Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme Business Case Executive Summary Proforma

LA / College Name	Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhondda
Project Title	New School for Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhondda (YGCR)
Business Case Stage	Full Business Case (FBC)

Brief overview of project (max 100 words)

- To build a new Welsh medium secondary school for Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhondda, with new teaching facilities for 750 pupils (ages 11-16) and 150 sixth form pupils, totalling 900 pupils.
- Classrooms to include specialist equipment, where required including science labs, technology classrooms and ICT suites.
- Develop suitable areas for outdoor learning and recreation and dedicated internal and external facilities within the school boundary that the local community can safely use, both during and after the school day.
- Improve the offer for Welsh medium education and create a continuum of learning to support the targets set by the Welsh Government to create one million Welsh speakers as detailed in 'Cymraeg 2050', as well as RCTCBC's WESP outcomes.

Strategic Case

School Organisation

Names of schools/campuses included as part of project:

Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhondda **Capacity**: 1,023

	Existing (FTE)		**Proposed (FTE)**		**Change +/-**	
	EM	**WM**	**EM**	**WM**	**EM**	**WM**
Childcare Offer	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Nursery	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Primary	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Secondary	n/a	870	n/a	750	n/a	-120
Post-16	n/a	153	n/a	150	n/a	-3
Additional Learning Needs	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Total	n/a	1,023	n/a	900	n/a	-123

Is a statutory consultation required in accordance with the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013?

Yes		**No**	X

If yes, please outline the timescales:

Sustainability

Confirmation that BREEAM Excellent, or higher, will be achieved?

BREEAM ‘Excellent’ will be achieved

Confirmation the scheme will be designed to achieve the Programme’s mandated Net Zero Carbon (NZC) standard. Please provide an overview of the NZC strategy (**max 100 words**).

As required by all new schools delivered in Wales from 2022 that are funded under the Welsh Government’s Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme, this project will achieve net zero carbon in operation as a baseline and meet embodied carbon targets.

Confirmation sprinklers will be installed:

Yes	X	**No**	

If no, please outline why:

Planning / Land

Is a land acquisition required for the project? If so, please provide an overview of process and anticipated timescales (**max 100 words**).

There is no land acquisition required for this project.

Is planning permission required?

Yes	X	**No**	

If yes, have you engaged with the Local Planning Authority? Please provide a summary of considerations (will a PAC be required? Will Pre-app advice be sought?) (**max 100 words**).

A Pre-Application Consultation (PAC) will be undertaken for this project and a PAC report will be submitted. An initial presentation was made to key internal stakeholders including a Planning Officer on 7th August 2025. This presentation also provided the opportunity for questions to be asked and observations to be shared. The PAC period is currently live, running from 15th December 2025 until 23rd January 2026.

Active Travel / Highways

Have you engaged with the Local Highway Authority and Active Travel Officer? Please provide a summary of considerations (**max 100 words**).

An initial presentation was made to key internal stakeholders including a Highways Officer on 7th August 2025. This presentation also provided the opportunity for questions to be asked and observations to be shared. This project will include a review of safe routes to school and, if required, an investment in improvements to walkways, road crossings and traffic calming measures to ensure the required safety standards are met. Where possible, we will look to increase opportunities for pupils, staff and the community to walk/cycle/scooter to school. The promotion and implementation of active travel will also feature within the design of the new school.

If the proposal involves changes to the location of one or more schools/ nurseries/ colleges, how does the proposed location support the sustainable transport hierarchy, which prioritises walking, then cycling, then public transport over private car use. (**max 100 words**).

n/a

How will you encourage pupils and staff to use walking, cycling, and public transport to travel to and from school? (**max 100 words**).

A significant number of pupils use home to school transport as some travel from as far as 10 miles each morning and afternoon. However, as above, a review of the safe routes to school will be completed, and an investment made to improve walkways, road crossings and traffic calming measures, where required to ensure safety standards are met. RCTCBC and the school will proactively implement an Active Travel Plan to promote access to and throughout the external environment. The promotion of active travel features within the design of the new school.

