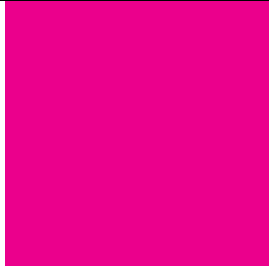


**21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY SCHOOLS – EDUCATION AND INCLUSION SERVICES DIRECTORATE  
RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL**



**STRATEGIC OUTLINE CASE**

**YSGOL GYFUN CWM RHONDDA**



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## **Foreword**

I am pleased to submit to Welsh Government (WG) this Strategic Outline Case (SOC). This SOC relates to a new school for Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhondda in Rhondda Cynon Taf (RCT).

In RCT, improving education has been made 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:

***'To deliver equity and excellence in Education and enhanced well-being for all'.***

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 well-being of our learners and the workforce.
5. Delivering 21<sup>st</sup> Century learning environments and innovative services for our learners and communities.

These strategic priorities can only be achieved if the schools in RCT are vibrant, selfimproving, 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 national and local recovery and reform.

Building on the success of RCTCBC's Band A and Band B 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools and Education Programme, this project will make a vital contribution towards delivering their 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 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

**Paul Mee Chief Executive, RCTCBC**

## **1. Executive Summary**

This proposal aims to build a new Welsh medium secondary school for Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhondda (YGCR), with new teaching facilities for 750 pupils (ages 11-16) and 150 sixth form pupils, accumulating to 900 pupils.

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 1960/70)
- Block 03 – New three storey teaching block

- Block 04 – Single storey specialist teaching block (possibly CLASP construction built 1960/70)
- Block 05 – Victorian teaching block
- Block 06 – Teaching block with main hall and sixth form
- Block 07 – Former Caretakers 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 hall/dining area, sports hall, and specialist teaching and learning areas to cater for the needs of all pupils.
- Dedicated 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 onsite 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 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 New Curriculum for Wales.
- Provide sustainable and attractive Welsh Medium education opportunities to support **Welsh Government's Cymraeg 205: A Million Welsh Speakers** and our **Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP)**.

## 2. Strategic Case

### Introduction

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 SOC forms part of RCTCBC's wider Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme and forms an integral part of the Strategic Outline Programme – Rolling Programme, submitted to Welsh Government in April 2024.

### Strategic Objectives

The **Council's Corporate Plan 2024-2030, 'Working with our Communities'** sets out the following four well-being objectives:

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

The Corporate Plan sets out a vision for RCT 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 wider **RCTCBC Invest Programme**, which also includes investment in priority areas of Leisure, Play Areas, Highways and Transport Infrastructure, Housing Towns and Recycling.

RCTCBC aims to improve education provision and strives to do this while following both national and regional strategies. Some of these strategies include the **Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015**; **Qualified for Life: An Education Improvement Plan for 3-19 Year Olds in Wales**; **Future Wales: The National Plan 2040, Cymraeg 2050**; and the **Central South Consortium Joint Education Service – Business Plan 2022 – 2025**. Also ensuring we comply with the ambitious targets set in our **Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP)**.

In line with the WG's ambition for a carbon neutral public service by 2030 and the wider goal of a net zero carbon Wales by 2050, RCTCBC has committed to becoming carbon neutral by 2030. **RCTCBC's Think Climate, Making RCT Carbon Neutral by 2030, for the years 2022 to 2025**, sets out climate commitments which underpin each of these strategic priorities.

RCTCBC's **Education and Inclusion Services Strategic Plan for 2022-2025**, focuses on delivering the following strategic priorities:

**Priority 1:** Developing a highly skilled educational workforce and excellent leadership at all levels.

**Priority 2:** Supporting educational settings to deliver a transformational curriculum, high quality teaching and learning and improved outcomes for all.

**Priority 3:** Ensuring equity and support for vulnerable learners and their families.

**Priority 4:** Enhancing the well-being of our learners and the workforce.

**Priority 5:** Delivering 21st Century learning environments and innovative services for our learners and communities.

These strategic priorities can only be achieved if the schools in RCT are vibrant, selfimproving, 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 national and local recovery and reform.

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

### **Wider Context**

This project will support the wellbeing objectives set out in the **Welsh Government's Programme for Government, for the years 2021 to 2026**, strengthening and increasing the offer of Welsh language education provision, transforming learning environments, developing net-zero carbon schools and opening these facilities for community use.

Due regard has been made to all seven well-being goals and the five ways of working, as contained within the **Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015**, which requires RCTCBC to think about the long-term impact of decisions on communities to prevent consistent issues such as poverty, health inequalities and climate change.

This project will also support the WG's ambition of a carbon neutral public service by 2030 and the wider goal of a net zero carbon Wales by 2050 as set out in the **WG's Net Zero Carbon Strategic Plan: 2022**.

In addition, this project will also support WG in achieving the ambitious targets set out in **Cymraeg 2050: A Million Welsh Speakers**. All pupils will benefit from having the opportunity to be taught using the Welsh language, in brand new facilities fit for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

The redevelopment of Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhondda will support the development of **Community Focused Schools in Wales**. The new school will be a fully accessible and fully integrated community school. A dedicated area including a dedicated access will be designed so that the local community are able to safely use the facilities, both during and after the school day. Use of the facilities will respond to the local need of the community but could provide greater opportunities for adult learning, for example Welsh language classes for adults.

In April 2021, the **Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act 2021** became law, in relation to the New Curriculum for Wales, to be implemented from September 2022. The redevelopment of the school site will be designed to support and enhance the delivery of a balanced curriculum at all key stages in line with the new Curriculum for Wales, whilst brand new facilities fit for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century will allow for greater choice and variety in pupils' learning experiences.

In March 2023, **Welsh Government's Our national mission: high standards and aspirations for all** established a roadmap highlighting the government and education system's priorities to ensure the success, high standards and wellbeing for all learners. The improvement to YG Cwm Rhondda will support the aims and objectives, tackling the impact of poverty on attainment and ambition, supporting pupils whatever their background to be healthy, engaged, enterprising and ethical citizens. A new, modern school building will provide excellent education opportunities, supporting the New Curriculum for Wales.

This aligns with the strategic priorities of **Medr**, as set out in the **Tertiary Education and Research (Wales) Act 2022**.

- Developing a tertiary system that prepares learners for a dynamic and changing economy where all can acquire the skills and knowledge they need to succeed in life and work.
- Maintaining and enhancing the quality of the tertiary system; continuing and intensifying work on widening participation; and taking steps to ensure a more equitable and excellent system for all.
- Putting the learner at the heart of the system by focusing on the experience of learners in the tertiary system and their well-being.
- Ensuring that the tertiary education system contributes to the economy and society.
- Establishing the Commission for Tertiary Education and Research (now Medr) as a highly effective organisation, providing stability and leadership during transition.

