Proposal to relocate Ysgol Heol Goffa to a new site and increase its capacity to 150

Consultation Report



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CONTENTS

1. **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY** 2
2. **BACKGROUND** 2
3. **THE CONSULTATION PROCESS** 3
4. **ANALYSIS OF CONSULTATION RESPONSES** 4
5. **OBSERVATIONS RECEIVED** 5
6. **SUMMARY OF OBSERVATIONS RECEIVED AND LOCAL AUTHORITY RESPONSES** 5
7. **PUPIL CONSULTATION FINDINGS AND LOCAL AUTHORITY RESPONSES** 13
8. **ESTYN'S RESPONSE** 16
9. **ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS** 17
10. **CHANGES ARISING FROM THE CONSULTATION** 19
11. **CONCLUSION** 19
12. **RECOMMENDATION** 19
13. **NEXT STEPS** 20
14. **APPENDIX A – ESTYN RESPONSE** 20
15. **APPENDIX B – SWOT ANALYSIS OF ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS** 22

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The statutory consultation regarding the proposal to relocate Ysgol Heol Goffa to a new site and increase its capacity to 150 received a total of 46 responses. Of the 46 responses received, 42 respondents (91%) supported the proposal and 4 respondents (9%) did not support it. Overall, the responses indicate a strongly positive and supportive sentiment towards the proposal, with an overwhelming majority recognising the urgent need for a new, purpose built school and the benefits it would bring to pupils, staff, and families. The respondents who did not support the proposal primarily expressed concerns regarding the proposed capacity of the new school, rather than opposition to the provision of a new school itself.

Stakeholders consistently highlight shortcomings in the current provision and broadly agree that investment is necessary to improve outcomes and meet rising demand. However, this support is coupled with a clear and recurring concern about whether the proposed capacity will be sufficient in the long term, with many respondents urging future proofing and expansion. As a result, while there is a clear mandate in favour of the development, the feedback also signals the importance of ensuring that the solution is future proof, sustainable, and responsive to increasing ALN demand.

2. BACKGROUND

The Local Authority commissioned an independent review following its 2024 decision not to proceed with the previously approved 120 place new build for Ysgol Heol Goffa. The review identified that the existing school buildings were in poor condition, requiring significant remedial work, and were unsuitable for providing a modern, accessible learning environment for pupils with severe and complex additional learning needs (ALN).

Demand for specialist provision in the Llanelli area continues to exceed available capacity, particularly for pupils with Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD), Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties (PMLD), and Autistic Spectrum Condition (ASC). This is evidenced by Ysgol Heol Goffa operating beyond its capacity of 118 places, with 132 pupils on roll as at the January 2026 PLASC census date.

The review concluded that developing a new 150 capacity special school represents the most effective and financially sustainable solution to meet current and future demand, improve learning environments, and support high quality ALN provision. The proposal is therefore to relocate Ysgol Heol Goffa to a new site and increase its

capacity to better address the ongoing and projected pressures on specialist placements for the medium to long term.

The proposal also forms part of the Authority's wider strategic approach to the planning and delivery of ALN provision across Llanelli and Carmarthenshire as a whole. Alongside the proposed new school, the Authority continues to develop specialist Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC) provision at Canolfan y Môr for secondary pupils as well as providing additional ASC places within other mainstream primary schools across Carmarthenshire, in line with the independent review of specialist provision. The Authority will continue to monitor demand through its ALN sufficiency planning processes to ensure that current and future needs are identified and that appropriate specialist provision is available to meet the needs of learners across the county.

3. THE CONSULTATION PROCESS

The consultation process followed Welsh Government guidelines, in compliance with the Schools Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and in line with the School Organisation Code (2026). The consultation process gave consultees the opportunity to learn about the proposal and provide feedback.

The consultation document was published in Welsh and English on the 9th June 2026 until the 21st July 2026. The consultation document was distributed electronically to consultees and published on Carmarthenshire County Council's website. Hard copies of the consultation document were available upon request.

The consultation document outlined the proposal being considered, the rationale for the proposal and the details of the consultation process. The consultation document also included an individual response form. Consultees were advised of the availability of Welsh and English versions of the online form to complete and where to send written letters or email responses.

Consultation with pupils of Ysgol Heol Goffa took place on 6 July 2026. A dedicated consultation session was held with 15 pupils aged 15 to 18 years, including School Council representatives and other interested pupils. Learners were provided with a Children and Young People consultation document and information about the proposal before participating in a structured group discussion. The session enabled pupils to explore the proposal, ask questions and share their views on the potential benefits of a new purpose built school. A summary of the feedback received is set out in Section 7 of this report.

4. ANALYSIS OF CONSULTATION RESPONSES

The responses received in between the 9th June 2026 and the 21st July 2026 are outlined below:

Online Survey	E-mail	Letter	Total
46	0	0	46

* *The figure of 46 relates to verified adult online survey responses counted within the formal consultation totals. Pupil responses were gathered through a separate engagement process and are reported separately in Section 7 of this report.*

A total of 46 online survey responses were received to the main snap survey during the consultation period. Respondents represented a range of stakeholder groups as outlined below:

Respondent Category	Number	Percentage
Parent, carer or guardian	9	20%
Prospective parent, carer or guardian	1	2%
Governor	6	13%
Staff	7	15%
Member of the community	15	33%
Community Council	2	4%
Other	11	24%

Note: Respondents were able to identify themselves within more than one category where applicable (for example, as both a parent/carer and a member of staff). Consequently, the combined total across all respondent categories exceeds 46 and the percentages shown do not sum to 100%.

In addition to the above, Estyn submitted a response to the consultation (see Section 8), with the full response provided in Appendix A. Feedback from pupils was gathered through sessions with the school, as described in Section 3, and the outcomes are presented in Section 7.

5. OBSERVATIONS RECEIVED

This section will summarise the submissions / observations received to the proposal, highlighting the themes that have emerged and the Local Authority's responses.

Thematic Analysis of Feedback

From the responses received during the consultation period, the following themes emerged:

- Need for a New School
- Capacity, Future Demand and Provision Planning
- Welsh Language Considerations
- ALN Demand and Equity
- Current Building Not Fit for Purpose
- Benefits to Wellbeing and Learning
- Site, Access and Community Impact

6. SUMMARY OF OBSERVATIONS RECEIVED AND LOCAL AUTHORITY RESPONSES

The following table notes the themes of the observations received. All responses received during the consultation period have been considered in full by the Authority in accordance with the School Organisation Code (2026) and have informed the conclusions and recommendations contained within this report.

Methodology

The thematic analysis presented below is based on the issues raised within consultation responses. A single response may contain comments relating to more than one theme. Therefore, the count reflects the number of responses in which a theme was identified and responses may contribute to multiple themes. As a result, the totals and percentages shown do not sum to 100%.

Thematic Heading: **Need for a New School**	**Count of Responses** **Percentage**	**25** **54%**
Summary of Responses: Respondents overwhelmingly support the development of a new school, describing it as long overdue and essential. Many highlight that the current provision is inadequate and that a new facility would significantly benefit pupils, families, and staff.		
Local Authority Response:		

The Local Authority notes the strong level of support for the development of a new school and recognises the urgency expressed by stakeholders. Evidence presented in the consultation document confirms that the current school is over capacity and that demand for specialist provision is increasing across Carmarthenshire.

The Authority considers that the development of a new school is essential not only to address current capacity and accommodation issues, but also to ensure that provision is sustainable and responsive to future demand. This aligns with the Authority's statutory duty to provide suitable and sufficient education for learners with ALN, and with the principles of the ALN Code 2025, which emphasise early intervention, inclusion, and person centred provision.

The proposal forms part of the Modernising Education Programme and seeks to address this need by delivering a purpose built facility designed to meet current and future ALN requirements. The new facility is designed to provide a high quality, inclusive learning environment with specialist teaching spaces, therapeutic provision, and improved accessibility, ensuring that pupils can access provision that is appropriately matched to the complexity of their needs. The Authority considers that a new school is necessary to ensure pupils can access suitable environments that support learning, wellbeing and independence.

Thematic Heading: Capacity, Future Demand and Provision Planning	**Count of Responses** **Percentage**	**21** **46%**

Summary of Responses: Respondents widely supported the proposal to increase the capacity of Ysgol Heol Goffa and recognised the growing demand for specialist ALN provision across Carmarthenshire. However, a significant number expressed concern that the proposed capacity of 150 places may not be sufficient to meet future demand and could quickly become oversubscribed.

Many respondents referred to increasing pupil numbers, ongoing pressures on specialist provision and the need to future proof the development. Suggestions included increasing the proposed capacity beyond 150 places, ensuring that the new school has the potential for future expansion, creating additional specialist provision elsewhere within the county, and exploring alternative models of provision to meet longer term demand. One respondent also questioned previous capital investment priorities and suggested that greater funding should be directed towards specialist ALN provision to enable a larger development.

Local Authority Response:

The Authority recognises the concerns raised regarding current and future demand for specialist ALN provision and acknowledges the importance of ensuring that sufficient capacity is available to meet the needs of learners across Carmarthenshire.

The proposed increase from 118 to 150 places represents a significant expansion of specialist provision and has been developed following detailed analysis of current demand, demographic trends, and the findings of the independent review of specialist provision. The proposed capacity of 150 has been informed by analysis of current placement pressures, historic growth patterns, referral trends and wider specialist provision developments across Carmarthenshire. Whilst predicting future demand for special school places is inherently difficult due to the complex and individual needs of learners, the increase represents an additional 32 places above the current capacity and provides a significant buffer above current pupil numbers.

The Authority considers that the proposed capacity represents an appropriate and deliverable response to identified need whilst remaining financially sustainable.

The Authority notes the view expressed by one respondent regarding previous capital investment decisions and the allocation of funding within the education estate. Capital investment decisions are made within the context of the Authority's wider Modernising Education Programme, inclusive of any statutory processes / approvals required, available resources, affordability considerations and Welsh Government funding arrangements. The current proposal has been developed following detailed appraisal, independent review and assessment of need, and is considered to represent an appropriate, deliverable and financially sustainable solution to address the current and projected demand for specialist ALN provision.

The proposal also forms part of the Authority's wider strategic approach to the planning and delivery of ALN provision across Llanelli and Carmarthenshire as a whole. Alongside the proposed new school, the Authority continues to develop specialist Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC) provision at Canolfan y Môr for secondary pupils as well as providing additional ASC places within other mainstream primary schools across Carmarthenshire, in line with the independent review of specialist provision. The Authority will continue to monitor demand through its ALN sufficiency planning processes to ensure that current and future needs are identified and that appropriate specialist provision is available to meet the needs of learners across the county.

The Authority also notes suggestions regarding alternative models of provision. The proposal has been developed as part of a broader programme of specialist provision planning across Carmarthenshire, which includes the development of different forms of specialist support and placement options to meet the diverse and evolving needs of learners with ALN.

The Authority also recognises the importance of future flexibility and will consider opportunities for expansion and adaptation through the design and development process where feasible. This strategic approach seeks to ensure that specialist provision remains sustainable, responsive and capable of meeting the diverse and evolving needs of learners across the county.

