



CROWNBRIDGE SCHOOL - CONSULTATION DOCUMENT – DECEMBER 2020



TORFAEN
COUNTY
BOROUGH



BWRDEISTREF
SIROL
TORFAEN

**EDUCATION SERVICE
GWASANAETH ADDYSG**

Chief Officer, Education & Lead Director for Children and Young People

Prif Swyddog, Addysg & Cyfarwyddwr Arweiniol ar gyfer Plant a Phobi Ifanc

Dermot McChrystal BA (Hons) PGCE MSSc



Your re/Eich cyf:

Our ref/Ein cyf: MH/

Date/Dyddiad: 7th December 2020

Please contact/Cysyllter â

Direct line/Linell union:

Mark Horton

01495 766910

To: Statutory Consultees and Other Interested Parties

Dear Consultee,

PROPOSAL TO EXPAND CROWNBRIDGE SPECIAL SCHOOL

Torfaen's Cabinet has agreed to commence consultation on the expansion of the school on its existing school site with the proposal implemented on 1st January 2024.

The specific purpose of this proposal is to expand Crownbridge School by 50 places on the main site at Turnpike Road, Cwmbran, NP44 2BJ. This will provide sufficient capacity to cater for Torfaen's children for the foreseeable future.

The regulations require that consultees must be given at least 42 days to respond to the document, with at least 20 of these being school days. Taking this into account, the consultation period will begin with the issue of this letter (7th December 2020), and will close on 18th January 2021.

Any comments/observations on the proposal can be made:

- By writing to the Chief Officer, Education & Lead Director for Children and Young People (FAO Mark Horton) c/o Torfaen County Borough Council, Civic Centre, Pontypool, Torfaen NP4 6YB.
- By email: 21stcenturylearning@torfaen.gov.uk
- By completing a response proforma (attached to the Consultation document) and returning it to the above address.

For information on how we handle your personal data please refer to our Privacy Notice at Torfaen.gov.uk

I gael gwybodaeth am sut rydym yn trin eich data personol, gweler ein Hysbysiad Preifatrwydd ar Torfaen.gov.uk

THIS DOCUMENT IS AVAILABLE IN LARGER PRINT AND BRAILLE UPON REQUEST

Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg a Saesneg. Cewch ateb Cymraeg i bob gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd yn arwain at oedi./ We welcome correspondence in Welsh and English.

Correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and will not lead to delay.

Civic Centre, Pontypool, Torfaen, NP4 6YB Tel 01495 762200

Y Ganolfan Ddinesig, Pont-y-pŵl, Torfaen, NP4 6YB Ffôn 01495 762200

www.torfaen.gov.uk

Separate arrangements will be made for children and young people to participate in the consultation, which will include, where possible, the views of the school council. The council will provide and distribute a version of the consultation document appropriate to the age of the children and young people affected.

In light of the current situation we will not be holding a consultation event at the school, but people will be able to contact us with their questions and comments.

Further information on this specific proposal (including the consultation document) and the authority's other 21st Century Schools proposals can be found on the Council website at: www.torfaen.gov.uk.

A Welsh Medium Executive Summary of this document can be obtained by telephoning 01495 766910 or by visiting the Council's website: www.torfaen.gov.uk.

If you are unclear about anything or require further information please do not hesitate to contact me on 01495 766910 (email: mark.horton@torfaen.gov.uk)

Yours sincerely



Mark Horton
PRINCIPAL OFFICER, FORWARD PLANNING

For information on how we handle your personal data please refer to our Privacy Notice at Torfaen.gov.uk

I gael gwybodaeth am sut rydym yn trin eich data personol, gweler ein Hysbysiad Preifatrwydd ar Torfaen.gov.uk

THIS DOCUMENT IS AVAILABLE IN LARGER PRINT AND BRAILLE UPON REQUEST

We welcome correspondence in Welsh and English.
Correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and will not lead to delay.
Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg a Saesneg.
Cewch ateb Cymraeg i bob gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd yn arwain at oedi.

Civic Centre, Pontypool, Torfaen, NP4 6YB Tel 01495 762200 Fax 01495 766904
Y Ganolfan Ddinesig, Pont-y-pŵl, Torfaen, NP4 6YB Ffôn 01495 762200 Ffacs 01495 766904
www.torfaen.gov.uk

CONTENTS

Introductory Letter	
Contents	2
1. Introduction	3
2. Consultation arrangements	3 - 4
3. The proposal to expand Crownbridge School	4
4. Rationale and background information	4 - 8
5. Options considered	9 -13
6. Admission arrangements	13
7. Home to school transport	13
8. Human resources	13
9. Community impact/Equality impact assessment	13 - 14
10. Welsh Language Impact Assessment	14
11. Frequently asked questions	14 - 15
12. What happens next?	15 - 16
13. Response pro forma	16
14. Other information	16
Appendix 1 – Distribution list for the consultation document	17
Appendix 2 – The quality and diversity of education	19
Appendix 3 – Community and Equality Impact Assessment	21
Appendix 4 – Your views	25

Crownbridge School **Consultation Document**

1. Introduction

The council has a long term programme (21st Century Schools programme) for its school estate and we are currently in the second phase (Band B of the programme).