This project will also address the key programme investment objectives of the **WG's Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme**, namely:

1. Transforming learning environments and learner experience, in turn supporting the delivery of Curriculum of Wales.
2. Meeting demand for school places, actively supporting the delivery of RCT's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP).
3. Improving the condition and suitability of the education estate, reducing backlog maintenance, and improving category and suitability buildings.
4. Developing sustainable learning environments, in line with the Welsh Government's Carbon Reduction Commitments, whilst enhancing the surrounding biodiversity and supporting active travel.
5. Supporting the community, optimising the use of infrastructure and resources to deliver public services working in collaboration with schools, staff, governing bodies, families, and the community. Also, maximising community benefits and social value through the supply chain.

## **Education: Case for Change**

### **Investment Objectives**

To enable the best use of monies available, RCTCBC has agreed key Investment Objectives (IO) 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 IO for transforming and reorganising education provision in RCT have been formulated through discussion and debate with RCTCBC's Directorate of Education and Inclusion Services Senior Management Team and 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Team. They are:

**1. Supporting Delivery of the New Curriculum for Wales** – Creating flexible and forward-thinking educational buildings and external environments that facilitate the delivery of the **New Curriculum for Wales** and meet the aspirations of the WG's **Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme** and RCTCBC's Directorate of **Education and Inclusion Services Education Strategic Plan 2022 to 2025** and provide all pupils with the best opportunities to reach their full potential.

- RCTCBC seeks to develop and deliver school and community facilities that provide educational, cultural, sporting, creative and recreational enrichment activities for all pupils and the wider community.

**2. Inclusion and Equality** – To provide inclusive and accessible facilities for all.

- RCTCBC will provide fully accessible facilities offering equality of access and opportunity for all pupils and staff.

**3. Enhancing the Wellbeing of our Pupils and Workforce** – To provide high quality and flexible educational spaces suitable for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and ensure these assets are available for community use.

- RCTCBC seeks to provide educational and recreational facilities which optimise the use of a school site, provide opportunities for outdoor learning and activities, and enhance the external environment and the biodiversity of our school estate.

**4. Sustainable Facilities Fit for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century** – Creating efficient and effective educational infrastructure and providing educational facilities that meet the aspirations of the WG's **Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme** and RCTCBC's Directorate of **Education and Inclusion Services Education Strategic Plan 2022 to 2025**.

- RCTCBC seeks to develop and deliver stimulating and sustainable schools through the better use of resources, with improved ICT infrastructure, improved overall efficiencies and cost effectiveness. RCTCBC seeks to reduce energy

consumption, meeting the net zero carbon agenda and supporting delivery of RCTCBC's **Think Climate, Making RCT Carbon Neutral by 2030**, for the years 2022 to 2025.

## **Benefits**

Many benefits could be realised from meeting this projects IO. A new school for Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhondda will 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. Accommodation will consist of:

- Modern, flexible learning environments for all pupils, a hall/dining area, sports hall and specialist teaching and learning areas to cater for the needs of all pupils.
- A dedicated area within so that the local community will be allowed to safely use the facilities, both during and after the school day.
- Enhanced outdoor spaces to support the full range of curriculum activities.
- Traffic management systems including on-site pupil bus drop off, and on-site staff and visitor parking with EV charging points and cycle storage.

A Quantitative Benefits Template can be seen at **Appendix A** which sets set out the main quantitative benefits associated with this project.

## **Risks**

At an early stage, an initial risk identification workshop was held to identify risks, this led to the creation of a Risk Register.

The table that follows outlines the Key Risks and Mitigations for this project. Although the impact of these risks (should they materialise) is high, risk control measures are identified which reduces the likelihood of them occurring, therefore the risks can be suitably managed and mitigated against.

<b>Key Risks and Mitigations</b>						
<b>Risk</b>	<b>Negative Impact</b>	<b>Likelihood *</b>	<b>Impact *</b>	<b>Score **</b>	<b>Risk Control Measure(s)</b>	<b>Risk Control Measure Owner(s)</b>
Funding not secured.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project abandoned.</li> </ul>	2	5	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop compelling business cases.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RCTCBC's 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Team.</li> </ul>
Feasibility unproven.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project abandoned.</li> </ul>	2	5	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Detailed feasibility study will be undertaken.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RCTCBC's 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Team.</li> <li>• RCTCBC's Corporate Estates Team.</li> </ul>
Tenders above estimates.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capital costs increase and project delayed.</li> </ul>	3	5	15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appoint PM/CM with a high level of relevant experience.</li> <li>• Develop appropriate Procurement Strategy with contingency costs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RCTCBC's 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Team.</li> <li>• RCTCBC's Corporate Estates Team.</li> <li>• RCTCBC's Procurement Team.</li> </ul>

Construction overruns.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased capital costs.</li> <li>Delayed opening.</li> </ul>	3	4	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appoint PM/CM with high level skills and experience.</li> <li>Develop and implement appropriate Procurement Strategy.</li> <li>Stringent management of construction works – appoint works supervisor with high level skills and experience.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RCTCBC's 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Team. RCTCBC's Corporate Estates Team. RCTCBC's Procurement Team.</li> </ul>
Low level of public support for this project.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Negative press.</li> <li>Project undermined.</li> </ul>	1	3	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop compelling business cases.</li> <li>Develop Marketing and Public Relations strategy.</li> <li>Develop high quality community consultation process.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RCTCBC's 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Team. RCTCBC's Corporate Estates Team. RCTCBC's Strategic Communications and Marketing Team.</li> </ul>

Construction costs increase beyond original estimates, due to several unforeseen reasons arising from risk and uncertainty.	Increased costs with insufficient funds to complete this project.	3	5	15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop appropriate Procurement Strategy with contingency costs to be built in.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RCTCBC's 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Team. RCTCBC's</li> <li>• Corporate Estates Team. RCTCBC's Procurement</li> <li>• Team.</li> </ul>
* 1 (Low) – 5 (High).						
** Ranked Scores: 1 – 8 (Low), 9 – 15 (Medium) 16 – 24 (High) 25 (Critical)						

## Constraints

A major constraint is managing the 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 forms an integral part of RCTCBC's and WG's Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme, delivering high standard education in modern, wellmanaged, nurturing learning facilities, ensuring the best possible breadth and depth of curriculum for all pupils, and in turn, delivering improved outcomes.

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

- YG Cwm Rhondda
- RCTCBC
- Welsh Government • Local community groups.

## Demographics/School Information

YG Cwm Rhondda is a Welsh medium secondary school, located in Cymmer, Porth. The school is made up of six buildings varying in construction methods, across several level changes.