	Yes / No	**Please provide evidence and attach any relevant documents.**

Have you undertaken any travel or traffic assessments? If so, please attach these.	Travel / Traffic Assessments will be completed as the design process progresses.	

For new locations, please estimate the change in travel distances for pupils and staff.	n/a	*E.g. analysing pupil location data*
Are your proposals already reflected on your local authority's Active Travel Network Map?	RCTCBC will proactively implement an Active Travel Plan to promote access to and throughout the external environment. The promotion of active travel will also feature within the design of the new school.	(i.e. is the location connected to an existing or planned active travel route?)
If the location is not currently served by appropriate walking and cycling routes, will these be in place by the time of opening?	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 new school. This assessment will look at the current capacity of the highway, and the impact of any increase in traffic flow, not just on the highway but also on pedestrian and cycling routes.	*E.g. Developer contribution, SRiC or AT Funding*

What steps have you taken to minimise the need for car parking spaces on site?	Car sharing amongst staff will be promoted and encouraged to help with reducing the amount of traffic in the area and with the reduction in vehicle emissions. Electric vehicle charging points will be provided as part of this project, for both school and community use.	
Is there a travel plan already in place? If so, please attach a copy. If not, when will it be prepared? And who will monitor the travel plan	As a part of the detailed design work required, a Traffic Impact Assessment will be undertaken focussing on	
and review it on a regular basis?	both the immediate and surrounding area of the new school. This assessment will look at the current capacity of the highway, and the impact of any increase in traffic flow, not just on the highway but also on pedestrian and cycling routes.	
Have you considered making the access area a School Streets area? (A school street is where the area outside one or more schools is closed to traffic at the start and end of each school day)	This will be considered as the detailed design of the new school progresses.	
Are there programmes that will encourage and enable active travel already in place or planned?	RCTCBC will proactively implement an Active Travel Plan to promote access to and throughout the external environment. The promotion of active travel will also feature within the design of the new school.	*E.g. Kerbcraft, cycle training, participation in Active Journeys, Walking promotion, cycle to work scheme, car / lift sharing?*

Flooding/Drainage

Will Sustainable Drainage Approval Body (SAB) approval be required?

Yes	X	**No**	

If yes, have you engaged with the SAB Authority? Please provide a summary of considerations. (max 100 words)

An initial presentation was made to key internal stakeholders including a SAB Officer on 7th August 2025. This presentation also provided the opportunity for questions to be asked and observations to be shared.

A Sustainable Drainage System (SuDS) application will be submitted February 2026 for Sustainable Drainage Approving Body (SAB) approval prior to the commencement of works.

Does the project include an area within a flood zone as per the current and proposed technical advice note 15?

Yes	X	**No**	

If yes, please outline how this will be managed:

A limited part of the site is located with the Flood Zone 2 & 3 (Surface Water and Small Watercourses). This is located near to the existing cluster of teaching blocks southeast of the site. Management of this will be considered during the design stage. To note: the site is **not** located in a flood zone for rivers and seas.

Welsh Language

How does the project support Cymraeg 2050 strategy and the authorities' WESP or FE and Apprenticeship Welsh Medium Action Plan?

	How will the proposal support?
Local Authorities	

Outcome 1 More nursery children/ three-yearolds receive their education through the medium of Welsh.	This proposal to provide a new school with specialist equipment and suitable areas for outdoor learning and recreation for Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhondda will improve the offer of Welsh medium secondary education in this area of the county borough, which will support Outcome 1 of the WESP. Many parents/carers decide which primary school to send their children to based on where their children will transition to at a later stage. Improving the conditions and facilities of Welsh medium secondary education in this area of the County Borough will improve the continuum of learning from the earliest stages of primary education through to secondary education, ultimately supporting an increase in the number of three-yearold learners receiving their education through the medium of Welsh.
Outcome 2 More reception class children/ fiveyear-olds receive their education through the medium of Welsh.	As referred to above, many parents/ carers decide which primary school to send their children is based on where their children will transition to for their secondary education. Improving the conditions and facilities of Welsh medium secondary education in this area of the county borough will improve the continuum of learning from primary through to secondary education, ultimately supporting an increase in the number of five-year-old learners receiving their education through the medium of Welsh.