This project was not previously part of Torfaen's Strategic Outline Programme (SOP). However there is now the opportunity to include it, due to the decision of the Archdiocese of Cardiff to review its plans and the consequent impact on the council's anticipated expenditure for 2019-2024. This means it is affordable within the existing Band B capital commitment.

There are no changes to Torfaen's strategy and the programme envelope has not been increased, in relation to this project.

Although agreed in principle, the investment will not go ahead until the Outline/Full Business Case (OBC/FBC) is approved by Welsh Government.

If successful, the capital cost of the project will be funded by Welsh Government (WG) (75%) and the council (25%). The Welsh Government contribution equates to £5,137,500, with the council investing £1,712,500.

2. Consultation arrangements

Before any decision is made on the proposal to expand Crownbridge School the council is required to hold a statutory consultation with all interested parties, and the following information is provided to set out the process by which consultation will be conducted. This is necessary because the proposal will see an increase in the number of pupils for whom the school makes provision which, when taken together with all such previous increases in the number of pupils, would increase the number of pupils by 10% or the relevant number of such pupils (whichever the lesser).

The School Organisation Code provides a list of consultees who must be advised by letter or email of the availability of the consultation document and that recipients can, if they wish, obtain a hard copy of the consultation document on request. A list of all those being consulted is attached as appendix 1 to this document.

In light of the current situation we will not be holding a consultation event at the school, but people will be able to contact us with their questions and comments.

Officers will ensure that all comments/views made during the consultation period are shared with Elected Members to ensure that they make an informed decision at the appropriate time.

Any views or comments can be made:

- By writing to the Chief Officer, Education & Lead Director for Children and Young People (FAO Mark Horton) c/o Torfaen County Borough Council, Civic Centre, Pontypool, Torfaen NP4 6YB.
- By email: 21stcenturylearning@torfaen.gov.uk.
- By completing a response proforma (attached as an appendix to this document) and returning it to the above mentioned address.

It is important to note that any unfavourable comments made during the consultation period will not be treated as objections and that if you wish to object, you will need to do so in writing during the statutory objection period. If consultees submit a request during the objection period that a response submitted at the consultation stage should be treated as an objection this will be accepted.

The views of children and young people are important. Therefore separate consultation and engagement arrangements will be made specifically tailored for children and young people. Pupils will be issued with their own version of this consultation document and will have an opportunity to discuss the proposal and submit their views and comments which will be included in the report to Cabinet.

3. The proposal

The proposal is as follows:

Torfaen County Borough Council propose to expand Crownbridge School and build a 50 place extension on the existing site, with the proposal implemented on 1st January 2024. This will provide sufficient capacity to cater for Torfaen’s children for the foreseeable future.

The proposal will now form part of the council’s 21st Century Schools Programme, the aim of which is to provide appropriate places and choices through investment in new and/or refurbished school building. The project was not previously part of Torfaen’s Strategic Outline Programme, but has been added to meet increasing demand for places at Crownbridge School.

The proposal is in keeping with Torfaen’s 21st Century Schools Programme investment objectives which are to:

- Create safe learning environments for schools and communities.
- Achieve greater economy and efficiency through appropriate sized schools.
- Develop a sustainable education system with reduced recurrent costs & carbon footprint.
- Achieve high quality inspirational buildings.
- Provide an outstanding resource for the whole community.
- Achieve inclusive settings.

4. Rationale and Background information

General Information

Crownbridge Special School, moved into their new premises in Croesyceiliog, Cwmbran in September 2012.

It was built with a capacity of 80 places for pupils with severe and profound learning difficulties. Based on predictions at the time, 80 places was deemed to be sufficient. However, the last few years have seen demand for places grow rapidly and they currently have 94 (97 in 2019/20) pupils on roll on the site. Another 21 (20 in 2019/20) pupils are currently accommodated in the satellite facility of Crownbridge at Penygarn Primary School site.

In order to accommodate the additional pupils on the main site above the designed capacity of 80, the school has re-purposed some other spaces, in particular the meeting rooms and Science/Art classrooms. To compensate for the loss of these spaces, the school currently has use of 2 repurposed demountable classrooms on site (adjacent to Croesyceiliog Secondary School) which it also uses for PPA, HLTA and overflow storage of pupils' wheelchairs and walking or standing frames. Pupils nowadays can have between 1 and 3 specialised wheelchairs, walking and standing frames; some pupils have beds. Each classroom can accommodate approximately 8 pupils and clearly the space requirements of a special school go beyond the limits of what is typical for a mainstream school setting.

The majority of pupils at Crownbridge live within Torfaen, but 7 pupils currently (September 2020) on roll are from the neighbouring local authority of Monmouthshire County Council. In 2019/20 there were 9 from Monmouthshire.