**Block 01** – Sports Block

**Block 02** – Teaching block, split over four levels (CLASP construction built 1960/70)

**Block 03** – New three storey teaching block

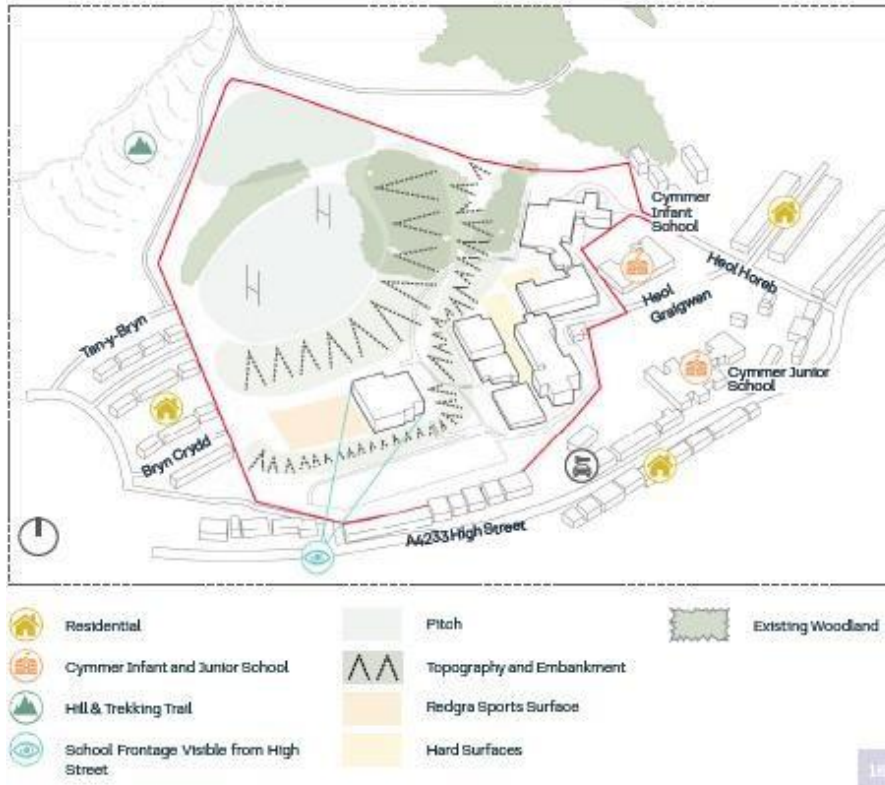
**Block 04** – Single storey specialist teaching block (CLASP construction built 1960/70)

**Block 05** – Victorian teaching block

**Block 06** – Teaching block with main hall and sixth form



The existing school site is bordered by residential streets, and vegetation to the north. Cymmer Infants and Cymmer Junior Schools are adjacent to the northeast and southeast side boundaries.



There are currently 625 pupils (Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC 2025)) accessing Welsh medium education at Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhondda.

There are 5 Welsh medium associated primary schools within the cluster of YG 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 YG 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.'*

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

## Data Analysis

The table 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.

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

- The data demonstrates a decrease in the number of pupils who accessed their education in Welsh medium 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%.

The table that follows outlines the total number pupils who accessed their education in all Welsh medium schools between the academic years 2018/19 and 2023 /24.

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

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 primary schools has varied in different parts of the Borough.

The following table shows the projected pupil data for YG Cwm Rhondda between academic years 2024/25 and 2028/29.

<b>Projected Number of Pupils for YGCR (between the academic Years 2024/25 and 2028/29, for Years 7-13.</b>					
	<b>Academic Year (PLASC)</b>				
	<b>2024/25</b>	<b>2025/26</b>	<b>2026/27</b>	<b>2027/28</b>	<b>2028/29</b>
<b>Total</b>	625	652	654	650	647

- The data 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.

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

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

### **Proposal**

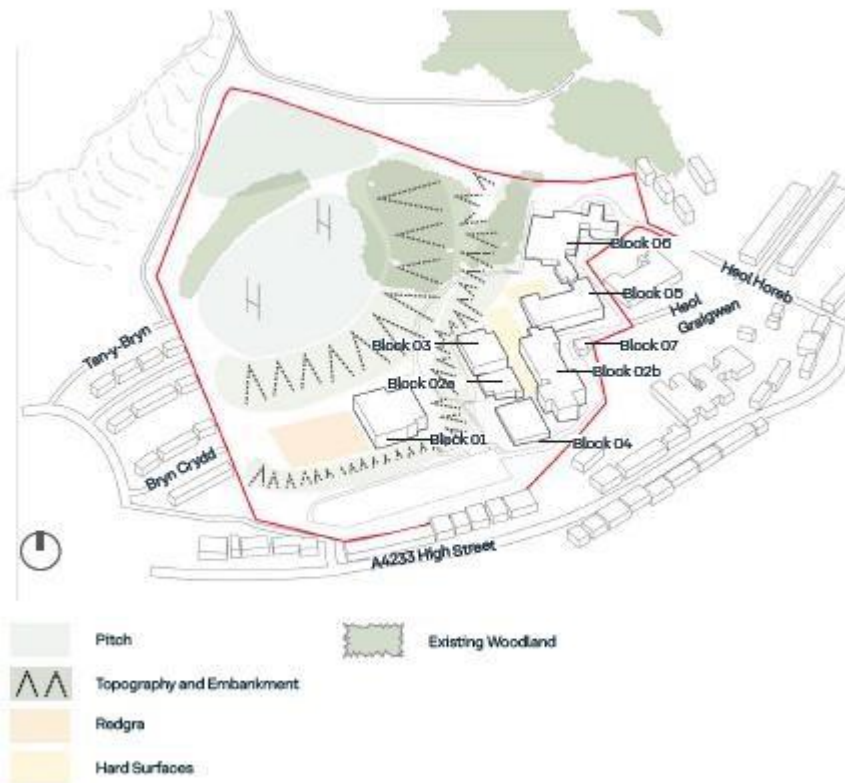
Several sites to accommodate a new school for Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhondda have been appraised by members of Education and Inclusion Services and Corporate Estates SLT using the following criteria:

- Ownership.
- Have an adequate site area.
- Have 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.

