

Education Investment Panel – 4 December 2025

Item 7.3.2 – RCT – Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Cwm Rhondda – OBC

1. Key Statistics

Project Title	Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Cwm Rhondda			
Project Type	Secondary New build			
Local Authority	RCT			
Cost/WG Share (%)	Element	Total Cost	WG Contribution	WG %
	Project Cost (Excl. NZC)	73,730,980	47,925,137	65
	NZC Cost	3,769,020	3,769,020	100
	Overall Project Cost	77,500,000	51,694,157	66.7
Business Case Stage	OBC			
Business Case History	SOC Approval Date	June 2025		
	SOC Cost	£77,500,000		
	OBC Approval Date			
	OBC Cost			
	Recent links attached:			
Primary Purpose	Condition, suitability, Cymraeg 2050, rationalisation and improving access			

2. 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 (total capacity: 900 pupils). Investment will improve the school building offer for Welsh medium education and create a continuum of learning to support Cymraeg 2050 targets.

SOC was approved in June 2025.

It is proposed that a new school will be built on the existing school site (proposed start on site is Sept 2026), and it will open during the 2030 academic year. Investment will provide a modern, flexible learning environments for all pupils which will include:

- a hall/dining area, sports hall, and specialist teaching and learning areas to cater for the needs of all pupils i.e. science labs, food technology classrooms and ICT suites.
- 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.

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.

Aims of investment include:

- Delivering a significant improved educational provision, having a noteworthy positive impact upon the educational performance of the pupils and staff morale.
- Building to net zero carbon in operation with a BREEAM rating of 'excellent'. Be fully compliant with the Equality Act 2010.

- Providing 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 RCT's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP).

3. Discussion Points

Category	Details
Local provision	<p>Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhondda is in the village of Cymmer, southwest of Porth, Rhondda Cynon Taf. The existing school site is made up of seven buildings varying in construction methods, across several level changes.</p> <p>Block 1: Sports block Block 2: Teaching block split over 4 levels (CLASP construction 1960/70) Block 3: New 3 storey teaching block Block 4: Single storey specialist teaching block (CLASP construction 1960/70) Block 5: Victorian teaching block Block 6: teaching block with main hall and sixth form</p> <p>There are currently 625 pupils on roll, 559 aged 11-16 and 66 sixth form pupils aged 17-19 (PLASC 2025). To note there are 5 WM primary schools in the YG Cwm Rhondda cluster.</p> <p>Pupil projections within the school are set to rise over the next 4 years (647 2028/29), however feeder school projections show a gradual decrease over the same time hence the reduction in capacity in the new school.</p>
Short-listed options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Option One – Business as Usual: Maintain current Welsh medium secondary school provision at YG Cwm Rhondda. Provision at YGCR to remain 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): Preferred way forward Redevelop YG 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 consultant team

	<p>to redevelop the school on the existing site, to design and build new facilities. Deliver the new school during 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.</p>						
Capacity		Existing (FTE)		Proposed (FTE)		Change +/-	
		EM	WM	EM	WM	EM	WM
	Childcare Offer						
	Nursery						
	Primary						
	Secondary		870		750		-120
	Post-16		153		150		-3
	Additional Learning Needs						
	Total		1023		900		-123
Cymraeg 2050 / WESP	<p>This project supports Cymraeg 2050 targets and RCT's Outcome 1 of its WESP. An impact assessment has been undertaken.</p>						
Condition and suitability	<p>Recent condition survey grade: C with backlog maintenance of c£4.097m.</p> <p>'The overall mechanical and electrical services are functioning but are near the end of their expected life span. Some buildings need significant investment.'</p> <p>Number of buildings known to contain asbestos.</p>						
Sustainability	<p>Net Zero Carbon in operation and BREEAM Excellent will be achieved, in accordance with current requirements of planning and building control legislation. It will be fully accessible and compliant with the Equality Act 2010.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Traffic/Highways will form part of the Client Engagement Meetings (CEM) process, which will be used in this project from initial contractor appointment to build the project brief and keep all stakeholders involved in the project. An initial presentation has been made to key internal stakeholders include highways, on 7 August 2025; providing an opportunity to ask questions and share observations of the plan.</p> <p>The new school will allow for public enabled Wi-Fi which will facilitate the delivery of adult learning and other community activities.</p>						
Town Centre First	<p>The school is in walking distance to Porth town centre.</p>						
Community Facilities	<p>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 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.</p>						

Size compared with standard benchmark	(a) Proposed area (m ²) New build: c8,888	8888
	(b) Benchmark area (m ²) New Build	8726
	(c) Variance (m ²)	1,362
	Justification for additional areas: The size of the hall and the inclusion of a multi-gym is showing above the recommended guidelines for a school of this size. This reflects the community use aspect. Various stakeholders already use the school and as part of the proposal there is an opportunity to provide a setting for Rhondda Netball group to compete at a 'Club' level and support their links with Rhondda Schools Rugby and Welsh Rugby Union.	
Cost compared with standard benchmark figure	(a) Total cost of project: REDACTED	77,500,000 REDACTED
	(b) Standard benchmark cost for construction (or nearest available benchmark): New build Refurbishment	37,955,548 36,268,348 1,687,200
	Variance With abnormals included Without abnormals	REDACTED
	Overall cost per square metre REDACTED	REDACTED
	REDACTED	REDACTED
Risks	<p>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.</p> <p>SAB approval is required. A SUDS application will be submitted for SAB works. SAB officer was made aware of this during initial presentation on 7 August.</p>	
Links with other grants	NA	

4. Assessment Summary

Case	Assessor/Division	Queries raised	Date Addendum Issued	Date Addendum Response Agreed	Approved
Strategic Case	REDACTED	No			Yes
	REDACTED	Yes	18/11/25	25/11/25	Yes
	REDACTED	Yes	18/11/25	26/11/25	Yes
	REDACTED	Yes	18/11/25	26/11/25	Yes
	REDACTED	Yes	18/11/25	21/11/25	Yes
	REDACTED	No			Yes
	REDACTED	No			Yes
	REDACTED	Yes	18/11/25	21/11/25	Yes
	REDACTED	No			Yes
	REDACTED	Yes	18/11/25	26/11/25	Yes

	REDACTED	Yes			Yes
	REDACTED	Yes	18/11/25	27/11/25	Yes
	REDACTED	No			Yes
	REDACTED	No			Yes
	REDACTED	No			Yes
	REDACTED	NA			NA
Economic Case	REDACTED	Yes	18/11/25	21/11/2025	Yes
Commercial Case	REDACTED	No			Yes
Financial Case	REDACTED	No			Yes
Management Case	REDACTED	No			Yes

* Approved: Assessor content within own area of expertise

**NA: Not applicable

***NCR: No comments received from policy colleague

5. FEI Financial health check rating

NA

6. Recommendation / Sign Off

Business Case Scrutiny Group meeting date	6 November 2025
Business Case Scrutiny Group – date of sign off	27 November 2025
Recommendation to Education Investment Panel	Approve to move to FBC – on the understanding that 2 abnormal cost elements will be included in the project cost and a new project cost template submitted to reflect this at FBC.