The Crownbridge main site typically caters for pupils in years 2 to 14. Crownbridge at Penygarn caters for pupils from reception to year 6 whose needs can be met in a school where there is some integration within the mainstream settings of infants and juniors. Those pupils whose learning difficulties are the most severe or profound, tend to be at the main site as are all of the secondary aged pupils.

Following a national and regional trend, demand for places has increased in recent years and the school has been oversubscribed for the last 3 years which has led to some pupils being refused places. In those circumstances, some pupils are placed in a Special Needs Resource Base in Torfaen, where it is sometimes possible to provide additional staffing and support services for the individual's needs at an additional cost. However, this places additional pressure on these SNRBs which are also experiencing a growth in demand for places from pupils who are currently in mainstream settings. For some pupils with the most complex needs and where an SNRB placement is not appropriate, the pupils are being sent out of county to a private provider at a cost per pupil to the authority of £90,000 per year.

The quality and diversity of education

Quality and standards in schools in Torfaen are monitored by Estyn and the local council. Estyn is the office of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education and Training in Wales. It is a Crown body established under the Education Act 1992. Estyn is independent of the Welsh Government and inspects quality and standards in education and training providers in Wales.

It is the view of the council that the proposal if implemented, would at least maintain the current standard of outcomes and attainment of Crownbridge School. The information outlined in this proposal will indicate how the school can continue to develop and build on their current excellent practice. Throughout the transition period, the school will continue to receive appropriate ongoing advice, support, and challenge from the local council, school improvement service and any relevant stakeholders to ensure the school maintains effective leadership and provides high quality teaching and learning experiences.

Appendix 2 sets out details of the last inspection carried out at the school in March 2014. It should be noted that this was carried out prior to a revised framework that was introduced in September 2017.

It is not appropriate to compare the standards that pupils achieve at the school with national averages or to analyse trends in overall performance over time because of the wide range of pupils' special educational needs.

Adequacy of the existing buildings

As indicated above, the new premises opened in September 2012 and whilst the school has ongoing maintenance requirements, it is condition grade A (“A” being good to “D” poor).

Given this is a relatively new building, the backlog maintenance requirements for Crownbridge School is quite small and estimated at £32,150. Maintenance backlog issues include, but are not limited to:-

- Mechanical (Replace CHP (combined Heat & power) boiler unit) - £12,500
- Electrical (Replace Hydro pool lighting) - £4,500

School Numbers on Roll/Pupil Projections & Demand for places/Impact on other Schools

The table below shows the increase in pupil numbers on roll at Crownbridge School (includes main site and Penygarn) since it moved to its new site in September 2012:

School (current notional capacity)	Sept 2012	Sept 2013	Sept 2014	Sept 2015	Sept 2016	Sept 2017	Sept 2018	Sept 2019	Sept 2020
Crownbridge (main site 80 & Penygarn 20)	92	92	95	101	107	111	116	117	115

The following table provides details of numbers on roll for the previous four annual school census years, currently on roll (as of September 2020) and a five year forecast of overall demand:

School	Act Sept 2016	Act Sept 2017	Act Sept 2018	Act Sept 2019	Act Sept 2020	Proj Sept 2021	Proj Sept 2022	Proj Sept 2023	Proj Sept 2024	Proj Sept 2025
Crownbridge school	107	111	116	117	115	117	125	134	142	147

Notes:

- 1) As no agreed model exists for the planning of special school places that we know of, actual projected numbers are difficult to predict. In an attempt to develop a basic mathematical model to try and predict the number of places required, we have looked at some historical data.

The number of requests for places each year over the last 6 years ranged from 9 to 26. The mean average number of requests was 17. The mean average number of actual admissions was 13.2. All pupil admissions to Crownbridge tend to happen between Reception and Year 7. Therefore, taking an average across these 8 year groups, there have been 2.1 requests in each year group and 1.6 admitted in each year group. This information has been used in the estimated demand figures above.

With the 80 “existing” places at Crownbridge (currently 95 pupils as oversubscribed and have repurposed other spaces) and 20 places at the Crownbridge “satellite” site at Penygarn, the additional 50 places at Crownbridge will provide an official capacity of 150 places (130 Crownbridge/20 Penygarn). This will be sufficient to accommodate projected numbers.

The number admitted each year also varies widely due to several factors including number of requests, individual pupil’s changing needs and the number of places available at a point in time. Whilst Crownbridge may not be the most appropriate setting for every request for a place, it is Torfaen’s aspiration to plan sufficient places in whatever setting is most appropriate for each child, without having to place them an alternative setting which may not be as suitable or which may be an expensive external cost to the council.

- 2) The “Measuring Capacity of Schools Guidance in Wales” 2011 describes the method for assessing the capacity of all maintained mainstream schools in Wales. Special Schools such as in the case of Crownbridge School is not subject to this guidance and as such this means there is no published capacity calculation.
- 3) As Crownbridge School is the only Special School within the Authority the catchment area for the school covers the entire area of Torfaen County Borough Council.