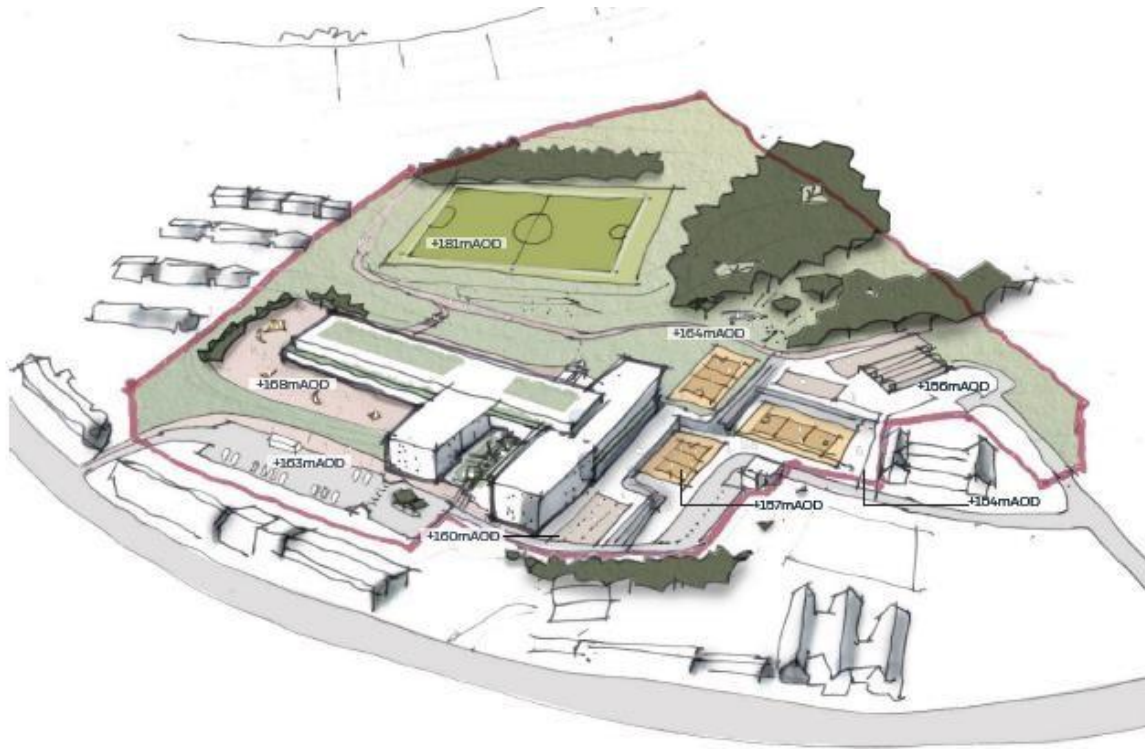
It has been deemed there are no viable areas that are large enough nor have suitable access within the catchment area of the school. Therefore, the preferred location for the new school would be on the existing school site, Heol Graigwen, Cymer, Porth CF39 9HA. The image that follows shows an aerial view of the existing site.



The image that follows shows the existing site plan of Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhondda.



The image below outlines model testing to demonstrate a 'fit to site' for a new school to accommodate 900 pupils (750 pupils (11-16) and 150 sixth form pupils)



## **Welsh Medium Education Provision**

All Councils in Wales must produce a **Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP)**. RCT Council's 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, a few of which are relevant to this project are:

- 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 new Curriculum for Wales.

In addition, the redevelopment of YGCR 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 WG's ambitious goal of creating a million Welsh speakers in Wales by 2050.

A Welsh Language Impact Assessment has been prepared and is available on request.

The outcome of the Welsh Language Impact Assessment identified positive and neutral impacts, and no negative impacts, and so it was deemed that approval would be sought to continue to implement this proposal. To confirm, the Action Plan included within the Welsh Language Impact Assessment will continue to be reviewed throughout the duration of this project's delivery period.

### **Additional Learning Needs Provision**

As with all mainstream schools in RCT, YGCR recognises pupils may have additional learning needs at any time during their school journey. The school aims to create an environment that meets the needs of each pupil, and ensures the educational needs are identified, assessed, and provided for to enable all pupils to have full access to all elements of the school curriculum.

RCTCBC has an excellent range of specialist provision for pupils with significant needs who experience difficulties in coping with mainstream education. There are currently:

- 49 Learning Support Classes (LSCs).
- 2 Pupil Referral Units.
- 4 Special Schools (three for pupils aged 3 to 19 and one for pupils aged 11 to 19).

Currently, Welsh medium learners with Additional Learning Needs (ALN), who experience difficulties within mainstream primary and secondary schools and require more specialist support, are supported by a specialist peripatetic team – The Welsh Complex Needs Team (WCNT). The WCNT provide support through an inclusive delivery model, whereby pupils are provided with specialist support within their mainstream primary and secondary schools. Analysis suggests that pupils accessing support from The WCNT make progress that is comparable to that of their peers in equivalent English medium primary and secondary school settings.

There is also a new 3 to 19 special school being built in RCT on a new site, significantly growing the special school provision within the Borough and increasing the number of special schools from four to five.

### **Disability Provision**

It is proposed that the new school will 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.

## **Period Dignity**

Pupil and staff toilet / personal care facilities will be situated throughout the new school buildings in accordance with the recommendations set out in Building Bulletin 98 and the Education (School) Premises Regulations 1999. The new facilities will be designed in accordance with any updates to statutory and non-statutory guidance following the UK Supreme Court judgment in *For Women Scotland v The Scottish Ministers*.

## **Child Poverty**

The vision of WG is for a Wales *“That enables children and young people to access their rights, have good wellbeing and fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances (including their socio-economic circumstances)”*.

The new school development supports each objective, ensuring learners are supported educationally and socially.

Cwtch y Cwm is a community area within the existing school that is a safe space for learners and their families. Items such as uniform, personal hygiene products, dried food items are accessible for those who may need it. The school are keen to develop this provision where a dedicated community space could allow this service to expand, and support be available for families/carers to take part in sessions to reduce costs, maximise income and support learners and family wellbeing.

## **Equality Impact Assessment**

An Equality Impact Assessment has been prepared for this proposal.

The outcome of the Equality Impact Assessment identified positive and neutral impacts, and no negative impacts, upon the protected characteristics and so it was deemed that approval would be sought to continue to implement this proposal. To confirm, the Action Plan included within the Equality Impact Assessment will continue to be reviewed throughout the duration of this project's delivery period.

## **Children's Rights Impact Assessment**

A Children's Rights Impact Assessment has been prepared for this proposal.

## **Youth Engagement**

RCTCBC acknowledges that the voice of children and young people is about involving them as active participants in the development, delivery, management, and improvement of their educational experience.

Children and young people have a right to express their views in all matters affecting them and for their views to be heard and considered in accordance with their age and maturity. As such, RCTCBC's Directorate of Education and Inclusion Services 21<sup>st</sup>

Century Schools Team will ensure that suitable arrangements are made to involve the learners who attend YG Cwm Rhondda as active participants throughout the project.

## **Built Environment**

### **Local Development Plan**

RCTCBC are preparing a revised Local Development Plan (LDP) for 2022-2037. This will replace the LDP for RCT 2006-2021.