Thematic Heading: Welsh Language Considerations	**Count of Responses** **Percentage**	**18** **39%**

Summary of Responses: Responses relating to the Welsh language were varied but generally indicated that the proposal would have either a positive or neutral impact on opportunities to use Welsh. Many respondents considered that improved facilities could support the development of bilingual learning environments and increase opportunities for children and staff to engage with the Welsh language.

Several respondents highlighted the importance of ensuring an appropriate number of Welsh speaking staff and maintaining a visible bilingual culture through signage, learning materials and everyday communication. Some respondents also identified opportunities for closer collaboration with neighbouring educational settings to strengthen Welsh language provision.

A number of respondents noted that many pupils attending Ysgol Heol Goffa have complex communication needs, including the use of alternative and augmentative communication systems. These respondents emphasised that Welsh language provision should be delivered in a flexible, person centred manner that reflects individual pupil needs and abilities. Whilst some respondents viewed Welsh language development as important, others felt that specialist educational and communication needs should remain the primary consideration.

Local Authority Response:

The Authority notes the range of views expressed regarding Welsh language provision. The Welsh Language Impact Assessment concludes that the proposal is likely to have a positive effect on opportunities to use Welsh, particularly through improved facilities, increased enrichment opportunities and stronger community engagement.

The proposal aligns closely with the aims of Carmarthenshire's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP), particularly in relation to increasing opportunities for learners to use Welsh socially and developing confidence in bilingual communication. The new school environment will enable a more structured and visible bilingual ethos through enhanced provision such as bilingual

signage, enriched learning experiences, and expanded extracurricular and community based activities that promote Welsh language use in meaningful contexts.

The Authority is committed to ensuring that Welsh is treated no less favourably than English and will continue to support the development of bilingual provision appropriate to the needs of learners, including those who require alternative communication methods.

Thematic Heading: ALN Demand and Equity	**Count of Responses** **Percentage**	**10** **22%**

Summary of Responses: Respondents strongly emphasise the growing demand for ALN provision and the need for equitable access to high quality facilities. Many state that pupils with additional needs deserve the same standards as those in mainstream education.

Local Authority Response:

The Authority fully recognises the importance of ensuring that learners with Additional Learning Needs (ALN) have equitable access to high quality facilities and provision, comparable to those available within mainstream education. The proposal seeks to address historic issues in accommodation by providing specialist facilities designed specifically around learner need.

The proposed development of Ysgol Heol Goffa will provide a modern, purpose built learning environment designed specifically to meet the needs of pupils with complex learning difficulties. This will represent a significant improvement in the quality of facilities, ensuring that learners benefit from appropriate, accessible and high standard accommodation that supports both learning and wellbeing.

The Authority's ALN Code 2025 places strong emphasis on person-centred planning, ensuring that provision is tailored to individual learner needs and supports positive outcomes. The design and delivery of the new provision will reflect these principles, enabling flexible, inclusive and responsive support for pupils with a wide range of needs.

Ysgol Heol Goffa forms part of a wider continuum of provision across Carmarthenshire. Alongside this proposal, the Authority continues to expand and review specialist provision within the Llanelli area, including ASC focused provision at Canolfan y Môr, in response to increasing demand.

This strategic approach ensures that:

- learners are supported in environments appropriate to their type and complexity of need;
- capacity and quality of provision are enhanced across multiple settings;
- learners are able, wherever possible, to access provision close to their home and community.

This approach supports the Authority's statutory duty to secure suitable and sufficient ALN provision, while promoting equality of opportunity and ensuring that learners with ALN benefit from high quality, person centred educational experiences.

Thematic Heading: Current Building Not Fit for Purpose	**Count of Responses** **Percentage**	**10** **22%**

Summary of Responses: Respondents frequently describe the existing building as outdated, unsuitable, and restrictive. Concerns centre on limited space, poor facilities, and the inability to meet the needs of pupils with ALN effectively.

Local Authority Response:

The Authority acknowledges concerns regarding the suitability of the current accommodation. Estyn noted in their recent inspection (November 2025) that several classrooms are too small to accommodate learners safely and effectively, particularly wheelchair users, and identified shortcomings in therapy and specialist facilities. In response to this work was undertaken to improve the current Ysgol Heol Goffa building in the short term utilising Welsh Government additional learning needs grant.

The proposed new school is intended to address these issues through the provision of modern, accessible, and specialist facilities, including therapy spaces, improved classrooms and environments designed specifically for learners with severe and complex needs. This aligns with the Authority's duty to provide appropriate educational provision. This will enable a more effective delivery of the curriculum, support multi-agency working, and enhance pupils' wellbeing, independence, and overall educational outcomes.

The Authority therefore considers that the development of a new, fit for purpose building is essential to ensure that learners are educated in an environment that meets current standards

and reflects best practice in specialist ALN provision. This aligns with the Authority's statutory duty to provide suitable, sufficient, and appropriate education for all learners.

Thematic Heading: Benefits to Wellbeing and Learning	**Count of Responses** **Percentage**	**9** **20%**

Summary of Responses: Respondents believe a new school will improve pupil outcomes, wellbeing, and opportunities. Improved facilities are seen as enabling better teaching, enhanced communication, and more supportive environments.

Local Authority Response:

The Authority acknowledges that improved facilities are likely to have a positive impact on learners' wellbeing and educational outcomes. Evidence within the consultation and impact assessment highlights that the current environment limits aspects of learning, independence and therapeutic support.

The proposed new school will provide enhanced environments, including sensory and therapeutic spaces, which are expected to support engagement, communication and overall development. This aligns with Estyn findings that improvements to accommodation would further enhance outcomes.

These improvements are expected to:

- enhance pupil engagement and participation in learning
- support the development of communication and independence skills
- improve access to therapeutic interventions and multi-agency support
- strengthen overall wellbeing and readiness to learn

In addition, the improved environment will enable staff to deliver a broader and more flexible curriculum, making greater use of specialist spaces and resources to meet individual needs more effectively.

The Authority therefore considers that the provision of a modern, fit for purpose learning environment is a key factor in improving both wellbeing and educational outcomes. This aligns with Estyn's findings that improvements to accommodation would further enhance pupil outcomes and supports the Authority's commitment to delivering high quality, inclusive provision for learners with ALN.

Thematic Heading: Site, Access and Community Impact	Count of Responses Percentage	5 11%

Summary of Responses: Some concerns were raised about traffic, parking, safety, and access to the site. Respondents suggested improvements such as better infrastructure and community focused planning solutions.

Local Authority Response:

The Authority acknowledges the concerns raised by respondents in relation to site access, traffic, parking, and safety, and recognises the importance of ensuring that the proposed development integrates effectively with the surrounding community and local infrastructure. The proposed site was selected following assessment of educational suitability, accessibility, land availability, affordability and deliverability. The site's location within Local Authority ownership reduces development risk and supports opportunities for collaboration with neighbouring educational facilities and community services.

A detailed Community Impact Assessment indicates that, overall, the proposed location represents an improvement in accessibility when compared to the current site. The new location benefits from direct access to public transport routes and closer proximity to key transport hubs, including bus and rail links, which will improve accessibility for staff, visitors, and community users. In contrast, the existing site is more constrained and less well connected to transport infrastructure.

The Authority recognises that, as with any development of this scale, there is potential for localised impacts relating to traffic and parking. These matters will be addressed in full through the detailed design and planning process, including traffic impact assessments, transport planning, and appropriate mitigation measures. This will ensure that issues such as safe access, drop-off arrangements, and parking provision are carefully designed to meet the needs of pupils, many of whom require specialist transport, while minimising disruption to the local community.

Importantly, the proposed development also provides an opportunity to enhance community use and wider community benefits. The design of the new school incorporates modern, flexible spaces that can support a broader range of activities, building on the school's existing role as a hub for services, events, and engagement with families, partner organisations, and the local community. Improved accessibility and facilities are expected to strengthen these connections, supporting greater participation and creating further opportunities for inclusive community use.

The Authority will continue to work collaboratively with relevant internal departments, transport planners, and external stakeholders throughout the planning and delivery stages to ensure that potential impacts are effectively mitigated and that the development delivers maximum benefit for both the school community and the wider area.

Overall, the Authority considers that, with appropriate mitigation and design, the proposed site will provide a more accessible, better connected, and community focused environment than the current provision.

7. PUPIL CONSULTATION FINDINGS AND LOCAL AUTHORITY RESPONSES

Pupil Consultation

In accordance with the School Organisation Code (2026) and the Authority's commitment to ensuring that the views of children and young people are taken into account throughout the consultation process, a dedicated pupil consultation session was undertaken with members of the School Council at Ysgol Heol Goffa on 6 July 2026.

A total of 15 pupils participated in the consultation session. The pupils represented the Senior School and were aged between 15 and 18 years. The group consisted primarily of School Council representatives, alongside other pupils who expressed an interest in learning about and discussing the proposal.

Prior to the session, pupils were provided with the Children and Young People Consultation Document to support their understanding of the proposal, its rationale and its potential impact. Pupils were informed about the proposal to relocate Ysgol Heol Goffa to a new purpose built school with capacity for 150 pupils, including details of the proposed learning environments, specialist facilities, outdoor areas and the planned implementation from September 2029. The proposed facilities were discussed and compared with the current school buildings and learning environment. Discussion focused on how the new school could improve learning opportunities, accessibility and the overall educational experience for pupils.

The consultation was delivered in a manner appropriate to the age, understanding and communication needs of the pupils, enabling them to participate fully through supported discussion and engagement activities. Feedback was gathered through a structured group discussion facilitated by staff. Pupils were encouraged to ask questions, share their views and reflect on how the proposed new school compared with their current experiences. Follow up questions were used to explore views in greater depth and identify any concerns, suggestions or areas of particular importance to learners.

Summary of Pupil Feedback

Overall, pupils expressed strong support for the proposal and were overwhelmingly positive about the development of a new school building. Pupils recognised the potential benefits of a modern, purpose-built environment and welcomed the opportunities that enhanced facilities could provide for current and future learners.

Key themes raised by pupils included:

- Strong support for the proposal to develop a new school building.
- Enthusiasm for larger classrooms, improved facilities and more modern learning environments.
- Interest in ensuring that the new school provides sufficient space for both current and future pupils.
- Excitement about the possibility of improved specialist facilities and learning spaces to support a wider range of needs.
- A desire for adequate outdoor areas for recreation, socialising and physical activity during break and lunchtime periods.

The principal issue raised during the session related to the proposed capacity of the new school. Pupils questioned whether 150 places would be sufficient to meet future demand, noting that the current school population is already approximately 133 pupils. Pupils sought reassurance that there would be adequate capacity to accommodate increasing numbers of learners in the future. They were informed that the proposed capacity has been developed in response to evidence of increasing demand for specialist school places.

Pupils also sought further information regarding the outdoor spaces proposed as part of the development. Learners were keen to understand how these areas would support recreation, social interaction and physical activity, and emphasised the importance of ensuring that both indoor and outdoor environments are sufficiently spacious and accessible.

No other significant concerns were raised during the consultation session. Overall, pupils were highly supportive of the proposal and welcomed the prospect of a new school designed to meet the needs of current and future learners.

Local Authority Response

The Local Authority welcomes the positive and constructive engagement of pupils throughout the consultation process and is encouraged by the strong level of support expressed for the proposal to relocate Ysgol Heol Goffa to a new purpose built school. The Authority appreciates the thoughtful contributions made by pupils and values the

opportunity to hear directly from learners about the facilities and learning environment that are important to them.