Outcome 3 More children continue to improve their Welsh language skills when transferring from one stage of their statutory education to another.	This proposal will support children to continue to improve their Welsh language skills as they transfer through different stages of their education through supporting the continuum of learning from primary to secondary education. A new school building for this Welsh medium secondary school will ensure an equitable offer for secondary education in this area of the County Borough where many of the surrounding English medium secondary schools have benefitted from investment in recent years. More specifically, this proposal will support the numbers transferring from year 6 to year 7 which is a critical stage of their statutory education. If they choose to transfer to English medium secondary school at this stage, it can negatively impact the opportunities available to continue to improve their Welsh language skills. This proposal includes the offer of exceptional facilities for Welsh medium sixth form education which in turn, should aid the retention of Welsh medium learners at this key stage of their education in this area of the County Borough.
Outcome 4 More learners study for assessed qualifications in Welsh (as a subject) and subjects through the medium of Welsh.	As this is a Welsh medium school, all qualifications are conducted through the medium of Welsh. Building a new school with first-class facilities will significantly improve the offer of Welsh medium secondary education available in this area of the County Borough. In turn, this should support the retention of learners throughout the statutory stages of secondary education which in turn will increase the number of learners studying for assessed qualifications in Welsh (as a subject) and subjects through the medium of Welsh.

Outcome 5 More opportunities for learners to use Welsh in different contexts in school.	Included in this proposal is the development of suitable areas for outdoor learning and recreation, providing opportunities for learners to use Welsh in different contexts in school, outside of the classroom. The Council's Youth, Engagement and Participation Service (YEPS) work closely with Welsh language organisations Menter Iaith Rhondda Cynon Taf and the Urdd to host a range of opportunities for learners to use Welsh in different contexts in school. This includes: • YEPS host after-school clubs • Menter Iaith host Welsh language youth forums at the school • Urdd host sports activities through the medium of Welsh at the school This collaborative working will continue and will be strengthened when the new school opens, to ensure all facilities are being optimised to ensure a wide range of opportunities are available for learners to use Welsh in different contexts.
Outcome 6 An increase in the provision of Welshmedium education for pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) (in accordance with the duties imposed by the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018.	Delivering a new school with improved conditions and facilities will strengthen the provision of Welsh medium education for pupils with additional learning needs educated in mainstream settings in this area of the County Borough. For pupils who require more intensive support, there is provision available through the medium of Welsh at Ysgol Garth Olwg following the opening of a dedicated unit to support learners with additional learning needs in September 2023.

Outcome 7 Increase the number of teaching staff able to teach Welsh (as a subject) and teach through the medium of Welsh.	Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhondda and Ysgol Llanhari are in partnership with the University of Wales Trinity Saint David to support the delivery of teaching programmes for students completing their PGCE/recently completed their PGCE. The school will continue to work with the university through this partnership to ensure there are sufficient staff available at the school to deliver a broad range of qualifications through the medium of Welsh.
Further Education	
Ensuring that learners are provided with support and information to progress along the Welsh language continuum in post-16 education and training and onto post-19 where appropriate.	
Create an improved infrastructure to enable learners to increase the level of learning undertaken through the medium of Welsh.	
Build and extend existing staff development opportunities to enable post-16 education and training providers to increase the level of Welsh-medium provision.	
Engage effectively with employers to enable effective skills planning to take place.	

Has a Welsh Language Impact Assessment been undertaken?

Yes	x	**No**	

If yes, please provide a copy – This was provided at SOC and is available if required.

If no, please outline why this has not been required.