A formal review of the current LDP for RCT was considered necessary in 2019, whereby the primary conclusion was that it was necessary to begin preparation of a fully Revised LDP. In September 2020, formal preparation began of a revision of the Local Development Plan which would have been for the years 2020 to 2030. It was decided in March 2022, to begin a new revised Local Development Plan for the years 2022 to 2037. A Delivery Agreement was prepared for the new revised Local Development Plan.

The Delivery Agreement for the new revised Local Development Plan sets out a timetable for the preparation stages of the new revised Local Development Plan and the Community Involvement Scheme (CIS) indicating how RCTCBC will engage with people in the process. Further information on the Delivery Agreement for the new revised Local Development plan can be found on RCTCBC's website.

### **Active Travel**

There is a statutory duty placed on all Councils in Wales to provide pupils with free transport to their nearest suitable school if they reside beyond safe 'walking distance' to that school. The term suitable school applies to the catchment area English, Welsh, dual language or voluntary aided mainstream primary, secondary, special school or specialist provision class as appropriate.

The law relating to safe "walking distance" is defined as two miles for learners of compulsory school age receiving primary education and three miles for learners of compulsory school age receiving secondary education.

From September 2025, the eligibility criterion for walking distance for learners receiving compulsory secondary education (years 7-11), at their nearest suitable school, has been set at 3 miles, in line with the Welsh Government statutory distance criteria. Free transport is provided to post 16 learners who meet the 3-mile eligibility criterion for two years after the end of compulsory education, rather than until the end of compulsory education (the last Friday in June of the school year in which a learner reaches the age of 16), as required by the Measure. This provision applies to full time attendance at the nearest suitable school or college to the learner's home at which the approved course of study that they wish to pursue is offered.

A large proportion of pupils (approximately 68%) attending YG Cwm Rhondda use home to school transport. There are 9 coaches and 1 taxi currently serving the school.

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. This is the approach that has been implemented within other communities through the delivery of the RCTCBC's Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme, which has seen significant improvements being made. Where possible, RCTCBC will seek to increase the opportunities for pupils, staff and members of the community, to walk or cycle to school. 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.

In addition, 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 Traffic Impact 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.

RCTCBC conducts regular monitoring and reviews of air quality to determine compliance with statutory Air Quality Objectives, set by the UK Government to protect public health. Information associated to air quality and the impact on residents will be included within the Traffic Impact Assessment.

### **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** – Bringing services to people in order 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 services and infrastructure.
- Priority 3** – Engage people to make the change to more sustainable transport.

The school is in walking distance to 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.

### **Community Use of Facilities**

The school have strong relationships with several local community groups who use the school facilities outside of school hours. As previously mentioned, the new school will be fully accessible with dedicated areas designed within so that the local community will be able to safely use the facilities, both during and after the school day.

The school will allow for public enabled Wi-Fi which can facilitate the delivery of adult learning and other community activities.

### **Sports and Outdoor Facilities**

The school has existing arrangements with local sports clubs who use the existing indoor facilities for netball (grassroots to seniors), cricket, football and basketball, and outdoor for rugby, all outside of the school hours. The continuity of this provision will be managed as best as possible to benefit the existing relationships and the community groups who benefit from the space.

The new school will support learners to realise 4 purposes of the new Curriculum for Wales, which aims for students to become:

- **Ambitious, capable learners**, ready to learn throughout their lives
- **Enterprising, creative contributors**, ready to play a full part in life and work
  - **Ethical, informed citizens** of Wales and the world
  - **Healthy, confident individuals**, ready to lead fulfilling lives as

To support learners to realise the four purposes, the design of the new school will include a range of flexible learning spaces, including open-plan areas, individual learning areas and discussion zones. It will also include innovative outdoor learning facilities, including outdoor classrooms and utilising the existing woodland as a habitat area as well as sports pitch and Multi Use Games Area (MUGA).

### **Environment (Wales) Act 2016**

To manage surface water and to maintain green spaces, several options will be explored that both protect the site against flood risk, but crucially enhance both the ecological value of the site and maximise the educational and amenity value of the school, providing an opportunity for active learning.

Consideration will be given to the management of rainfall and surface water at the school. A Sustainable Drainage System (SuDS) application will be submitted to SuDS Approval Body (SAB) approval prior to the commencement of works.

It is proposed to adapt existing land to create outside learning spaces and habitat areas at existing woodland, where appropriate. This project will also seek to develop green infrastructure on the site that enriches local biodiversity through tree and hedgerow planting of local species, the installation of wildlife accommodation (such as bird and bat boxes), the creation of wildflower meadows and of wetland areas as part of the SuDS design.

As an organisation, RCTCBC is committed to reducing its carbon footprint, as evidenced by its aim to become carbon neutral by 2030 in line with the WG's target of a carbon neutral public sector by 2030. Renewable energy plays an important role in reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Various renewable energy sources will be investigated for use within this project as we deliver new school buildings that will be net zero carbon in operation with a BREEAM rating of 'excellent'.

Electric vehicle charging points will be provided at the school site as part of this project and will aim to be designed to allow community access to the charging points. The landscaping schemes for the school will be developed in conjunction with ecologists to ensure that appropriate local tree and plant species are utilised that will support and enhance local biodiversity potential.

The construction materials for the school will be materials which will be chosen with low embodied energy and the local context in mind, and these will be confirmed as this project progresses and detailed designs are developed. As part of RCTCBC's net zero carbon initiative and to achieve a BREEAM rating of 'excellent', local building materials will be prioritised and utilised wherever it is practicable.

### **Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015**

Due regard has been made to all seven wellbeing goals and the five ways of working, as contained within the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 which requires RCTCBC to think about the long-term impact of decisions on communities to prevent consistent issues such as poverty, health inequalities and climate change. This project could contribute towards achieving some of the seven wellbeing goals by:

- **A Prosperous Wales** – Construction will be competitively tendered, thereby achieving best value for money. Main contractors will be asked to advertise work on Sell2Wales which could provide opportunities for local businesses to tender for the construction. In turn, this could provide opportunities for local businesses to engage with the main contractor for inclusion in their supply chain, via 'Meet the Buyer' events. This would support economic activity in the area.
- **A Resilient Wales** – As part of RCTCBC's net zero carbon initiative and to achieve a BREEAM rating of 'excellent', local building materials will be prioritised and utilised wherever it is practicable.
- **A Healthier Wales** – The new school will be a fully accessible and integrated community school with a dedicated area designed within so that the local community will be able to safely use the facilities, both during and after the school day. Accommodation will consist of enhanced outdoor spaces to support the full range of curriculum activities.
- **A More Equal Wales** – The new school and the way in which it will be used will bring neutral or positive socio-economic impacts to all of the vulnerable groups.
- **A Wales of More Cohesive Communities** – Fully accessible and integrated community school with a dedicated area designed within so that the local

community will be allowed to safely use the facilities, both during and after the school day.

