

## **Abertillery Learning Community**

### **Community Impact Assessment**

#### **Purpose and Approach**

Community Impact Assessments are a structured mechanism to ensure that Council decision-making fully considers the potential impacts of proposals on communities, particularly those that may be disproportionately affected by change. This assessment supports robust, transparent, and legally compliant decision-making by identifying community-level impacts, assessing risk, and setting out proportionate mitigation.

This assessment has been undertaken in recognition of the Council's duties under equality, education, and learner travel legislation and reflects Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council's commitment to fair access to services, community cohesion, and the sustainable delivery of education provision.

#### **Community Context and Sensitivity**

Abertillery Learning Community is located within the Ebbw Fach South Ward. The Council recognises that parts of the ward experience higher levels of deprivation, as evidenced by the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) 2025, including Cwmtillery which falls within the 21–30% most deprived category nationally.

In this context, changes to education provision may have heightened sensitivity for families affected by financial pressures, limited transport options, or additional support needs. Accordingly, this assessment has placed particular emphasis on accessibility, affordability of travel, continuity of provision, and safeguarding the wellbeing of vulnerable learners.

#### **Evidence Base**

The assessment is informed by:

- Issues and themes emerging from the statutory consultation process
- Demographic and pupil forecast data
- Travel distances and transport provision
- Statutory duties and Council policy frameworks

Key consultation themes considered include travel and accessibility, staffing implications, community use of the Roseheyworth Road Campus, community cohesion, and the impact on vulnerable learners. These matters have been assessed with a view to ensuring impacts are understood, mitigated, and proportionate.

## **Description of the Proposal**

If approved, the preferred option, closure of Roseheyworth Road Campus, will be implemented from September 2027. Pupils will transfer to either Tillery Street Campus or Six Bells Campus, remaining within the same all-through Abertillery Learning Community.

The proposal represents a consolidation of provision rather than the closure of the learning community. Leadership, curriculum continuity, pastoral arrangements, and support structures will be maintained throughout transition. The reduction in capacity to 210 places reflects sustained reductions in pupil numbers and aims to secure the long-term sustainability of the learning community.

## **Key Community Impacts and Mitigation**

### **1. Impact on Pupils and Families**

#### **Impact:**

Pupils and families will experience a period of change, including adjustments to campus location and routines. Some pupils may experience anxiety as a result of transition.

#### **Mitigation:**

- Structured transition and familiarisation activities
- Phased transitions where appropriate
- Enhanced pastoral and wellbeing support
- Clear, timely communication with parents/carers

These measures are designed to minimise disruption and safeguard pupil wellbeing.

### **2. Travel and Accessibility**

#### **Impact:**

Travel distances will increase for some pupils. The distance between Roseheyworth Road Campus and Tillery Street Campus is approximately 1.2 miles. Consultation responses highlighted concern, particularly for younger pupils.

#### **Mitigation:**

- Distances to alternative campuses remain within statutory learner travel expectations
- Transport needs will be assessed in accordance with the Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008

- Familiarisation visits and clear guidance on transport arrangements will be provided
- Transport demand will be monitored during implementation to ensure no learner is disadvantaged

### **3. Impact on Community Facilities and Cohesion**

#### **Impact:**

Closure of Roseheyworth Road Campus will result in the loss of:

- On-site childcare provision
- Community access to meeting and shared spaces

There is also a recognised risk associated with a vacant building.

#### **Mitigation:**

- The site will remain within the Council's Education Property Portfolio
- Interim security, inspection, and asset management arrangements will be implemented
- Options for future educational or community use will be considered as part of wider asset planning, subject to statutory and financial considerations

These steps are intended to mitigate risks to community safety and cohesion while longer-term decisions are developed.

### **4. Staff Impact**

#### **Impact:**

The proposal may have workforce implications, including potential redundancy, redeployment or changes in working location. Consultation responses identified staff morale and uncertainty as key concerns.

#### **Mitigation:**

- Engagement with staff and trade unions will continue
- HR processes will be followed in line with Council policy
- Every effort will be made to minimise compulsory redundancies
- Support for redeployment and transition will be provided where possible

### **5. Additional Learning Needs (ALN)**

#### **Impact:**

No adverse impact on specialist provision is anticipated.

**Assurance:**

- Existing ALN Resource Areas at the secondary campus and Six Bells Campus will be unaffected
- The proposal relates solely to mainstream capacity
- This assurance responds directly to consultation feedback concerning vulnerable learners

**Health and Wellbeing**

The Council acknowledges that change may affect emotional wellbeing for some pupils, families, and staff. This will be mitigated through continued pastoral support, close monitoring, and targeted intervention where required. The proposal does not adversely affect access to education, support services, or safeguarding arrangements.

**Overall Assessment and Assurance**

Overall, this Community Impact Assessment demonstrates that:

- The proposal has been informed by consultation evidence
- Community-level impacts have been fully considered
- Identified risks are capable of mitigation
- No group is disproportionately disadvantaged
- Statutory duties and Council responsibilities are met

The Council is satisfied that, subject to implementation of the mitigation measures identified, the proposal supports the long-term sustainability of education provision in Abertillery while safeguarding accessibility, equality, wellbeing, and community safety.