

Education Investment Panel - 19 June 2025

Item 7.4 – YG Cwm Rhondda, RCT - SOC

1. Key Statistics

Project Title	Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhondda			
Project Type	Primary - new build			
Local Authority	RCT			
Cost/WG Share (%)	Element	Total Cost	WG Contribution	WG %
	Project Cost (Inc. NZC)	£77,500,000	£50,375,000	65
	NZC Cost	within project cost at this stage		
	Overall Project Cost	£77,500,000	£50,375,000	65
Business Case Stage	SOC			
Primary Purpose	Condition, additional places, suitability, Cymraeg 2050, Additional Learning Needs, 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). This will improve the offer for Welsh medium education and create a continuum of learning to support Cymraeg 2050 targets.

It is proposed that a new school will be built on the existing school site, 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.
- 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.

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'.
- 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 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. • Option Four – Most Ambitious (B) Build a new school for YG Cwm Rhondda on a new site, with 21st Century Facilities. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o 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.

	<p>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.</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.</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	<p>(a) Proposed area (m²)</p> <p>New build: 8,550 Light refurbishment: 350 Temp accommodation: 400 Temp sports hall: 600</p>					<p>9,900</p>	

	(b) Benchmark area (m ²)	
	(c) Variance (m ²)	(b)-(a)
	Justification for additional areas:	
Cost compared with standard benchmark figure	(a) Total cost of project: REDACTED	77,500,000
	(b) Standard benchmark cost for construction (or nearest available benchmark):	
	Variance	(a)-(b)
	REDACTED	REDACTED
	REDACTED	REDACTED
Risks	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.	
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		11/06/25	Yes
	REDACTED	Yes	29/05/25	11/06/25	Yes
	REDACTED	Yes	29/05/25	18/06/25	Yes
	REDACTED	Yes	29/05/25	12/06/25	Yes
	REDACTED	Yes	29/05/25	18/06/25	Yes
	REDACTED	No			NA
	REDACTED	Yes	29/05/25	11/06/25	Yes
	REDACTED	No			Yes
	REDACTED	Yes			Yes/No
	REDACTED	NCR			Yes/No
	REDACTED	NCR			Yes/No
	REDACTED	No			Yes
Economic Case	REDACTED	Yes	29/05/25	13/06/25	Yes
Commercial Case	REDACTED	NCR			Yes/No
Financial Case	REDACTED	Yes	29/05/25	11/06/25	Yes

Management Case	REDACTED	No			Yes
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* 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	15 May 2025
Business Case Scrutiny Group – date of sign off	18/06/25
Recommendation to Education Investment Panel	Approve SOC, subject to policy colleagues being content with query responses re access to vocational facilities.