- **A Wales of Vibrant Culture and Thriving Welsh Language** – All pupils will benefit from having the opportunity to be taught in the medium of Welsh in brand new facilities fit for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.
- **A Globally Responsive Wales** – The new school could build upon the good working practices and initiatives already in place to further develop extra-curricular activities to encourage healthy lifestyles for the school and wider community.

This proposal could contribute towards achieving some of the five ways of working by:

- **Long Term** – This project 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.
- **Prevention** – RCTCBC believes that this proposal represents the best opportunity to safeguard and sustain educational standards for the future and provides a platform for further improvement through significant investment in permanent and fit for purpose facilities.
- **Integrations** – The new school will be a fully accessible and integrated community school. A dedicated area will be designed within so that the local community will be able to safely use the facilities, both during and after the school day.
- **Collaboration** – RCTCBC will continue to work effectively with internal and external partners to ensure the new school meets the short- and long-term needs of pupils, parents / carers, staff and the wider community.
- **Involvement** – RCTCBC's Directorate of Education and Inclusion Services 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Team will ensure that suitable arrangements will be made to involve pupils, parents / carers, staff and the wider community as active participants throughout this consultation process, and if a decision is made to progress this proposal, throughout the implementation process.

### **Net Zero Carbon**

As required by all new schools delivered in Wales from 2022, funded under the WG's Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme, this project will achieve net zero carbon in operation as a baseline.

### 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).

### Long List of Options

The long list of options for this project have been generated by a consensus of RCTCBC's Directorate of Education and Inclusion Services Senior Management Team and 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Team. Each long list of options has been evaluated against this projects Investment Objectives (IO's) and Critical Success Factors (CSFs). This has resulted in the long list of options either being discounted, carried forward for further consideration within the short list of options or identified as the preferred way forward.

The options framework used to identify the widest possible number of long list of options focussed on the following:

- **Scope Solution** – Coverage of the service to be delivered.
- **Service Solution** – How this may be done.
- **Service Delivery Solution** – Who is best placed to do this.
- **Implementation Solution** – When and in what form can it be implemented.
- **Funding Solution** – What this will cost and how it shall be paid for.

These key points are then evaluated against the project IO's and CSF's.

### IO's

**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 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

### CSF's

**1. Business Needs** – The solution must satisfy the existing and future needs of pupils. In line with the New 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 solution 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.

### Scope Solution

The scope solution options in relation to the scope of this project are shown in the table that follows along with the advantages and disadvantages of each option.

Scope Options	Solution Advantages	Disadvantages
<p><b>Business as Usual</b> Maintain current Welsh medium secondary school provision at YGCR.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoids the need for significant capital investment in the short term.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does not address poor building conditions or asbestos issues.</li> <li>• Does not fully meet this project's IO and CSF.</li> <li>• Would be an increased cost in maintaining buildings not fit for purpose.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Do Minimum</b> Demolish the Victorian building at YG Cwm Rhondda and rebuild in the same footprint.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Less capital investment required by RCTCBC.</li> <li>• The poorest condition building will be dealt with, delivering a slightly improved educational provision.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does not fully meet this project's IO and CSF.</li> <li>• Would require temporary classrooms.</li> <li>• Disruption to the wider school for one building within the school site.</li> <li>• Would be an increased cost in maintaining other buildings not fit for purpose.</li> </ul>

<b>Most Ambitious Option A</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Would deliver a significant improvement in the quality of the educational provision, having a significant positive</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Could cause some anxiety for some pupils, staff, and parents/carers.</li> </ul>
Redevelop YGCR in a phased approach with 21 <sup>st</sup> Century facilities.	<p>impact upon the educational performance of the pupils and staff morale.</p> <p>Meets all this project's IO and CSF.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Would be a fully accessible and fully integrated community school.</li> </ul> <p>Would be built in accordance with current requirements of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• planning and building control legislation and will be fully accessible and compliant with the Equality Act 2010.</li> </ul> <p>Would be built to net zero carbon in operation with a</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BREEAM rating of 'Excellent'.</li> </ul> <p>Would be designed to be energy efficient and will include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• renewable energy systems.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Significant capital investment required by RCTCBC.</li> </ul>
<b>Most Ambitious Option B</b> Build a new school on a new site with 21 <sup>st</sup> Century facilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Meets all this project's IO and CSF.</li> <li>• Would be a fully accessible and fully integrated community school.</li> <li>• Would 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.</li> <li>• Would be built to net zero carbon in operation with a BREEAM rating of 'Excellent'.</li> <li>• Would be designed to be energy efficient and will include renewable energy systems.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Could cause some anxiety for some pupils, staff, and parents/carers.</li> <li>• Significant capital investment required by RCTCBC, which could include the purchase of land.</li> <li>• Difficulty in finding a suitable site, with all the requirements for a new school.</li> <li>• Could impact on home to school transport.</li> <li>• Dependent upon the location of new site for YGCR, a statutory school organisation consultation may need to be carried out in line with the WG's School Organisation Code 2018 (11/2018).</li> <li>• Following a site appraisal, there are no suitable new sites available.</li> </ul>

## Conclusion

The table that follows summarises an evaluation of how well each of the scope solution options meets this projects IO and CSF.

Scope Solution Options – Conclusion																				
	Business as Usual					Do Minimum					Most Ambitious (A)					Most Ambitious (B)				
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
<b>IO</b>	Red	Yellow	Red	Red	Black	Yellow	Yellow	Red	Red	Black	Green	Green	Green	Green	Black	Green	Green	Yellow	Green	Black
<b>CSF</b>	Red	Yellow	Red	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Red	Yellow	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Yellow

Based on the above evaluation, the preferred way forward is the Most Ambitious (A) – To redevelop YGCR in a phased approach with 21<sup>st</sup> Century facilities This option meets all this project’s IO and CSF. The other options have been discounted.

## Service Solution

The service solution options in relation to the scope of this project are shown in the table that follows along with the advantages and disadvantages of each option.

Service Solution Options	Advantages	Disadvantages
<p><b>Business as Usual</b> Provision at YGCR remains as is, with future repairs and redecorations dealt with on a priority basis.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Avoids the need for significant capital investment in the short term.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does not address poor building conditions or asbestos issues, would be a short-term solution.</li> <li>Does not fully meet this project’s IO and CSF.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Do Minimum</b> Demolish Victorian building at YGCR and rebuild in the same footprint.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Less capital investment required by RCTCBC.</li> <li>Will improve the learning environment for some pupils and staff.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does not fully meet this project’s IO and CSF</li> <li>Would require temporary classrooms.</li> <li>Disruption to the wider school site for one small area of the school.</li> <li>Does not address poor building conditions or asbestos issues, would be a short-term solution.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Most Ambitious</b> Build a new school for YGCR with 21<sup>st</sup> Century facilities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Meets all this project's IO and CSF.</li> <li>• Would be a fully accessible and fully integrated community school.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Significant capital investment required by RCTCBC.</li> <li>• Could cause some anxiety for some pupils, staff, and parents/carers.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Would 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.</li> <li>• Would be built to net zero carbon in operation with a BREEAM rating of 'Excellent'.</li> <li>• Would be designed to be energy efficient and include renewable energy systems.</li> </ul>	

### Conclusion

The table that follows summarises an evaluation of how well each of the service solution options meets this projects IO and CSF.

