delivered jointly by RCTCBC's 21st Century Schools Team and Corporate Estates Corporate Design Team, advised by our Consultant Project Manager/Cost Manager. The procurement approach will be achieved in accordance with the European Consolidated Procurement Directives, supplemented by RCTCBC's Financial Regulations, Standing Orders for Contracts and Procurement and Commissioning Strategy. An options appraisal has been undertaken to identify the contractual arrangements that best support the successful delivery of this project. The construction contract has been procured engaging a main contractor, via the South-East and Mid-Wales Collaborative Construction Framework. (SEWSCAP4)

Evaluation and Award Criteria

The first stage of the procurement process has now been concluded. This initial stage involved the appointment of a preferred contractor and architect under a PCSA to provide specialist support throughout the design process, with a particular focus on buildability, efficiency, and cost of the preferred option.

The procurement approach was developed jointly by RCTCBC's 21st Century Schools Team, Corporate Design Team, and Procurement Team, advised by our Consultant

Project Manager/Cost Manager, Aecom. The assessment ratio score was split 60/30/10 for quality/price/social value to ensure the weighting was in favour of the quality element. In addition, the cost element was assessed on a narrow average approach.

In total, five contractors returned tenders. Following an evaluation process, Kier Construction were appointed as the Design and Build Contractor, under a PCSA to provide specialist support throughout the design process, with a particular focus on buildability, efficiency, and cost of the preferred option.

Community Benefits Approach

Notwithstanding the requirements to implement the Community Benefits Plan submitted as part of the SEWSCAP4 Framework, specific requirements will be identified to contractors at the time of tender, which will form the basis of any contractual arrangements made with RCTCBC. These include, but are not limited to:

- 75.0% of all sub-contracts being awarded to local companies in Wales.
- Advertising of sub-contracting opportunities on the Sell2Wales website.
- Links with local schools and community organisations to provide work experience opportunities.
- Opportunities being made available to local businesses/enterprises within the villages and surrounding areas of this project.
- Delivery of 52 person weeks of training or employment per £1 million capita spend on this project.

As part of the Welsh Government and SEWSCAP4 Framework commitment to Community Benefits, Contractors must use the Welsh Government's Community Benefits Measuring Tool which is submitted to the Employer's Agent/Client Project Manager at the completion of a project. The Welsh Government Community Benefits Measuring Tool has been issued to all SEWSCAP4 Framework contractors as well as being included within the tender documentation.

Community benefits will be an agenda item at client meetings. The Contractor will be required to provide their updated Community benefits at tender stage, and this will be reviewed during the pre-construction stage so that clear targets are agreed for monitoring over the duration of the contract and post-completion as part of the inhabitant post occupancy evaluation process.

Project Bank Account

In line with the funding requirements of the Welsh Government's Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme, RCTCBC will use Project Bank Accounts for this project.

5. Financial Case

Introduction

The purpose of the Financial Case is to identify the estimated cost of the preferred way forward, as set out in the Economic Case, over financial years and outline how the preferred way forward is to be funded. This OBC notes any changes since the submission of the SOP and SOC.

Funding Requirements

This project is to redevelop Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhondda for 900 pupils (including 150 Sixth Form pupils); however, this will be subject to undertaking further feasibility and progressing with the detailed design.

The estimated project value is now £77.5 million. This is an increase to the estimated costs that were submitted in the Strategic Outline Programme (SOP) however this is still in line with the figure included in the SOC. This figure has been scrutinised by our appointed professional services managers, Aecom, who market tested the costs against more recent projects delivered. A cost opportunity exercise will be completed before the submission of the FBC.

Financial Forecast

Table 5.1 that follows provides a provisional financial forecast for this project. This will be developed and finalised as the business case process progresses.