Demand has risen in recent years for several reasons. Families are moving into the area and more children are surviving birth with complex needs. The latter also results in these children needing specialist provision during pre-school and

reception so we are seeing a rise where their needs cannot be met in a mainstream setting.

Some other Local Authorities request places at Crownbridge as they do not have sufficient provision of their own. However in recent years, Torfaen has been unable to provide any such places to other Local Authorities due to needing the places for pupils living in Torfaen.

The picture of growing demand is similar across Wales. Following general discussions with other Local Authorities within the consortia it is clear that they have also seen an increase in requests for special school placements. In response, they have been expanding their capacity in their special schools in recent years. However, concerns have been raised by some that even with increased capacity this has proven overtime that the increase in places was not enough and one Local Authority is now left with having no placements available for September 2020. Therefore, planning sustainable places over the next 10 years is very relevant.

Due to the nature and specific requirements of the pupils, it is not anticipated that the proposal would impact on any other school provision within the Authority as mainstream schools would not be able to cater for the complex needs of this most vulnerable group.

Early Years/Nursery Provision

There are sometimes children admitted at pre-school and nursery ages, depending on need and availability of spare places. There is no plan to build a separate unit or space for this provision as part of this proposal.

There is therefore not anticipated to be any impact or changes to the integrated approach already in place with regard to early year's education with childcare services.

Because this is a specialist provision there is no requirement for additional mainstream nursery places in the area. As a consequence, this will not impact or create demand for certain types of nursery education e.g. Welsh medium or provision with a religious character.

There are not anticipated to be any effect on other institutions, including private and third sector providers.

Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Provision

The proposal to increase capacity and extend the building would ensure that all children and young people with severe and complex learning disabilities within Torfaen have equitable access to the same high quality and effective learning environment and provision within Torfaen.

The perceived benefits are that all learners in Torfaen identified as requiring specialist provision will have equitable access to the Borough's own excellent provision.

5. Options considered

An option appraisal has been undertaken using Welsh Government business case modelling, which resulted in the development of the Strategic Outline Case (SOC), from which the following long list of options was generated. The proposal will be subject to further submissions to Welsh Government for approval mentioned below (i.e. OBC (Outline Business Case) / FBC (Final Business Case)).

The result of the long list analysis is summarised as follows:

Option number	Description	Conclusions
Option 1	Business as Usual - maintain the status quo	This is the baseline comparator and goes forward to the shortlist.
Option 2	Build a 50 place extension on the main Crownbridge site	Possible. Preferred Way Forward.
Option 3	Build a 50 place extension on the Penygarn site	Insufficient space on Penygarn School site and only suitable for primary aged pupils. Discounted.
Option 4	Build another special school in Torfaen on another site.	Merits further investigation in the OBC against availability of sites and overall programme budget. To be considered as part of the overall ALN provision review in Torfaen. Possible.
Option 5	Send pupils to a special school in a neighbouring Local Authority.	No spare capacity exists. Discounted.
Option 6	Neighbouring Local Authority builds a new special school and additional capacity for Torfaen pupils.	Not within our control. No such projects on the horizon. Discounted.
Option 7	Build even more capacity, up to 100 extra places.	Merits further investigation in the OBC. Could be a hybrid with Options 2 & 4. Possible.

The short list that emerged in the SOC was:

Option 1 - Business as Usual

Option 2 - Build a 50 place extension on the main Crownbridge site.

Option 4 - Build another special school in Torfaen on another site.

Option 7 - Build even more capacity, possibly a hybrid with options 2 & 4.

Options have been further re-evaluated, and going forward are as follows:

Options	Advantages / Disadvantages
<p><u>Business as Usual</u></p> <p>Continue with existing provision structure and capacities.</p>	<p><u>Advantages</u></p> <p>Does not require significant capital investment.</p> <p>Avoids grant funding application process.</p> <p>Least disruption.</p> <p><u>Disadvantages</u></p> <p>Fails to address business need, strategic fit or benefits optimisation.</p> <p>Does not address of the school being over-subscribed and in the last few years several pupils have been refused places.</p> <p>Even with additional support, not all pupils' needs may be met in the Special Needs Resource Bases at other schools.</p> <p>In the most profound cases of learning difficulties, pupils have to be sent out of county at an annual cost of £90k per place compared to in-house costs of £35k.</p> <p>We are currently unable to offer any places to neighbouring local authorities.</p>
<p><u>Intermediate</u></p> <p>Expand the provision by 50 places.</p>	<p><u>Advantages</u></p> <p>Addresses all the critical success factors.</p> <p>Provides places for all suitable applications for the foreseeable future.</p> <p>Affordable in Band B.</p> <p>Offers annual revenue savings of up to £55k per external placement avoided.</p> <p><u>Disadvantages</u></p> <p>Requires significant capital investment and grant application submissions.</p> <p>Does not address the school being oversubscribed in the next 2-3 years, so some external placements may still be required for this period.</p> <p>May still not be able to offer any places to neighbouring local</p>