Service Solution Options – Conclusion																
	Business as Usual					Do Minimum					Most Ambitious					
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	
<b>IO</b>	Red	Red	Red	Red	Black	Red	Yellow	Red	Red	Black	Green	Green	Green	Green	Black	
<b>CSF</b>	Red	Red	Red	Yellow	Red	Red	Red	Red	Yellow	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	

Based on the above evaluation, the preferred way forward is the most ambitious option – Build a new school for YGCR with 21<sup>st</sup> Century facilities. This option meets all this project's IO and CSF. The other options have been discounted.

### Service Delivery Solution

The service delivery options in relation to the scope of this project are shown in the table that follows along with the advantages and disadvantages of each option.

Service Delivery Solution Options	Advantages	Disadvantages
<b>Business as Usual</b> RCTCBC continue to project manage future repairs and redecorations of the school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Less capital investment required by RCTCBC.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does not fully meet this project's IO and CSF.</li> <li>Does not provide a long-term solution.</li> </ul>
<b>Do Minimum</b> RCTCBC to design and manage the design and construction of the Victorian teaching block.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allows RCTCBC to retain full control of this project.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does not fully meet this project's IO and CSF.</li> <li>RCTCBC does not have the skills and knowledge of specialist professional and technical advisers.</li> </ul>
<b>Most Ambitious</b> RCTCBC to commission and project manage consultant team to redevelop YGCR on the existing site, to design and build new facilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A tried and tested method of project delivery which has proved successful throughout RCTCBC's Band A 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools' Programme and Band B Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme. Meets all this project's IO and CSF.</li> <li>RCTCBC will maintain full involvement, whilst benefitting from the skills and knowledge from specialist professional and technical advisers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Would require payment of external fees.</li> </ul>

### Conclusion

The table that follows summarises an evaluation of how well each of the service delivery options meets this projects IO and CSF.

#### Service Delivery Solution - Conclusion

	Business as Usual					Do Minimum					Most Ambitious				
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
IO	Red	Red	Red	Red	Black	Red	Yellow	Red	Red	Black	Green	Green	Green	Green	Black
CSF	Red	Red	Red	Yellow	Yellow	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green

Based on the above evaluation, the preferred way forward is the most ambitious option – for RCTCBC to commission and project manage consultant team to redevelop the school on the existing site, to design and build new facilities This option meets all this project’s IO and CSF. The other options have been discounted.

### Implementation Solution

The implementation solution options in relation to the scope of this project are shown in the table that follows along with the advantages and disadvantages of each option.

Implementation Solution Options	Advantages	Disadvantages
<b>Business as Usual</b> Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• N/A</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does not fully meet this project’s IO and CSF.</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No set delivery deadlines, backlog maintenance will be rectified when school budget allows.</li> </ul>
<b>Intermediate</b> Deliver the project by September 2032.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Would deliver the solution in an achievable timescale</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does not fully meet this project’s IO and CSF.</li> </ul>
<b>Most Ambitious Option A</b> Deliver the project during 2030.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meet this project’s IO and CSF.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Would need to maintain the operation of a live school during the construction stage.</li> </ul>
<b>Most Ambitious Option B</b> Deliver the project in 2031.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Existing school can continue to operate as normal without the need to consider the construction stage.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dependant upon the location of new site for YGCR, a statutory school organisation consultation may need to be carried out in line with the WG’s School Organisation Code 2018 (11/2018).</li> <li>• Following a site appraisal, there are no suitable new sites available.</li> </ul>

### Conclusion

The table that follows summarises an evaluation of how well each of the implementation solution options meets this projects IO and CSF.

Implementation Solution Options – Conclusion																				
	Business as Usual					Least Ambitious					Most Ambitious (A)					Most Ambitious (B)				
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
IO	Red	Red	Red	Red	Black	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Yellow	Black	Green	Green	Green	Green	Black	Green	Green	Green	Green	Black



Based on the above evaluation, the preferred way forward is the Most Ambitious (A) – to deliver the new school during the 2030 academic year. This option meets all this project’s IO and CSF. The other options have been discounted

### **Funding Solution**

The funding solution options in relation to the scope of this project are shown in the table that follows along with the advantages and disadvantages of each option.

<b>Funding Solution Options</b>	<b>Advantages</b>	<b>Disadvantages</b>
<b>Business as Usual/Least Ambitious</b> This project is funded entirely using RCTCBC funds.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allows RCTCBC to retain full control of this project.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not affordable to RCTCBC.</li> <li>Does not fully meet this project’s IO and CSF.</li> </ul>
<b>Intermediate</b> This project is funded through a combination of RCTCBC funds and external funding via the WG’s Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is affordable.</li> <li>Meet this project’s IO and CSF.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May result in this project being delayed due to the application processes.</li> </ul>
<b>Most Ambitious</b> This project is funded entirely using funding via the WG’s Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Would eliminate financial risk from RCTCBC.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does not meet the WG’s Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme funding criteria.</li> <li>Does not fully meet this project’s IO and CSF.</li> </ul>

### **Conclusion**

The table that follows summarises an evaluation of how well each of the funding solution options meets this projects IO and CSF.

<b>Funding Solution Options – Conclusion</b>															
	<b>Business as Usual</b>					<b>Intermediate Option</b>					<b>Most Ambitious</b>				
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
<b>IO</b>	Red	Red	Red	Red	Black	Green	Green	Green	Green	Black	Red	Red	Red	Red	Black
<b>CSF</b>	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red	Red	Red	Red

Based on the above evaluation, the preferred way forward is the Intermediate option – for this project is funded through a combination of RCTCBC funds and external funding via the WG’s Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme. This option meets all this project’s IO and CSF. The other options have been discounted.

### **Short List of Options**

Based on the evaluation of the long list of options, a short list of options has been compiled for further economic appraisal, which enables the preferred option to be selected. This forms the basis of the remainder of this SOC.