The feedback demonstrates that pupils recognise the potential benefits of a modern specialist learning environment, including larger classrooms, improved facilities, enhanced accessibility and specialist learning spaces. The Authority notes the importance pupils place on having sufficient indoor and outdoor space to support learning, wellbeing, recreation and social interaction. These views align with the objectives of the proposal, which seeks to provide a high quality educational environment designed to meet the needs of current and future learners.

The Authority acknowledges the questions raised regarding the proposed capacity of 150 pupil places. The proposed capacity has been informed by a detailed assessment of current pupil numbers, future demand, demographic trends and the wider strategic planning of Additional Learning Needs (ALN) provision across Carmarthenshire. The increase from the current capacity of 118 places to 150 places represents a significant expansion of specialist provision and has been designed to respond to increasing demand for places. The Authority is actively progressing additional provision within the Llanelli area, including the development of specialist ASC capacity at Canolfan y Môr and associated settings. This reflects a strategic approach to planning provision across different types of ALN rather than relying on a single site. The Authority will continue to monitor demand for specialist provision through ongoing sufficiency planning and review processes to ensure that future needs are appropriately identified and that sufficient capacity is available across the wider specialist education system.

The Authority also notes the importance pupils attached to outdoor learning, recreation and social spaces. The proposal includes enhanced outdoor facilities and play areas designed to support learners' educational, social and wellbeing needs. As the project progresses through the design and development stages pupils can actively contribute to discussion through dedicated workshops and consideration will continue to be given to how outdoor spaces can best support a wide range of activities and provide opportunities for learning, leisure and physical activity.

The enthusiasm expressed by pupils for improved specialist facilities and learning environments is particularly welcomed. The proposed development aims to provide modern, flexible and accessible accommodation that will enhance learning opportunities and better support the diverse and complex needs of pupils attending Ysgol Heol Goffa. The feedback received from learners will help inform the ongoing development of the project and ensure that the pupil voice continues to be reflected throughout the process.

The Local Authority would like to thank all pupils who participated in the consultation. Their views have provided valuable insight into the aspirations and priorities of learners and will form part of the evidence considered as the proposal progresses through the statutory decision making process.

8. ESTYN'S RESPONSE

Estyn's response is supportive of the proposal to relocate Ysgol Heol Goffa and increase its capacity to 150 places. It concludes that the proposal is likely to strengthen specialist ALN provision in Carmarthenshire, helping the local authority meet increasing demand for specialist placements and reducing reliance on out of county provision. Estyn acknowledges the clear strategic rationale for the proposal, noting that the current school has been over capacity for several years and that there are no surplus specialist places available within the county. It agrees that a new purpose built school with modern facilities, specialist therapeutic spaces and improved outdoor provision will enhance teaching and learning, wellbeing, care and support, and curriculum opportunities, particularly for post-16 learners. Estyn also considers that the local authority has appropriately assessed alternative options, transport implications, transition arrangements and project risks. While noting that further detail on overall costs and long-term affordability could have been provided, Estyn's overall view is that the proposal is likely to improve the quality and standard of specialist education provision for learners with additional learning needs in Carmarthenshire.

The full response from Estyn is included in Appendix A.

Local Authority Response

The Local Authority welcomes Estyn's response to the proposal to relocate Ysgol Heol Goffa to a new purpose built site and increase its capacity to 150 places. The Authority is pleased that Estyn recognises the clear strategic rationale for the proposal and agrees that it is likely to improve specialist educational provision for learners with additional learning needs (ALN) across Carmarthenshire. Estyn acknowledges the significant and sustained demand for specialist placements, the absence of surplus ALN capacity within the county, and the pressures arising from Ysgol Heol Goffa operating above capacity for a number of years. The Authority agrees that the proposal will support its wider strategy to increase local specialist provision and reduce reliance on out of county placements.

The Authority welcomes Estyn's recognition that the proposal will provide significant educational benefits through the creation of a modern, purpose built learning environment. As highlighted by Estyn, the new school will address the accommodation limitations identified at the current site and provide enhanced learning, therapy and wellbeing facilities that better meet the complex needs of learners. The Authority agrees that improved specialist accommodation, increased outdoor learning opportunities, and enhanced facilities for post-16 learners will strengthen teaching and learning, wellbeing, care and support, and curriculum delivery.

The Authority also notes Estyn's acknowledgement that alternative options have been appropriately considered and that the preferred site has been selected following an assessment of educational need, site suitability and long term sufficiency planning. The Authority remains confident that the proposed location will provide a sustainable long term solution that supports future demand and enables opportunities for collaboration with neighbouring educational and community facilities.

The Local Authority welcomes Estyn's view that learner transport issues, transition arrangements and project risks have been appropriately considered. The Authority is committed to working closely with pupils, families, staff and partner agencies to ensure a carefully managed transition to the new school through a phased programme that places the needs and wellbeing of learners at its centre.

The Authority notes Estyn's observation regarding the level of detail available at this stage in relation to project costs, affordability and longer term budget implications. Detailed financial information will continue to be developed and scrutinised through the Sustainable Communities for Learning Welsh Government business case process and the Authority's established governance arrangements. The proposal remains subject to Welsh Government business case approval and the associated funding processes.

Overall, the Authority welcomes Estyn's positive assessment and its conclusion that the proposal is likely to improve the quality and standard of specialist education provision in the area. The Authority believes the proposal represents a significant investment in the future of specialist education in Carmarthenshire and will provide learners attending Ysgol Heol Goffa with facilities that are fit for the 21st century, supporting improved outcomes, wellbeing and opportunities for current and future generations.

9. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

As part of the consultation process, consultees were invited to identify any alternative options that they felt the Authority should consider in relation to the proposal. Whilst many respondents either supported the proposal as presented or did not suggest any alternatives, a small number of consultees proposed additional options and enhancements.

Many consultation responses reiterated or expanded on alternative options that had already been assessed and published within the consultation document, these included increasing the capacity of the proposed new school beyond 150 places, reconsidering a larger 250 place special school incorporating ASC provision. This option has already been considered in the consultation document and the reasons for discounting remain unchanged.

Other respondents suggested, creating additional specialist provision elsewhere in the county, using empty buildings, exploring an executive headship/shared leadership model with Ysgol Pen Rhos, considering an alternative site.

The Local Authority notes the suggestions received regarding the creation of additional specialist provision elsewhere in the county, the introduction of an executive headship or shared leadership arrangement with Ysgol Pen Rhos, and the consideration of alternative sites. These suggestions are welcomed and demonstrate the importance that stakeholders place on ensuring sufficient, sustainable and high-quality specialist provision for learners with additional learning needs.

In relation to additional specialist provision elsewhere in the county, the Authority continues to review ALN sufficiency across Carmarthenshire through its wider ALN Code 2025. However, the current proposal specifically seeks to address the immediate and evidenced capacity pressures at Ysgol Heol Goffa and provide modern specialist accommodation for learners with severe learning difficulties (SLD) and profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD). The proposed increase to 150 places represents a significant increase in capacity and the new school has been designed with consideration for future needs.

With regard to suggestions for an executive headship or shared leadership model with Ysgol Pen Rhos, leadership arrangements are operational matters that fall outside the scope of this school organisation proposal. Should the proposal proceed, the governing bodies and relevant stakeholders would be responsible for considering future leadership structures in accordance with relevant legislation, guidance and the needs of the schools concerned. Nevertheless, the proximity of the two schools is expected to create opportunities for collaboration and the sharing of good practice where appropriate.

In relation to alternative sites, the Authority considered a range of options before identifying the preferred location adjacent to Ysgol Pen Rhos. The preferred site was selected following an assessment of educational suitability, accessibility, deliverability, land availability, affordability and the ability to provide a purpose built facility capable of meeting the current and future needs of learners. The site is already within the ownership of Local Authority and provides opportunities for enhanced partnership working and shared use of resources. For these reasons, the Authority remains of the view that the proposed site represents the most suitable and deliverable option.

Overall, whilst these suggestions have been considered, the Authority remains satisfied that the proposal to relocate Ysgol Heol Goffa to the proposed site and increase capacity to 150 places represents the most appropriate, achievable and sustainable solution for addressing current pressures and improving specialist provision for learners across Carmarthenshire.

A SWOT analysis of these options can be found at Appendix B.

10. CHANGES ARISING FROM THE CONSULTATION

Having carefully considered all consultation responses received during the consultation period, including the alternative options suggested by stakeholders, the Local Authority is satisfied that all reasonable alternatives have been fully explored and appropriately assessed. The responses demonstrated strong support for the provision of a new special school for Ysgol Heol Goffa, with the majority of alternative suggestions focusing on increasing capacity, future proofing provision, enhancing collaboration opportunities, or considering wider specialist provision across the county.

The Authority has considered these views alongside the educational, financial, operational and strategic evidence presented within the consultation document and impact assessment pack. Following this assessment, the Authority remains of the view that the proposal to relocate Ysgol Heol Goffa to a new purpose built school and increase its capacity to 150 places represents the most appropriate, achievable and sustainable solution to address current and future pressures on specialist ALN provision in Carmarthenshire and that there are no changes to the proposal.

11. CONCLUSION

The consultation responses demonstrate overwhelming support for the proposal. Whilst stakeholders have raised legitimate questions regarding long term sufficiency and future capacity, these concerns relate primarily to the scale of provision rather than opposition to the principle of developing a new school. The consultation has therefore reinforced the need for investment in specialist provision and has provided strong evidence in support of progressing the proposal.

The proposal will provide significant improvements to the learning environment, increase local specialist capacity and support improved outcomes for learners with severe learning difficulties and profound and multiple learning difficulties across the county.

12. RECOMMENDATION

Having carefully reviewed the Consultation Report and considered all representations received, including those from parents, pupils, staff, governors, Estyn, and other stakeholders, it is recommended that Cabinet:

- notes the issues raised throughout the consultation process, along with the Local Authority's responses to those issues;
- confirms that the consultation has been undertaken in line with the requirements of the School Organisation Code (2026);

- agrees, subject to its own consideration and any final refinements it deems appropriate regarding implementation, that a Statutory Notice be published to propose the relocation of Ysgol Heol Goffa to a new site and an increase in its capacity to 150 places.

Publishing a Statutory Notice would allow the statutory process to move to the next stage, during which further representations can be made during the objection period and considered before any final decision is reached. Responses received during the consultation period will not be treated as statutory objections. If consultees wish to object, they will need to do so in writing during the statutory objection period.

13. NEXT STEPS

The Consultation Report will be presented to the Cabinet who will decide whether or not to approve the proposal to proceed to Statutory Notice or to approve with modifications. The Consultation Report will be published on Carmarthenshire County Council's website at least two weeks prior to the publication of a Statutory Notice should Cabinet decide to proceed. All required consultees will be notified of the availability of the consultation report.

14. APPENDIX A – ESTYN RESPONSE

Proposal to relocate Ysgol Heol Goffa, Carmarthenshire to a new site and increase its capacity to 150

Introduction

This report has been prepared by His Majesty's Inspectors of Education and Training in Wales.

Under the terms of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and its associated Code, proposers are required to send consultation documents to Estyn. However, Estyn is not a body which is required to act in accordance with the Code and the Act places no requirements on Estyn in respect of school organisation matters. Therefore, as a body being consulted, Estyn will provide their opinion only on the overall merits of school organisation proposals.

Estyn has considered the educational aspects of the proposal and has produced the following response to the information provided by the proposer.

Summary/conclusion

The proposal is likely to increase specialist provision for pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) within Carmarthenshire and improve the local authority's capacity to meet

increasing demand for specialist placements. The proposer provides a clear strategic rationale for the proposal based on evidence of pressure on existing provision, increasing demand for specialist placements and the need to increase specialist capacity within the authority.

Overall, the proposal appears likely to improve the standard of specialist education provision in the area.

Description and benefits

The proposer provides a clear rationale for the proposal. The consultation document and supporting evidence identify increasing demand for specialist provision across Carmarthenshire and demonstrate that the existing school site is over capacity putting it under considerable pressure. The proposal forms part of the local authority's wider strategy to increase specialist ALN capacity and reduce reliance on placements outside the authority.

The proposer provides a clear description of the proposal and implementation arrangements. The proposal is to relocate Ysgol Heol Goffa and increase its capacity to 150. The consultation documentation outlines the statutory process and proposed implementation arrangements appropriately and outlines clearly how stakeholders can respond to the consultation.

The proposer sets out a range of anticipated benefits of the proposal clearly. These include increasing specialist places within Carmarthenshire, improving existing facilities and increasing access to local placements and enabling learners to benefit from specialist support. The proposal also appears likely to contribute to the local authority's ability to meet its statutory duties in relation to additional learning needs. These appear to be reasonable.

The proposer considers alternatives to the status quo appropriately and explains why the area next to Ysgol Pen Rhos has been selected as the preferred site. The proposal demonstrates that the authority has considered wider sufficiency planning and future demand for specialist provision, outlining advantages and disadvantages.

The proposer provides relevant details about land and buildings, noting that the proposed new site is owned by the local authority and that the existing Ysgol Heol Goffa site would return to the Corporate Property Division.

Learner travel arrangements appear to have been considered appropriately, with the proposal suggesting reasonably that travel and access to the new site will be improved and of benefit to learners. The proposal notes an increase in travel time for some learners however as the new site is 3 miles from the current site, this is likely to have limited impact.

The proposer has effectively shown how surplus places will be affected. There are currently no surplus places for learners with ALN in Carmarthenshire and Ysgol Heol Goffa has been over capacity for the last five years.

The proposer outlines broad funding intentions, but provides limited detail about the overall costs, affordability and longer-term budget implications.

The proposer identifies risks associated with the proposal in the consultation document and outlines how these will be managed, including arrangements to ensure that individual pupil needs are considered and supported throughout implementation and transition to the new site.

The local authority has provided a Welsh Language Impact Assessment as part of this proposal.

Educational aspects of the proposal

The proposer has thoughtfully considered the impact the proposal will have on the quality and standards in education and included useful information from the most recent Estyn inspection report that outlines limitations regarding accommodation shortcomings. They suggest that access to a modernised site, with 21st century equipment and increased outdoor space will benefit the quality and standards of teaching and learning, well-being, care, support and guidance, and leadership. This appears to be reasonable.

The proposer has considered the impact on the school's ability to deliver the full curriculum to its learners. They suggest that the new facilities and environment will provide learners with greater learning opportunities than existing provision and this includes improved provision for teaching post 16 pupils with life skills and vocational skills as well as more space and better play provision on the proposed new school site.

The proposal outlines suitably how improved facilities at the new school site will enhance provision for learners with ALN whilst also reducing the need for out of county placements.

The proposer appears to have considered disruption to learners and how this can be minimised appropriately. Learners will continue in the existing school building until the new site is completed. A phased transition programme is being planned to ensure the smooth transition of learners into the new site.

15. APPENDIX B – SWOT ANALYSIS OF ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

Alternative Option 1 – Executive Headship / Shared Leadership with Ysgol Pen Rhos	
Strengths	**Weaknesses**
Could promote closer collaboration between Ysgol Heol Goffa and Ysgol Pen Rhos, particularly in sharing expertise, professional learning and resources.	The schools serve different cohorts of learners with distinct educational, pastoral and operational requirements, requiring significant specialist leadership expertise.

Potential for greater strategic alignment between neighbouring schools on curriculum, inclusion and community engagement.	The scale and complexity of managing both a large special school and a mainstream primary school may place considerable demands on leadership capacity.
May create efficiencies in leadership structures and opportunities for succession planning.	There is a risk that the specific priorities and needs of either school may receive less focused leadership attention.
Could facilitate sharing of facilities and community resources where appropriate.	
Opportunities	**Threats**
Opportunities for joint professional development, staff networking and sharing specialist expertise.	Potential leadership capacity constraints impacting school improvement priorities in either setting.
Could support stronger transition pathways and wider inclusion initiatives between schools.	Governance, accountability and staffing structures may become more complex.
Potential to strengthen community engagement through joint initiatives and events.	Stakeholders may perceive that the unique identity and specialist focus of

	Ysgol Heol Goffa could be diminished.
Could be considered in the future if both governing bodies determine it would provide educational benefit.	Changes to leadership arrangements could create uncertainty during implementation of the new school project.

Overall Assessment

A very small number of consultation responses suggested that an Executive Headship or shared leadership arrangement between Ysgol Heol Goffa and Ysgol Pen Rhos should be considered as an alternative approach. Respondents noted that such an arrangement could promote collaboration between the schools, provide opportunities for shared expertise and support greater consistency in strategic leadership, particularly in relation to curriculum development, inclusion and the promotion of the Welsh language. One respondent specifically highlighted the potential benefits of a single headteacher in providing a unified vision and strengthening collaborative working between the two schools.

Ysgol Heol Goffa and Ysgol Pen Rhos are fundamentally different educational settings with distinct purposes, learner populations, statutory responsibilities and operational requirements. Ysgol Heol Goffa provides highly specialised education for learners with severe learning difficulties (SLD), profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD), autism and complex additional learning needs. This requires specialist leadership, extensive multi-agency collaboration, oversight of therapeutic provision, complex safeguarding arrangements, workforce planning for specialist staff, and a detailed understanding of ALN legislation and practice. In contrast, Ysgol Pen Rhos operates as a mainstream primary school with a different curriculum, accountability framework and learner profile.

The Authority considers that leading a special school of this nature is a substantial role in its own right and requires dedicated leadership capacity. As demand for specialist provision continues to increase, the complexity of

managing and developing provision for learners with significant and complex needs has also increased. A shared Executive Headship arrangement could risk diluting leadership focus at a time when both schools require strong and visible leadership to deliver their respective priorities and improvement objectives.

Furthermore, there is no evidence to demonstrate that a shared leadership model would deliver measurable educational benefits, improved learner outcomes or operational efficiencies sufficient to outweigh the additional complexity it would create. Shared leadership arrangements can introduce challenges relating to governance, accountability, decision-making, staff management and strategic prioritisation, particularly where schools have significantly different educational contexts and improvement priorities.

Whilst opportunities for collaboration between Ysgol Heol Goffa and Ysgol Pen Rhos are recognised and could develop regardless of leadership arrangements, the Authority does not consider a shared Executive Headship to be a suitable or evidence based alternative to the proposal. The option would introduce additional leadership and governance complexity without providing a clear solution to the strategic challenges facing specialist education provision. Consequently, Alternative Option 1 is not considered a viable alternative and has therefore been discounted.

Alternative Option 2 – Consider Alternative Sites including vacant sites in Llanelli	
Strengths	**Weaknesses**
May be perceived by some stakeholders as a central and familiar location within Llanelli.	No evidence has been presented that the site is available, deliverable or suitable for a 150 place special school.

Could potentially provide opportunities for community access depending on site constraints.	The site has not formed part of the detailed feasibility and option appraisal work undertaken by the Authority.
Might be considered closer to some services and amenities.	Potential additional land acquisition costs and legal complexities if not already within Local Authority ownership.
Could require less relocation for a small number of existing users.	Would delay delivery of the project significantly through the need for further site investigations, surveys and business case revisions.
Opportunities	**Threats**
Could be explored as part of any future strategic planning for specialist education provision.	Delay in progressing the project would prolong existing accommodation pressures and overcrowding at Ysgol Heol Goffa
Potential for regeneration benefits depending on the site's future development plans.	Additional planning, environmental, transport or infrastructure constraints may emerge.
Potential community interest in alternative redevelopment opportunities.	Risk to Welsh Government funding timelines and business case approvals if a new site assessment were required.

Opportunity to undertake fresh site comparisons if circumstances changed significantly	Increased project costs and uncertainty could jeopardise delivery of the new school.

Overall Assessment

Consultation responses identified limited support for the consideration of alternative sites for the proposed new school. The principal alternative locations suggested were the former leisure centre site and vacant buildings within Llanelli, particularly the former college buildings at Stebonheath. These suggestions were raised by a small number of individual respondents rather than representing a recurring theme across the consultation. The overwhelming focus of consultation feedback related to the need for a larger school and increased future capacity, rather than concerns regarding the proposed location itself.

The strengths of this alternative option are that it reflects a willingness to consider the re-use of existing buildings or brownfield sites and could potentially support wider regeneration objectives. Some respondents considered that vacant buildings may already provide substantial accommodation and could avoid the need for a new build development. There was also a view that relocating the school elsewhere might free up the existing Heol Goffa site for alternative educational uses.

However, significant weaknesses are associated with this option. No evidence was provided through the consultation process to demonstrate that any identified vacant site or building could meet the specialist accommodation requirements of learners with Severe Learning Difficulties (SLD), Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties (PMLD) and associated Additional Learning Needs without substantial adaptation. Furthermore, no detailed feasibility, condition, accessibility, suitability or cost assessments were submitted to support the viability of the suggested sites.

The preferred site adjacent to Ysgol Pen Rhos has been selected following consideration of educational suitability, accessibility, land availability, deliverability and strategic fit. The site benefits from being in Local Authority

ownership, provides opportunities for closer collaboration with neighbouring educational provision, and allows the project to progress without the delays and risks associated with identifying, acquiring, assessing and developing an alternative site. A number of consultation responses specifically supported the educational benefits arising from proximity to Ysgol Pen Rhos.

The principal risk associated with pursuing Alternative Option 2 is that further site investigations, acquisition negotiations, planning considerations and feasibility studies could delay the delivery of much needed specialist provision. Given the acknowledged inadequacy of the current accommodation and increasing demand for places, any significant delay could have an adverse impact on learners, staff and families awaiting improved facilities. Consultation feedback consistently highlighted the urgency of delivering the new school and the inadequacy of the existing building.

Whilst the Authority acknowledges the suggestions regarding the former leisure centre site and vacant buildings within Llanelli, consultation responses do not provide sufficient evidence to demonstrate that these alternatives would deliver equivalent educational, operational or strategic benefits to the preferred site. As a result, Alternative Option 2 is not considered a preferable or deliverable solution when compared with the proposal to relocate Ysgol Heol Goffa to the Local Authority owned site adjacent to Ysgol Pen Rhos. On the basis of the evidence currently available, there is insufficient justification to pursue further assessment of alternative sites as part of the current proposal.

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