	<p>authorities at the end of the investment.</p> <p>May not be big enough if long term demand for places increases beyond current trends.</p>
<p><u>Do Maximum</u></p> <p>Expand the provision by 100 places.</p>	<p><u>Advantages</u></p> <p>Provides places for all suitable applications for the foreseeable future with additional capacity in reserve if long term demand for places increases beyond current trends.</p> <p>Offers annual revenue savings of up to £55k per external placement avoided.</p> <p>Secures additional headroom for additional unexpected growth.</p> <p>It is the option most likely to allow us to offer places to neighbouring authority children.</p> <p><u>Disadvantages</u></p> <p>Requires the greatest capital investment and grant application submissions.</p> <p>Does not address the school being oversubscribed in the next 2-3 years, so some external placements may still be required for this period.</p> <p>There may be a space limit to the size extension we can build on the existing site.</p> <p>There may not be sufficient space on site for the additional parking and drop-off zones required on the current main site.</p> <p>May not be affordable in Band B.</p>

The Council submitted a Business Case to Welsh Government on the “Intermediate” option in November 2020 and now forms the basis of this formal consultation on the proposal.

Risks of the proposal

A number of risks and counter measures have been considered as part of this proposal:

Risks	Counter measure
Failure to get WG funding approval.	Follow the 5 case guidance and Better Business Case sessions and 21st Century Schools’ guidance and templates.
Failure to get Torfaen County Borough Council (TCBC) funding approval for business case and related statutory consultation.	Although not originally in our Strategic Outline Programme, this project is expected to be supported by TCBC Cabinet as it affects the education of our most vulnerable learners. It is still subject to statutory consultation and will be put forward to a TCBC Cabinet decision.
Delays in receiving political	WG has streamlined the process of business case

approval (Ministerial) delays project.	approval. Keep in close contact with WG Department for Education officials and submit the OBC/FBC to hit the relevant WG panel dates.
Insufficient capacity for future demand.	The purpose of this business case is to build extra capacity to meet a previously unforeseen demand and to give some additional headroom.
Site development costs exceed budget.	Carry out site surveys and also ensure sufficient budget is available for abnormal costs.
Construction cost exceeds budget.	Ensure cost planning throughout bid and pre-con phases and be prepared to carry out Value Engineering exercises.
Project delivered late due to excessive abnormal ground conditions.	Undertake thorough site surveys and plan for worst case scenarios. Alert funding bodies to any abnormal costs as soon as they are quantified.
Project delayed by statutory undertakings. (e.g. Welsh Water, Bats, FIT for Wales, Countryside Alliance, Slow worms)	Carry out desk top study and surveys early on in pre-construction programme in order to plan accordingly.
Contributes high Carbon Dioxide (CO ₂) emissions.	Target cost effective low CO ₂ technologies that are compatible with linking to the existing school.
Existing site services may be in the way.	Carry out desktop study on existing services early on, physical surveys and allow for abnormal cost/contingency in budget.
Delays and additional costs due to pandemic.	Monitor status and impact throughout the business case phases.
SUDS (Sustainable Drainage System) approval adds cost and delay to the project.	Seek pre-application meeting early on in the pre-construction phase to assess the proposal and any measures required.
Covid 19 pandemic adds cost and delay to the project.	Continue to monitor and report to the executive bodies of the Council and Welsh Government.

Benefits of the proposal

As a consequence of the above, the main benefits for the project would be:

- Addresses all the critical success factors.
- Provides places for all suitable applications for the foreseeable future.
- Affordable in Band B.
- Offers annual revenue savings of up to £55k per external placement avoided.
- There is sufficient space on the existing site for an extension of 50 places.
- Extending the current provision benefits from some of the current infrastructure, facilities and leadership team.

- Can be delivered in approximately 3 years.
- Access and road infrastructure near the site is good.

Costs of the proposal

The total capital cost for the 50 place extension is £6,850,000 spread over 3-4 years. The funding split for this capital project is 75/25 by Welsh Government (£5,137,500) and Torfaen CBC (£1,712,500).

There will be revenue costs associated with this project due to the increase in the size and pupil capacity. This is estimated to be £169,000 per annum for premises costs (buildings maintenance, caretaking, cleaning, grounds maintenance, energy and rates), leadership costs and administration costs. Whilst the school will receive additional funding for the increase in pupils, it is difficult to accurately predict how much this will be as it will be dependent on funding uplifts to the ISB (Individual School Budget) and number of pupils actually on roll. As an indication based on roll numbers for 20/21 (95 pupils) the funding allocated to Crownbridge was c£2,258k.

It should be noted that any revenue costs will not include home to school transport costs. Home to school transport as a non-delegated budget is held and administered centrally by the Council.

6. Admission arrangements

Whilst Crownbridge School falls outside of the standard admissions arrangements for schools, the local authority determines the admission arrangements. Pupils who attend Crownbridge School are not required to have a statement of educational need as a pre-requisite to entry. The majority of pupils will be between Stages 3 and 5 of the SEN Code of Practice and may be in the process of a multi-professional assessment of which a placement at Crownbridge School may be a part.