The short list of options has been re-named (Options One to Four):

<b>Short List of Options</b>				
<b>Key Dimension</b>	<b>Option</b>			
	<b>Business as Usual</b>	<b>Do Minimum</b>	<b>Most Ambitious (A)</b>	<b>Most Ambitious (B)</b>
<b>Scope Solution</b>	Maintain current Welsh medium secondary school provision at YGCR	Demolish the Victorian building at YG Cwm Rhondda and rebuild in the same footprint.	Redevelop YGCR in a phased approach with 21 <sup>st</sup> Century facilities	Build a new school for YGCR on a new site with 21 <sup>st</sup> Century facilities.
<b>Service Solution</b>	Provision at YGCR remains as is, with future repairs and redecorations dealt with on a priority basis.	Demolish Victorian building at YG Cwm Rhondda and rebuild in the same footprint.	Build a new Welsh medium secondary school with 21 <sup>st</sup> Century facilities.	
<b>Service Delivery Solution</b>	RCTCBC continue to project manage future repairs and redecorations of the school.	RCTCBC to design and manage the design and construction of the Victorian teaching block.	RCTCBC to commission and project manage consultant team to redevelop YGCR on the existing site, to design and build new facilities.	
<b>Implementation Solution</b>	Ongoing.	Deliver the project by September 2032.	Deliver the project during the 2030 academic year.	Deliver the new school during 2031 academic year

<b>Funding Solution</b>	This project is funded entirely using RCTCBC funds.	This project is funded through a combination of RCTCBC funds and external funding via the WG's Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme.	This project is funded entirely using funding via the WG's Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme.
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- **Option One – Business as Usual:**
  - Maintain current Welsh medium secondary school provision at YG Cwm Rhondda.
  - Provision at YGCR 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 YG Cwm Rhondda and rebuild in the same footprint.
  - Demolish the Victorian building at YG Cwm Rhondda and rebuild in the same footprint.
  - RCTCBC to design and manage the design and reconstruction of the Victorian teaching block.
  - Deliver the new school by September 2032.
  - Funded entirely using RCTCBC funds.
  
- **Option Three – Most Ambitious (A)** ○ Redevelop YGCR in a phased approach with 21<sup>st</sup> Century facilities. ○ Build a new Welsh medium secondary school with 21<sup>st</sup> Century facilities.
  - RCTCBC to commission and project manage consultant team to redevelop the school on the existing site, 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 WG's Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme.
  
- **Option Four – Most Ambitious (B)** ○ Build a new school for YGCR on a new site, with 21<sup>st</sup> Century Facilities. ○ Create a new school for 900 pupils, including 150 Sixth Form pupils.
  - RCTCBC to commission and project manage consultant team to design and build new school.
  - Deliver the new school during 2031 academic year. ○ This project is funded through a combination of RCTCBC funds and external funding via the WG's Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme.

## **The Preferred Way Forward**

The preferred way forward is Most Ambitious Option A. This option has now been renamed the preferred way forward. Building a new school for YGCR and creating modern and accessible provision, will ensure that RCTCBC can continue to recognise the importance of Cymraeg 2050, and achieve the vision that RCT's WESP sets out.

The preferred way forward:

- 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 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 and will be fully accessible and compliant with the Equality Act 2010.
- Would deliver a fully accessible and fully integrated community school. A dedicated area will be 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.

## **Quantitative Benefits Template**

A Quantitative Benefits Template can be seen at **Appendix A** which sets set out the main quantitative benefits associated with this project.

## **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.

### **Procurement Approach**

The decision on the proposed procurement approach will be taken according to the broader learning outcomes RCTCBC is seeking to achieve and it will not be entirely focused on price alone. The proposed procurement approach will be 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 YG 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 of the school site. It is proposed to create modern and accessible facilities suitable for the New Curriculum for Wales. It will open during the 2030 academic year.

This project will deliver:

- Net zero carbon in operation.
- BREEAM rating of Excellent'.

This project will be managed and delivered jointly by RCTCBC's 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Team and Corporate Estates Design Team. 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. There will be an options' appraisal undertaken to identify the contractual arrangements that best support the successful delivery of this project. The construction contract will be procured engaging a specialist main contractor, via the South-East and Mid Wales Collaborative Construction (SEWSCAP4) Framework.

### **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.

A Community Benefits Strategy will be agreed by RCTCBC and its appointed consultants prior to the tender process. Contractors will be asked to provide a method statement that demonstrates their proposed approach to community engagement that fully aligns with the aims of this project, and this will be assessed at the time of tender.

As part of the WG 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 has been issued to all SEWSCAP4 Framework contractors and is also included within the Tender Documentation.

Community Benefits will be an agenda item at client meetings. Contractors 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 WG's Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme, RCTCBC will use Project Bank Accounts for this project.

## **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.

### **Funding Requirements**

This project is to redevelop YG 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 figure has increased following scrutiny of the original project costs by our appointed

professional services managers, Aecom, who market tested the costs against more recent projects delivered.

At this early stage in project development estimated costs include a significant amount of risk which we fully expect will reduce as the project develops. Further site investigations will be undertaken, and once the contractor is appointed and designs are progressed, costs will become more defined. A cost breakdown, including an estimate of abnormals, will be included within the Outline Business Case should this SOC be successful.

### **Financial Forecast**

The table that follows provides a provisional financial forecast for this project. This will be developed and finalized as we move through the business case process.

		<b>Provisional Financial Forecast - estimated</b>				
<b>Project</b>	<b>Financial Year</b>					
	<b>2025/2026 (£)</b>	<b>2026/2027 (£)</b>	<b>2027/2028 (£)</b>	<b>2028/2029 (£)</b>	<b>2029/2030 (£)</b>	<b>Total Project Cost (£ Million)</b>
New School for YGCR	2.3m	5.8m	21m	26m	22m	<b>77.5</b>

### **Source of Match Funding**

RCTCBC and the WG, via the Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme, will fund this project, with the WG funding up to 65% of project costs, and up to 100% of costs directly associated with making the school net zero carbon 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 YGCR. This site is proposed 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's much need for detailed site-specific investigation works with the appropriate enabling and demolition works with clearance of the existing buildings and site.

## **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.

### **Project Management Methodology**

RCTCBC has experienced officers within the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Team and Corporate Estates Design 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 WG 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 specialist professional and technical advisers will be achieved wherever possible and appropriate.

### **Key Risks and Mitigation**

At an early stage, an initial risk identification workshop was held to identify risks, this led to the creation of a Risk Register.

The table shown in the Strategic Case outlines the Key Risks and Mitigations for this project. Although the impact of these risks (should they materialise) is high, risk control measures are identified which reduces the likelihood of them occurring, therefore the risks can be suitably managed and mitigated against.

## **Key Milestones**

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

<b>Provisional Project Plan</b>	
<b>Action</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
Strategic Outline Case Submission	May 2025
Contractor Appointment	July 2025
Outline Business Case Submission	November 2025
Planning Approval	February 2026
SAB Approval	February 2026
Full Business Case Submission	March 2026
Construction Underway	July 2026
Works Completed	December 2030