Digital Inclusion

Please confirm if you have considered whether the school/college internet provision can be opened to allow for public access (e.g. community Wi-Fi) and for ICT

equipment to be made available to support community use? What was the outcome? **(Max 100 words).**

The new school will allow for public enabled Wi-Fi which will facilitate the delivery of adult/community learning along with other community activities.
A dedicated area has been designed within the new school for the local community to safely access and benefit from use of the new facilities, both during and after the school day. ICT equipment will be included within the internal community facilities to ensure there are no members of the community who could be digitally excluded. This will enhance the already well-used community facilities and allow for the further expansion of wider community engagement.

Benefits

Please outline how the project supports the investment objectives of the Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme **(max 100 words).**

This project will:

- Deliver a significant improvement in the quality of the educational provision, having a noteworthy positive impact upon the educational performance of the pupils and staff morale.
- Be built to be net zero carbon in operation with a BREEAM rating of 'excellent', in accordance with current requirements of planning and building control legislation.
- Be fully accessible and compliant with the Equality Act 2010.
- Have dedicated facilities 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 will 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 the objectives in our Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP).

Provide an overview of facilities available to the community **(max 100 Words).**

There will be areas designed within the new school for the local community to safely access and benefit from use of the new facilities, both during and after the school day. This will enhance the already well-used community facilities and allow for the further expansion of wider community engagement. The project will include a community room with ICT equipment whereby there could be an offer of ICT support, Welsh learners' sessions etc. Also, the existing offer of internal, and external sports facilities for community use will be strengthened – this includes a much-improved sports hall and an all-weather sports pitch.

Economic Case

Short listed options:

- **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 reconstruction 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.

Preferred way forward? Why?

The preferred way forward is Option Three - Most Ambitious. This option has now been renamed the preferred way forward. Building a new school for Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhondda and creating modern and accessible provision, will ensure that RCTCBC can continue to recognise the importance of **Cymraeg 2050**, and achieve the vision that **Rhondda Cynon Taf's WESP** sets out. This option:

- 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.
- Would be built to be net zero carbon in operation with a BREEAM rating of 'Excellent'.
- Would be built in accordance with current requirements of planning and building control legislation.
- Would be fully accessible and compliant with the Equality Act 2010.
- Would deliver a fully accessible and fully integrated community school. A dedicated area is designed within so that the local community will be able to safely use the facilities, both during and after the school day.
- Would deliver external areas that would allow staff, pupils, and the community to experience a greater breadth of teaching and learning experiences.

Financial Case

Size and Cost Standard Proposed Area:

	Area (m^2)
New build	Circa 8,888m2
Light Refurbishment (to facilitate a single-phase build)	Circa 1,200m2
Medium Refurbishment	0
Heavy Refurbishment	0
Total	Circa 8,888m2 (+ refurb)

Is the scheme being designed in accordance with the relevant Building Bulletin or FE Space Norms? (Please outline which guidance has been used for the project)

This project will be designed and built in accordance with the Area Guidelines for Schools in Wales: Building Guidance. Also, in accordance with current requirements of planning and building control legislation and will be fully accessible and compliant with the Equality Act 2010.

Breakdown of areas:

Schools	**Proposed Area (m^2)**	**Colleges**	**Proposed Area (m^2)**
Childcare	n/a	n/a	n/a

Nursery	n/a	n/a	n/a
Primary	n/a	n/a	n/a
Secondary	Circa 8,888m2 New Build Circa 1,200m2 Refurbishment	n/a	
Post 16		n/a	
ALN		n/a	
Other (please specify)		n/a	
Total	**8,888m2** **(+ Refurb)**	**Total**	

Please provide justification for any areas in excess of the relevant Building Bulletin or Space Norms.

The size of the sports hall, and the inclusion of a multi-gym is showing above the recommended guidelines for a school of this size.
Community use of facilities is integral to the school and its relationship with various stakeholders. The proposal includes the opportunity for the ever-growing community netball groups as part of the Rhondda Netball group to compete at a 'Club' level, and includes the provision of spectator seating and digital score board to facilitate this.
The school have extremely strong links with Rhondda Schools Rugby and the Welsh Rugby Union. Rhondda Schools Rugby have 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 alongside the improved internal and external facilities. The enhanced sports facilities and the availability of a multi-gym will support the retention of Sixth Form pupils in Welsh medium education and be a significant incentive for pupils to remain at Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhondda, as opposed to opting for local Sixth Form Colleges and their BTEC Sport/Rugby academy provision.

Breakdown of cost:

	Cost (£)
Construction cost	Please see Project Cost Template at Appendix G.
ICT	
FFE	
NZC	
Abnormals	£REDACTED
Total	**£77,500,000.00**

Provide a breakdown of abnormal costs (including allocated cost for each):

Historic maps and information indicate the school site was previously used for industrial purposes including a quarry and tramway sidings, hence detailed sitespecific investigation works with the appropriate enabling and demolition works along with clearance of the existing buildings is required, allowing the area to be developed into a new school for Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhondda. The abnormal costs for this project are outlined below;

Item	Cost (£)	
REDACTED	REDACTED	REDACTED
REDACTED	REDACTED	
REDACTED	REDACTED	
REDACTED	REDACTED	
REDACTED	REDACTED	
REDACTED	REDACTED	
REDACTED	REDACTED	
REDACTED	REDACTED	REDACTED
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REDACTED	REDACTED	

REDACTED	REDACTED
REDACTED	REDACTED
REDACTED	REDACTED
REDACTED	REDACTED
Total	**£** REDACTED

The school site is challenging with significant level changes. It is proposed that the new school be built on the existing school site of Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhondda, which was selected as no other suitable sites were available. Historic maps and information indicate the school site was previously used for industrial purposes including a quarry and tramway sidings, therefore, detailed site-specific investigation works with the appropriate enabling and demolition works along with clearance of the existing buildings and site are required. Robust site surveys and investigations have been undertaken that have aided the design of the new school. The topography and the nature of the site are extremely challenging, with circa 25m level difference from the highest to the lowest part of the school site. A significant proportion of the project costs are considered 'abnormal' as listed above.

Funding

Breakdown of funding

		Funding (£)	Percentage (%)
Welsh Government Grant		47,925,137.00	65%
Welsh Government NZC		3,769,020.00	100%
LA/FEI	General Capital Funding	25,805,843.00	35%
	Capital Receipts		
	S106 Contributions		
	Reserves		
	Borrowing		
	Other		
Total		77,500,000.00	

Please outline any other Welsh Government grants allocated to support the proposal.

There will be no other Welsh Government grants allocated to support this project.

Please confirm LA or College funding has been approved.

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 school net zero carbon in operation. This project has Cabinet approval.

A current Programme Funding Forecast is required at business case submission, if not included, the submission will not be taken forward for scrutiny.

<u>Commercial Case</u>

How will the project be procured? **(Max 100 words)**

This project will be managed and delivered jointly by RCTCBC's 21st Century Schools Team and Corporate Estates Team. The procurement approach is achieved in accordance with the European Consolidated Procurement Directives, supplemented by RCTCBC's Financial Regulations, Standing Orders for Contracts and Procurement and Commissioning Strategy. The engagement of a specialist main construction contractor is via the South East and Mid Wales Collaborative Construction (SEWSCAP4) Framework.

What are the proposed contractual relationships? **(Max 100 words)**

Please see above.

Confirmation a project bank account will be utilised?

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.

Provide an overview of the approach to maximising community benefits? **(Max 100 words)**

A Community Benefits Strategy was agreed by RCTCBC and its appointed consultants, AECOM Ltd, as part of the tender process. Contractors were asked to provide a method statement that demonstrated their proposed approach to community engagement that fully aligns with the aims of this project.

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

Community Benefits will be an agenda item at client meetings and an initial meeting has been held with the Social Value Manager for Kier, with a meeting scheduled with the school to discuss their ambitions to support pupils, staff and the wider community.

Management Case

Overview of governance arrangements for project **(max 100 words).**

- RCTCBC has experienced officers 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.
- PRINCE 2 methodology will be used in managing the activities and outputs of this project.

- This project will meet the Welsh Government's 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.