7. Home to school transport

Transport will be provided in accordance with the requirements of a Statement of Special Educational Needs issued by the Authority or where a pupil/learner is the subject of the statutory assessment procedure where they have learning difficulties which the Local Authority considers makes transport “necessary”. The type and nature of transport provided will be determined by a risk assessment as is the case now.

8. Human resources

As the proposal relates to the extension of the school it will not put any jobs at risk. Instead, it will actually increase jobs and staff opportunities at the school.

9. Community/Equality impact assessment

As part of the consultation process, a Community and Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken and is attached at appendix 3 to this document.

Should this proposal be implemented, it is likely to benefit children in accordance with the seven core aims of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, specifically:

Core aim 1 - have a flying start in life;

Core aim 2 - have a comprehensive range of education and learning opportunities;

Core aim 3 - enjoy the best possible health and are free from abuse, victimisation and exploitation;

Core aim 4 - have access to play, leisure, sporting and cultural activities;

Core aim 5 - are listened to, treated with respect, and have their race and cultural identity recognised;

Core aim 6 - have a safe home and a community which supports physical and emotional wellbeing; and

Core aim 7 - are not disadvantaged by poverty.

10. Welsh Language Impact Assessment

The proposal does not impact the availability of Welsh medium places. Where there is a demand for Welsh medium ALN provision, it is possible for the curriculum to be delivered through the Welsh medium with oversight from Welsh speaking staff.

The proposed development will therefore not change the current situation with regard to the Welsh Language Measure (2011).

11. Frequently asked questions

- **When would building work start?**

If this proposal is approved the aim is to start building work on the Crownbridge School site in August 2022. We anticipate the new building will be available in January 2024.

- **Will the catchment area of the school change?**

There are no plans to change the catchment area, which covers the whole of the Torfaen County Borough Council area.

- **Will school transport be provided?**

Yes, see point 7 above.

- **What about staff**

There should be no impact on staff as the school is simply expanding. As pupil numbers increase in the future however, there will be new opportunities and any new appointments to the staff structure would have to be approved by the Governing Body and the Council through the formal Human Resource (HR) arrangements as is the case now.

- **What about the increased traffic in the area that the extended school will generate**

This area is well served by foot and cycle paths and regular road crossing points. A formal Traffic Impact Assessment (TIA) will be commissioned as part of the planning process. This will also review any additional parking and drop-off requirements for which we believe there is sufficient space on site.

- **How safe will the pupils and staff be with construction adjacent to the existing school? How will the school manage with all the noise and dust from the building work?**

The council has an excellent record of coordinating the building of school buildings on “live” sites. The construction area will be completely separated from the day to day operation of the school with safety of the pupils and staff of paramount importance.

Building material deliveries will be timed to miss the start and end of the school day to ensure as little disruption as possible.

In terms of noise and dust this will be mitigated as best as possible and the contractor will work closely with the school to keep any disruption to an absolute minimum.

The impact on learners is likely to be restricted to a reduced but manageable external play provision for the duration of the build. Where the extension may need to break through into the existing school, the aim will be to do so during a school holiday period to minimise any disruption.

12. What happens next?

The following details what happens next and sets out the statutory process:

<u>Date:</u>	<u>Comment:</u>
December 2020 January 2021	– Initial consultation on proposal (6 weeks)
February 2021	Cabinet receive report on the outcome of the consultation and consider next steps. If Cabinet decide to proceed with the proposal, a Statutory Notice will be published.
Feb/March 2021	Statutory Notice published (28 day objection period; published on a school day and not less than 15 days before end of term so at least ½ of the notice period is in term time).
March/April 2021	If no objections are received during the Statutory Notice period local determination of the proposal will be made via report to Executive Member for

Date:

Comment:

Education. If objections are received, the determination of the proposal will be the function of the Local Authority's Executive.

April 2021

Pre-construction period begins.

August 2022

Construction start on site.

January 2024

Proposal implemented.

13. Response pro-forma

A response pro-forma for comments and suggestions of alternatives to the proposals, including an opportunity for consultees to register their wish to be notified of publication of the consultation report, is attached to this consultation document (Appendix 4).

14. Other information

Further information on this and other proposals can be found on the Council website at: www.torfaen.gov.uk.