Table 5.1							
Provisional Financial Forecast - estimated							
Project	Financial Year						Total Project Cost (£ Million)
	2025/26 (£)	2026/27 (£)	2027/28 (£)	2028/29 (£)	2029/30 (£)	2030/31	
New School for Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhondda	1.1m	30m	34.2m	8.8m	3.m	0.4m	77.5

Source of Match Funding

RCTCBC and Welsh Government, via the Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme, will jointly fund this project, with the Welsh Government funding up to 65% of project costs, and up to 100% of costs directly associated with making the new school NZC in operation. Detailed costs will be developed, and approvals sought in line with RCTCBC's decision-making procedures.

Abnormal Costs

It is proposed that the new school be built on the existing school site of Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhondda. This site was selected as the preferred location following a site appraisal process. Historic maps and information indicate the school site was previously used for industrial purposes including a quarry and tramway sidings. Therefore, there is much need for detailed site-specific investigation works with the appropriate enabling and demolition works along with clearance of the existing buildings and site.

Project Cost Template

A Project Cost Template can be seen ***Appendix H – Project Cost Template***

Risk Assessment

At an early stage, an initial risk identification workshop was held to identify risks, this led to the creation of a Risk Register. A Risk Assessment Ranking of Shortlisted Options can be seen at ***Appendix B – Assessment Ranking of Shortlisted Options***. A Risk Assessment of the Preferred Option can be seen at ***Appendix C – Risk Assessment of the Preferred Option***.

Cabinet Commitment

Following a meeting of the Cabinet held in October 2021, Members were informed that early development and feasibility work had commenced on several new education investment projects, which included Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhondda.

A report was presented to RCTCBC's Cabinet on 19th March 2025 to update on the Sustainable Communities for Learning – New Rolling Programme, and the latest Strategic Outline Programme (SOP), approved in principle by Welsh Government which includes the building of a new school for Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhondda on the current school site.

Cabinet agreed to the recommendations to:

- note the progress made to date in developing the latest tranche 1 projects, which includes Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhondda, as part of the new Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme; and
- to receive further reports on projects as they develop and progress through the Welsh Government’s Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme.

6. Management Case

Introduction

The purpose of the Management Case is to address the achievability of a project. Its purpose is to set out the actions that will be required to ensure the successful delivery of a project in accordance with best practice. This section of the OBC notes any changes since the submission of the SOP and SOC.

Project Management Methodology

RCTCBC has experienced officers within the 21st Century Schools Team and Corporate Estates Team who have successfully completed projects of this nature in the past. We will continue to use the skills of these teams to deliver this project, using the existing management and reporting structures in place. In doing so, the following project management methodology will be adopted:

- PRINCE 2 methodology will be used in managing the activities and outputs of this project.
- This project will meet the Welsh Government requirements and guidance which may be issued during its lifespan.
- This project will use standard documentation and products, where available, and will seek to benefit from the experience and best practice of other projects.
- Specialist professional and technical advisers already available to RCTCBC will be employed for those activities where the necessary skills and experience are not otherwise available. The transfer of skills and knowledge from professional and technical advisers will be achieved wherever possible and appropriate.