Appendix 1

DISTRIBUTION LIST FOR THE CONSULTATION DOCUMENT

- Parents (and where possible prospective parents) carers and guardians, and staff members of schools affected by the proposals;
- In the case of proposals affecting secondary provision, parents of pupils attending primary schools from which pupils normally transfer to that secondary school;
- The maintaining or proposed maintaining authority for any school likely to be affected by the proposals;
- Any other local authority (including those in England where appropriate) likely to be affected – including in the case of dedicated SEN provision any authority placing or likely to place pupils with SEN in it. Pan - Gwent Chief Education Officers (Caerphilly, Newport, Monmouthshire and Blaenau Gwent), to distribute to schools in their areas as appropriate.
- The Church in Wales and Roman Catholic Diocesan Authority for the area in which any school likely to be affected is located.
- Any other appropriate religious body for any school likely to be affected by the proposals;
- The Governing body of any school which is the subject of the proposals;
- The Governing body of other schools which the proposer consider are likely to be affected by the proposal;
- The Welsh Ministers;
- Constituency and Regional Assembly Members (AMs) and Members of Parliament (MP's) representing the area served by/intended to be served by any school which is the subject of the proposals;
- ESTYN
- Teaching and staff trade unions (NUT; NASUWT; ATL; UCAC; UNISON; GMB) representing teachers and other staff at any school which is the subject of the proposals;
- The relevant Regional Education Consortium;
- The Police and Crime Commissioner for the area served by/intended to be served by any school which is the subject of the proposals;
- Any community or town council for the area served by/intended to be served by any school which is the subject of the proposals (Blaenavon Community Council; Cwmbran Community Council; Pontypool Community Council; Ponthir Community Council; Henllys Community Council; Croesyceiliog and Llanyrafon Community Council);
- In the case of proposals affecting nursery provision, any independent or voluntary providers who may be affected including Mudiad Meithrin. Also

including all Registered Private/Voluntary Early Years Settings/Providers in Torfaen;

- In the case of proposals affecting nursery provision, the Children and Young People's Partnership and/or the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnerships where present;
- In the case of proposals affecting SEN provision, any relevant health or third sector bodies with an interest;
- In the case of proposals affecting secondary provision, any further education institutions serving the area of the school (Coleg Gwent);
- In the case of proposals affecting Welsh Language provision, the Welsh Language Commissioner.

In addition to the above, the following are also included in the distribution:

- The Headteacher of each school maintained by Torfaen LEA;
- All elected Members of Torfaen County Borough Council;
- The Careers Service;
- Torfaen Association of School Governors;
- Libraries; (Blaenavon, Cwmbran and Pontypool)
- Other Directorates of Torfaen County Borough Council
- RhAG (Parents for Welsh Medium Education)
- Torfaen Voluntary Alliance
- Communities First Partnership Board

Appendix 2

The Quality and Diversity of Education

The following information is provided as a summary of Crownbridge School's last inspection.

Estyn Report

The most recent Estyn report for the school is summarised below.

Date of Inspection: March 2014

At that time, during each inspection, inspectors aim to answer three key questions:

Key Question 1: How good are the outcomes?

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?

The report was produced in accordance with Section 28 of the Education Act 2005.

Inspectors also provide an overall judgement on the school's current performance and on its prospects for improvement. In these evaluations, inspectors use a four-point scale:

Judgement	What the judgement means
Excellent	Many strengths, including significant examples of sector-leading practice
Good	Many strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement
Adequate	Strengths outweigh areas for improvement
Unsatisfactory	Important areas for improvement outweigh strengths

Summary

The school's current performance: Excellent

The school's prospects for improvement: Excellent

Current performance Crownbridge is an excellent school because:-

- nearly all pupils make excellent progress;
- pupils are highly successful in applying their literacy and communication skills consistently across the curriculum and in their social interactions;
- exemplary pupil centred planning is at the heart of the school's provision;
- information about pupils' literacy and numeracy skills is used highly effectively to plan and monitor specific interventions for all pupils; and
- rigorous planning ensures that learning experiences are well matched to the needs of all pupils.

Prospects for improvement are excellent because:-

Appendix 3

CROWNBRIDGE SCHOOL – COMMUNITY AND EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Community and Equality Impact Assessments are a structured way for the Council to fully understand the implications of our decisions and whether they are detrimental or discriminatory to certain groups or sections of the community. They help us to consider the impact of Council decisions and policies within and between communities more generally. The Community Impact Assessment process will ensure that our decision making process is robust and impacts on all communities within Torfaen ensuring that they are fully considered in Council business. By carrying out impact assessments, the Council is working to promote equality for all our service users, employees and the wider community that we serve.

1) The proportion of pupils from within and outside the catchment area that attend the school

There are currently (September 2020) 7 pupils out of catchment/county (from the Monmouthshire CC area) who attend Crownbridge School. This represents 6% of the total school population with the majority therefore residing in Torfaen. Future availability of places for “out of county” pupils will be subject to demand from within Torfaen first.

2) Current facilities and/or services offered by Crownbridge School

The following facilities are offered at Crownbridge School:

- Hydropool – used by a variety of adult and children’s groups for hydrotherapy and swimming lessons, during and out of school hours.
- Community Café.
- Play Service – providing after school club sessions for some pupil.

The above services will be not be affected by the new extension.

We have consulted the Youth Service and Sport Development teams. They do not currently use Crownbridge School and do not have a requirement for additional school-based facilities in this area.

3) Distance and travelling time involved in attending Crownbridge School

Given the proposal is to extend the existing premises on its existing site there will be no impact on travel distances for existing pupils.