Key Milestones

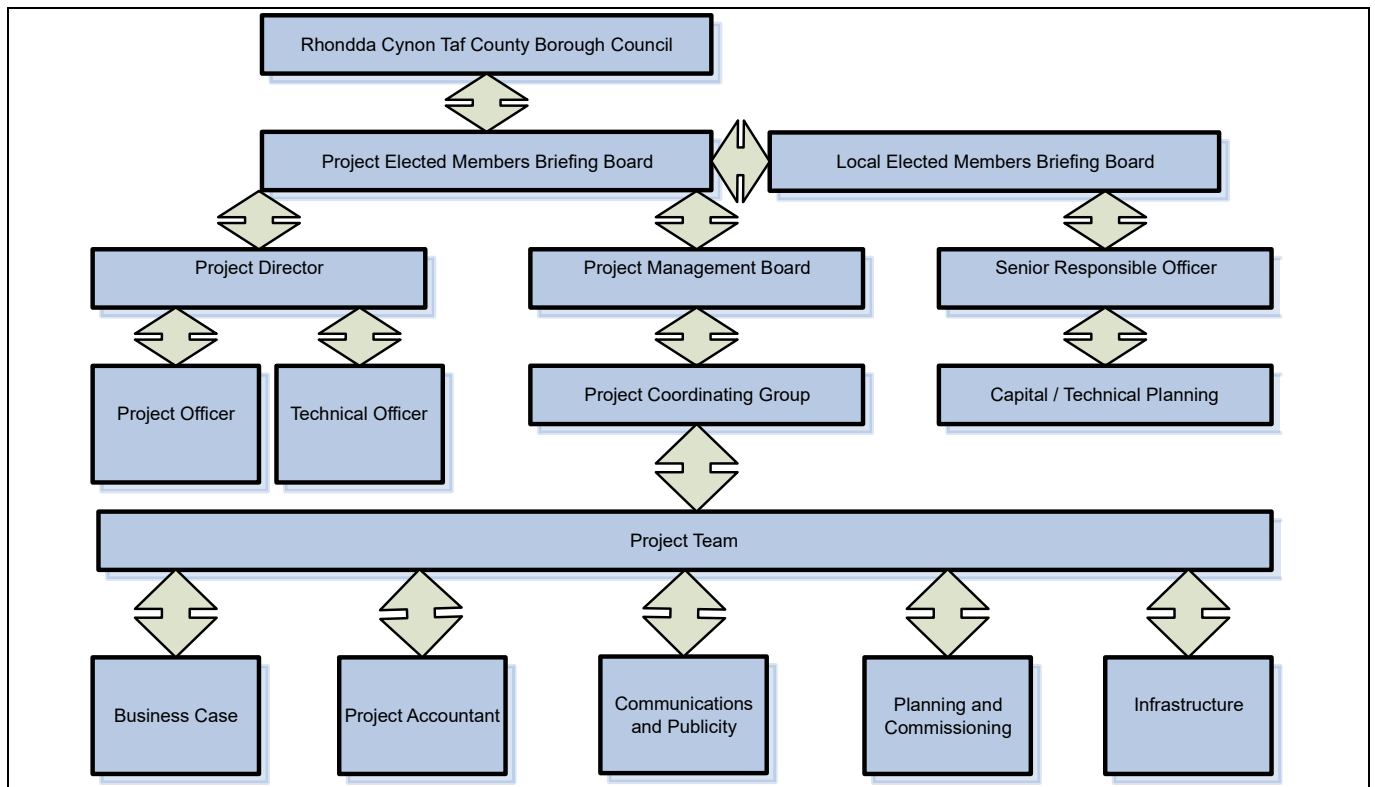
The table that follows outlines a Provisional Project Plan for this project.

Provisional Project Plan	
Action	Timeline
RCTCBC Cabinet Approval to Proceed	19 th March 2025
SOC Submission	1 st May 2025

OBC Submission	23 rd October 2025
PAC Submission	December 2025
FBC Submission	8 th January 2026
Planning Submission	February 2026
SAB Submission	May 2026
Construction Commencement	September 2026
New Build Complete	For 2030 Academic Year
Demolition and Externals Complete	December 2030

Project Reporting Structure

The proposed lines of accountability and statutory role of this project are shown in the Project Structure that follows:



Contract Management

The strategy, framework, and plan for dealing with change associated with contract management is as follows:

- The Project Director (assisted by the Project Officer) will be responsible for recording, logging, and categorising all project issues.

-
- The Project Director (in consultation with the appropriate lead officer(s)) will assess project issues by type (request for change or off specification) and action required and will investigate required actions. Actions will be documented, and their completions confirmed.
 - An Issues Log will be maintained by the Project Officer and reviewed regularly by the Project Team.
 - Newly identified risks will be added to the Risk Register and evaluated, with proposal(s) for mitigation to be reviewed and agreed by the Project Team.
 - Project issues will be reported, in the first instance, to the Project Director. All major issues, above the tolerance set by the Project Team, will be reported to the Project Director (and, if necessary, to the Project Management Board) for decision before implementation, particularly if any funding increase is required as a consequence of change.

- The Project Director (in conjunction with the appropriate lead officer(s)) can authorise other changes if within the tolerance level set by the Project Team (and confirmed by the Project Management Board).
- Where an issue could cause a deviation beyond agreed levels of tolerance set by the Project Team, the Project Manager will prepare an Exception Report to the Project Management Board and a subsequent 'Exception Plan' will be required.

Benefits Realisation Arrangements

The outline strategy, framework, and plan for dealing with the management and delivery of benefits has been developed and can be seen at ***Appendix I – Project Roles and Responsibilities***.

The outline strategy and supporting plan for benefits which shows what could happen, where and when the benefits are likely to occur and who would be responsible for their delivery has been developed and can be seen at ***Appendix J – Benefits Realisation Plan***.

The plan for benefits will be coordinated and integrated into a Project Plan and will be clear about handover and responsibilities for ongoing operations in the changed state (where the benefits will accrue).

There will be a tracking process which monitors achievement of benefits against expectations and targets. The tracking process will be capable of tracking both 'hard' (e.g., cost, headcount etc.) and 'soft' (e.g., image) benefits and operates alongside the changing operation.

The Welsh Government's Community Benefits Tool has been incorporated into the procurement process and the ongoing benefits will be reported and measured as per guidelines issued by Value Wales when issuing public sector contracts.

Risk Management

Risk identification involved identifying potential opportunities and risks relating to the achievement of objectives. These may arise because of the general environment in which we are operating or in relation to specific decisions being made or options being considered.

We have prioritised risk assessment and management, utilising RCTCBC's established risk assessment matrix process. The process identifies risk, then quantifies the likelihood and impact of the risk occurring to reach an aggregate risk score. Ownership of the risk is then allocated alongside risk mitigation control measures.

The Project Team will regularly update an overarching Risk Register that will be developed in collaboration with the contractor which will include individual project risks at a delivery and operational level. This process will enable to Project Team to

reassess current risks at given points in the development of this project, to highlight risks that have been successfully mitigated and identify any new risks.

An initial risk register meeting was held on 2nd September 2025, and there will be regular risk management meetings between members of the Project Team, led by the Project Manager and supported by the Project Director. The Project Director will report the key project risks and mitigations/control measures to the Project Board.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The arrangements for Post Project Evaluation (PPE) and Post Implementation Review (PIR) will be conducted according to best practice.

It is fully recognised that PPE is a requirement for organisations that are undertaking a project to this scope and scale. In this context, guidance has been (and will continue to be) taken from PRINCE 2, the Office of Government Commerce, and examples of good practice from successfully completed projects of this nature in the past.

The Project Management Board is determined that a thorough and robust PPE will be undertaken which will be informed by an ongoing Project Evaluation Review (PER).

Additionally, a full Post-Occupancy Evaluation (POE) will be undertaken in accordance with the requirements of the Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme to monitor building performance and to capture the views of building users.

Gateway Review Arrangements

A Gateway Review of RCTCBC's programme has yet to be completed.

This project builds on the success of RCTCBC's Band A and Band B's Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme and forms an integral part of RCTCBC's commitment to delivering high standard education in modern, well-managed, nurturing learning facilities, ensuring the best possible breadth and depth of curriculum for all pupils, and in turn, delivering improved outcomes, delivering on our promotions within our Corporate Plan and Education Strategic Plan. As such, any recommendations made because of future Gateway Reviews will be addressed. RCTCBC strives to improve processes and practices as we continue to deliver the Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme projects.