As the catchment area covers the entire County Borough area the maximum distance likely to be travelled is no more than 12 miles (from Blaenavon at the top end of the borough) approximately 20 minutes by car. Distances/travelling times will increase for those pupils with a placement from further afield.

4) How would parents' and pupils' engage should the proposal be agreed?

The Council recognises the importance of an effective and smooth transition process to ensure there is little if any disruption should the proposal to expand Crownbridge Special School be approved.

The school will form part of the project team and will contribute to the overall development of the new provision. Parents/carers and pupils will be provided with relevant information to aid their understanding of the transition process and the most appropriate support they can offer their children during the period of transition. The school will also work together with other services and where necessary agencies, in identifying families who may need additional support.

Parental and community engagement will remain a key priority throughout this process.

5) The wider implications the changes would have on public transport provisions.

The proposal is not expected to have any significant implications for public transport provision in the area given pupils' transport is largely provided by contracted vehicles.

6) Wider community safety issues.

No significant safety issues are anticipated.

7) Equality Impact

An Equality Impact Assessment is also undertaken in conjunction with and as part of the Community Impact Assessment and examines the potential equality implications of Council proposals.

The following are known as the "protected characteristics" in the Equality Act 2010 and are the groups that need to be considered: age; disability; gender; Marriage and Civil partnership; Pregnancy and maternity; race; religion and belief; and sexual orientation.

In terms of equality impact, and because of the nature of this proposal, there is unlikely to be a significant impact, either positive or negative on groups or individuals with those protected characteristics:

Protected Characteristics	Current school(s)	Proposal	Impact
Race	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Torfaen has a low proportion of people from an ethnic minority.• No	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Young people from an ethnic minority background are unlikely to be adversely	No Change

	discrimination against race in Admission Policy.	affected by the proposals. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No discrimination against race in Admission Policy. 	
Disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Young disabled people are more likely to live in Torfaen's main towns. Access plans will indicate any issues in relation to the physical environment and how to improve them. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The proposed new extension will have full accessibility. The new Building will also have IT and network facilities to match that already provided, which makes it easier to support pupils with additional needs through IT. 	Positive
Gender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All schools named in this document are mixed sex. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New provision will be mixed sex. 	No Change
Age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Crownbridge Special School is a 3 – 19 aged setting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The age range will be unaffected. 	No Change
Religion & Belief	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provided as part of the existing National Curriculum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No changes proposed. 	No Change
Sexual Orientation	N/A	N/A	No Change
Transgender	N/A	N/A	No Change

Any issues will however be drawn out as part of the consultation process. For example if there are children at the school with individual needs, this will be addressed as part of the transition process.

The consultation will also consider if there are any vulnerable groupings of children e.g. Looked after Children, Gypsy Traveller Children or particular ethnic groups.

Overall, the council does not anticipate any significant impacts which cannot be mitigated.

8) What would be the impact on health and well-being?



As a special school, the focus is on children with complex specialist needs, so the proposal is expected to have a very positive impact on the health and wellbeing of those who attend.

9) Transport Impact Assessment

The Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008 places a duty on the council to assess the travel needs of learners under the age of 19. In addition to those children who qualify for free transport provision due to meeting the eligibility criteria, the council is under a legal obligation to assess the travel needs of learners who walk to school.

There will be an impact, but any implications on transport arrangements will be more positive than if we have to use provision from outside of the borough to meet the children's needs.

10) Staff Impact Assessment

There will be no impact on existing staff albeit the increase in capacity may provide new and different opportunities not available in a smaller school.

Nevertheless, in addition to their role as statutory consultees, meaningful consultation will take place with any affected staff and recognised trade unions on the possible impact of the outcome of the statutory consultation. During this period, staff and trade unions will be given the opportunity to comment on the changes and the governing body and council representatives (which will include designated support from the Education Human Resources Team) will listen and take account of views expressed. Discussion will take place through agreed joint consultative processes with recognised trade unions (PSJCC) and collective consultation (and as required 1:1) meetings with staff.

11) Special Educational Needs provision

This proposal specifically addresses the shortage in the amount of provision available for children with SEN in the county borough and will therefore have a positive impact.



PROPOSAL: - TO EXTEND CROWNBRIDGE SCHOOL

YOUR VIEWS

WE WOULD LIKE YOUR VIEWS ON THE ABOVE PROPOSAL. THIS IS ALSO YOUR OPPORTUNITY TO SUGGEST ALTERNATIVES TO THIS PROPOSAL. PLEASE EITHER COMPLETE THIS FORM AND RETURN TO THE CHIEF OFFICER, EDUCATION & LEAD DIRECTOR FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE (FAO MARK HORTON) C/O TORFAEN COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL, CIVIC CENTRE, PONTYPOOL, TORFAEN, NP4 6YB, OR EMAIL: 21stcenturylearning@torfaen.gov.uk



Should you require a copy of the consultation report please provide your contact details below

Email:

Name/Address:



