

YSGOL
PONTFADOG

FEASIBILITY
STUDY

FINAL REPORT

26/02/2020

Marc Roberts, Cynlas Cyf.



Report to:

Glyntraian

Community Council



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This project has received funding through the Welsh Government Rural Communities - Rural Development Programme 2014-2020, which is funded by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the Welsh Government.

Cyllidwyd y prosiect hwn drwy Cymunedau Gwledig Llywodraeth Cymru - Rhaglen Datblygu Gwledig Cymru 2014-2020, a ariennir gan Lywodraeth Cymru a'r Gronfa Amaethyddol Ewrop ar gyfer Datblygu Gwledig.

Executive Summary

Rural Development Agency Cadwyn Clwyd, in partnership with Glyntraian Community Council, commissioned Cynlas Cyf to undertake a feasibility study to determine whether a viable and sustainable future use for the former Ysgol Pontfadog could be achieved, whilst at the same time providing social and economic benefits to the community residents. If such a sustainable and viable solution was identified, then this report would be used to support a proposal to Wrexham County Borough Council for a potential asset transfer.

This project received funding through the Welsh Government Rural Communities – Rural Development Programme 2014 – 2020, which is funded by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the Welsh Government.

The brief issued required a consideration of the above, and to provide a coherent viable and sustainable proposal to Wrexham County Borough Council which would allow for an effective transfer of the school to a third party for an appropriate and effective redevelopment and reuse of the site.

Key to this consultation was to challenge the community to identify a viable project proposition that was self-sustaining, of wide benefit to the community and critically, did not impinge upon other businesses or community assets/venues in the Ceiriog Valley.

The ambition of the consultation and feasibility study was therefore to explore the most appropriate, sustainable, eco-friendly and community-focused options, ones which were economically viable and critically, driven by, and managed onwards, by a social enterprise with community cohesion at its core.

In preparing this report, Cynlas was presented with a range of initial ideas to test with funders, stakeholders and most importantly, the community. This included the idea of a Forest School, which a group of residents had developed in response to the closure of the school. Other ideas, including housing, community spaces and gardens, wedding venue, bunkhouses and a community hub were put forward and considered.

Extensive consultation was undertaken, with all residents of the valley given the opportunity to offer their views and thoughts. This included two public meetings, face to face meetings and a questionnaire sent to each household in the Glyntraian area by the Community Council.

Key data, such as the census and Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) were also reviewed. This data showed a steady drop in the population between 2001 and 2018 (from 878 to 800) and an increasingly older age profile.

The WIMD data also demonstrated that Glyntraian continues to lack key services, ranking amongst the 10% most deprived in this context across Wales. Of noteworthy concern is the deterioration in the housing ranking from 2014. Although some caution must be applied (as the process of assessment was slightly different to the previous exercise) housing has shown a significant change in five years, from a ranking of 1464 in 2014, (within the 20% least deprived communities in Wales), to 402 in 2019, thus placing it amongst the 20-30% most deprived.

The response to the questionnaire was significant, with nearly 200 households sending at least one questionnaire back. This represented 71% of all households. In total, 230 responses were received (some residences sending more than one form back), equating to 34% of all residents.

This, coupled with a review of key data, such as population statistics and the recently published Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation, provided robust evidence for an options appraisal to be carried out.

Based on the evidence received, discussions with potential project leads, and the significant response from the community, a number of options were shortlisted. These were:

- Sheltered Housing for the elderly
- Starter/affordable Homes
- Green Space and Allotments
- Forest School and Community Hub
- Community Hub.

All the options were considered against specific criteria, most specifically:

Community need and desirability - the degree to which each option meets the community's need and demands, but also the strategic objectives and priorities of stakeholders, both locally and regionally. This element was also considered against the backdrop of the results of the community survey

Viability - the degree to which each option is financially viable and sustainable

Feasibility - the degree to which each option can be implemented

Economic and Social Impact – the degree to which each option impacts positively on the community of Glyntraian and the wider Ceiriog Valley area.

Based on the above, the option which offers the most suitable pathway forward is the development of new social housing or starter/affordable homes.

However, this option is on the premise that the development is led by Wrexham CBC and/or a Housing Association, in cooperation with Glyntraian CC, and that a significant social return on investment through the development of a community project is also delivered. A robust and clear local lettings policy will also need to be embedded within the project.

This conclusion is based on the following:

- Clear empirical and demonstrable need for such housing.
- Significant community support
- Discernible economic and social benefit
- Redressing the population decline and the age distribution of Glyntraian.
- The potential for an additional social benefit
- Track record of Registered Social Landlords (Housing Associations) delivering community projects alongside housing developments.

We hope that this recommendation will be considered fully, and the next steps recommended

within the report are followed through with rigour. We also hope that this report engenders the continued support of the community; a community that has been pivotal in developing and preparing this report.

Marc Roberts, Cynlas Cyf. 26/02/2020

Acknowledgements

In preparing this report Cynlas Cyf had the support and help of a number of people, and thanks are extended to everyone who gave of their time to input into the study.

We would specifically like to thank Glyntraian Community Council, and the members of the Communications Committee especially for their consistently high level of support during this process; Cllrs Robin Boston, Graham Barrow and more recently Chris Futchter, and in particular, Cllr Jools Payne, are to be thanked for their guidance, support and for keeping the project on track and promoted to the community so professionally.

We also want to acknowledge the fantastic support and help provided by the Community Council Clerk, Steph Masters, and we especially want to thank her for the work developing, issuing and analysing the residents' questionnaires. We would also like to express thanks to Matthew Masters for his invaluable contribution to the design of the survey and questionnaire. The survey successfully provided quantitative evidence for the feasibility study and has been critical to coming to a clear conclusion in this report.

The whole Community Council is also to be commended for its commitment to engaging with the community during the last five months. The fact that 71% of households responded to the survey, and so many individuals contributed to the content of this report, is testament to Glyntraian Community Council's appreciation of its responsibilities to serve its constituents.

Wrexham CBC Councillor, Trevor Bates, has been extremely helpful in facilitating meetings with officers and members of the Local Authority, and his local knowledge helped us better appreciate and understand the dynamics of Glyntraian.

Community Agent Davena Davies' help has been invaluable, and her connections with the community pivotal in getting to know the people of Glyntraian.

We also want to express our appreciation to everyone who's taken the time to offer their thoughts, either by email, written comments, face to face or on the phone. This input has also been critical in shaping this report.

Most of all though, thank you to everyone in Glyntraian and the Ceiriog Valley. It has been a genuine privilege working in such a wonderful, warm and close-knit community and everyone's welcome and openness has been appreciated.

Marc Roberts. Cynlas Cyf.

1. Introduction

1.1 The Study

Rural Development Agency Cadwyn Clwyd, in partnership with Glyntraian Community Council, commissioned Cynlas Cyf to undertake a feasibility study to determine whether a viable and sustainable future use for the former Ysgol Pontfadog could be achieved. If such a sustainable and viable solution was identified, then this report would be used to support a proposal to Wrexham County Borough Council for a potential asset transfer.

Pontfadog School lies within the Ceiriog Valley, and was permanently closed in July 2019. This study has been commissioned to provide a route map for the future sustainable and viable use of the school site, whilst at the same time providing social and economic benefits to the people of the community.

1.2 The School

Pontfadog School officially opened on April 15, 1909, (although the memorial stone notes the date as 1908) and has a noteworthy educational pedigree. It was built in response to a growing demand for education free from the dominance of the established Church of England doctrines. Sir Alfred T Davies, a resident of Pontfadog, was appointed by Lloyd George as Permanent Secretary to the newly created Department of Education in 1907. It is reported that strings were pulled to give priority to having a new school built at Pontfadog, with the design and materials used considered the most up to date for the period.

One of the giants of early 20th Century Welsh education, O.M. Edwards, who was the first Chief Inspector for Schools, in Wales, and a close friend of Sir Alfred Davies, visited Pontfadog in 1912. *He noted:*

“The school has beautiful up to date buildings...The school buildings could become more definitely the home of education within the district.

Despite significant lobbying and protest over a significant period, after a 110 year history, the school was closed in July 2019.

The closure of rural primary schools has been a contentious and continual feature of the North Wales social and physical landscape for the last few years.

In a climate of continued pressure on the public purse, community needs must balance with tight fiscal management. Nevertheless, when a school does close, where feasible, the negative impact of a school closure needs to be minimised and measures put in place to offer offset the closure with positive community focused measures.

The closure of Ysgol Pontfadog in July 2019 was an emotive affair, and was the subject of much debate and strenuous efforts by the local community to keep the school open; with support for its retention reflected in a 1300 letters of objection.

However, rather than continuing to rue past decisions that led to its closure, the Community Council has taken the constructive and positive step of ensuring that the future use of the school site is partly and possibly wholly shaped by the needs, demands and energies of the local community.

This study is a manifestation of that forward thinking approach of the Community Council.

1.3 The Impact of the School Closure

The impact of a school closure on smaller more rural communities can be significant, including:

1.3.1 Population effects

Young families tend to be less keen to move to communities where there is no immediate school provision. As a result, villages inevitably become "retirement communities" and the population inevitably declines.

1.3.2 Economic Impact

House prices fall due to the above population effects, and there is also a significant risk of impacting on small businesses and shops who partly depend on the school trade.

1.3.3 Social Impact

The closure of a school inhibits community cohesion. A school is at the "heart of the community", physically and emotionally. Schools are used not only for education, but other community activities such as concerts, Saturday morning football and rugby, fetes and Christmas fayres.

It is also a place where parents meet and begin to get know each other during term time and especially at school activities.

Losing such activities leaves a significant gap in the social fabric of a community.

Educational Impact

The educational impact is less clear; however there is an argument that smaller school sizes produce better results, and provide more wellbeing support for individuals. This can be counteracted to a certain degree, with larger schools being able to offer a wider range of experiences and facilities.

But, undoubtedly the need for travel reduces opportunities to participate in extra-curricular activities and participation in locally based activities may be reduced, leading to them coming to an end.

In the context of this study, it is critical that any strategy to reinvent the school facilities, at least partly seeks to minimise many, if not all the above impacts.

1.4 Pontfadog, Glyntraian and the Ceiriog Valley.

Pontfadog is the first village one encounters when entering the Ceiriog Valley from nearby Chirk. It is part of the community of Glyntraian, which also comprises the hamlets of Dolywern, Llechrydau and Llwynmawr.

There are a small number of key businesses serving the community within Pontfadog village; including the Swan Public House, the Post Office and village shop and the Ceiriog Valley Services Centre. All within a stone's throw from each other.

The Glyn Valley Tramway had a station in the village, which has now been preserved by the Glyn Valley Tramway Group. The village is also home to Gareth Morris Construction, a long-established building company.

Glyntraian itself is a designated local government Community Council and is one of 34 such local government communities across the county of Wrexham. The parish was formed when the ancient parish of Llangollen was divided into three traeanau ("traean meaning "third" in Welsh): Llangollen Traean, Trefor Traean, and Glyn Traean, subsequently became known as Glyntraian.

The Ceiriog Valley is the valley of the River Ceiriog in north-east Wales, and the name of a ward of the County Borough of Wrexham. The ward is the largest ward of the county borough by area and the valley itself extends some 12 miles from west to east.

It is considered one of Wales' most unspoilt valleys and was once described by Lloyd George as a "*little bit of heaven on earth*".

1.5 The Brief

The brief issued by Cadwyn Clwyd and Glyntraian Community Council required Cynlas Cyf to consider all of the above, and to provide a coherent viable and sustainable proposal to Wrexham County Borough Council which would allow for an effective transfer of the school to a third party for an appropriate and effective redevelopment and reuse of the site.

The next section sets out the specific brief and methodology undertaken to achieve the aims and objective of the study.

2. The Brief and the Methodology

2.1 Rural Development Agency Cadwyn Clwyd, in partnership with Glyntraian Community Council, commissioned Cynlas Cyf to undertake a feasibility study to determine whether a viable and sustainable future use for the former primary school could be achieved. If such a sustainable and viable solution was identified, then this report would be used to support a proposal to Wrexham County Borough Council for a potential asset transfer.

An offer from Wrexham County Borough Council to divest of the school and transfer the site into the stewardship of Glyntraian Community Council prompted the Council to seek the views of Glyntraian residents on their preferred long-term option for the future use of the site; one that would deliver positive social, wellbeing and economic impacts.

2.2 The Brief

Key to this consultation was to challenge the community to identify a viable project proposition that was self-sustaining, of wide benefit to the community and critically did not impinge on other businesses or community assets/venues in the Ceiriog valley.

The Community Council was eager to offer the community the chance to reimagine Ysgol Pontfadog, whilst keeping the building (or prime historic parts thereof) at the heart of the village, thus retaining it as the emblem of community cohesion and unity for which it stood for over 100 years.

This commitment by Glyntraian Community Council reflected its duties as set out in the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011ⁱ. As noted in Welsh Government's Good Councillor Guide 2017ⁱⁱ, the 2011 Measure gave Community Councils the power to:

"...do anything which it considers likely to achieve the promotion or improvement of the economic, social or environmental wellbeing of their area."

The ambition of the consultation and feasibility study was therefore to explore the most appropriate, sustainable, eco-friendly and community-focused options, ones which were economically viable and critically, driven by and managed onwards by a social enterprise with community cohesion at its core.

Within the brief the emergence of the Forest School project was explicitly mentioned. In the brief the following was noted,

"GCC (Glyntraian Community Council) is keen to support this group's ambitions, whilst recognising there may be other schemes of which we are currently unaware, of equal merit".

However, other ideas were also listed within the brief, namely:

- A community garden
- A café: using local produce
- A bi-lingual playgroup

- A green space for ball games and outdoor activities with brick-built BBQs for tourists and an all-weather multi-use sports area to include mini-football pitch, basketball courts and associated interior health and wellbeing suites
- An intimate bohemian wedding venue
- A culture hub and exhibition space for local artists, historians, environmentalists and/or naturalists
- An online orders 24hr access lockers scheme
- A bikers'/hikers' bunk hub for regular visiting cyclists, walkers
- Community office hub with high-speed broadband, printers, copying facilities
- A sheltered shared space housing development for older residents to free up single occupancy family homes
- A small community-led low-cost starter homes development.

It was emphasised that Glyntraian Community Council expected to see other ideas emerging through the consultation exercise.

2.3 The output expected from this work was therefore as follows:

“To establish a viable and sustainable project from the ideas put forward by the local community for the future use of the Pontfadog school site, which can then be put forward to Wrexham County Borough Council as part of the asset transfer process” and to:

- Hold in-depth community consultation regarding the needs of the community and potential uses for the school site
- Investigate and assess the options for the potential utilisation of the old school site in terms of the viability, sustainability and economic/social impact on the Community
- Include outline projected financial costs in terms of capital investment and revenue costs
- Make independent recommendations for the future use of the old school site and provide a business case/plan that would satisfy the requirements of potential grant application(s) to national funding bodies.

2.4 The Methodology

The work was commissioned in September 2019 and an inaugural meeting of the Client Group (the Communications Committee of Glyntraian Community Council) and Cynlas Cyf was held on the 16th September to agree the workplan and methodology.

Key Tasks Agreed:

- In-depth community consultation, to include a public meeting on Wednesday 9th October at the Oliver Jones Memorial Hall, Dolywern. Further drop-in consultation events and activities were to be arranged during the study.
- Investigation and assessment of the options for the potential utilisation of the old school site, considering viability, sustainability and economic/social impact on the

Community.

- Outline projected financial costs in terms of capital investment and revenue costs.
- Offer recommendations for the future use of the old school site and provide a business case/plan that will satisfy the requirements of potential grant application(s) to national funding bodies.

In addition to the initial brief, Cynlas Cyf also offered to:

- Provide a detailed Community and Stakeholder Engagement Action Plan to support its recommendations. This Plan would be focused on engagement post completion of the preferred option for the school.
- If appropriate, Cynlas Cyf would also provide a recommended Governance Plan for the future administration and management of the recommended solution for the school.

The methodology to undertake this work was set out as follows:

Set Up and Information Gathering

An initial meeting with the Client Group was held to confirm:

- The scope of the work
- Confirming the reporting lines and frequency of reporting
- Fine tuning the methodology proposed and the consultation process.
- Confirming consultees
- Drawing up a detailed timeline, project plan and schedule.

This meeting was also used to secure copies of all relevant documentation, plans and further details of the ideas for future uses listed in the brief issued by Cadwyn Clwyd.

Due to the explicit attention given to the emerging proposals of the Forest School Group, an initial meeting with the team was also arranged.

This first phase was completed with a public meeting at the Oliver Jones Memorial Hall on the 7th October, as stipulated in the brief.

Social and Commercial Demand.

Key to the feasibility study was to deliver an option or short list of options that were fit for purpose and, as much as was feasible, were future proofed. i.e. a property and business solution that is adaptable and flexible and responds to changes in commercial and community demand, without the need for significant additional investment or disruption to operations.

Therefore a rigorous engagement process was undertaken. This was coupled with an audit of existing provision and services across the Glyn Ceiriog area and beyond.

This audit to include:

- What commercial, business and community needs were being delivered, and where gaps existed
- Where demand and/or need not currently being met
- Of the opportunities potentially existing in the Ceiriog Valley, how these related to the project ideas identified in the brief (see pages 4/5)
- We also visited the school site and obtained plans of the existing site from Wrexham County Borough Council.

We also explored other potential options and consider those in the development of the feasibility study.

Finalisation of work programme

This involved continued consultation with the community, and with key stakeholders, including the Community Council, community groups and organisations, the business sector, Wrexham County Borough Council and others agreed with the client.

We then brought this work together to provide a short list of the most viable options, underpinned by community demand and justification. This is set out in Section 5.

Report

The report is now in final form, based on all the above work packages, and presented to Glyntraian Community Council on the 4th March 2020.

3. Consultation

3.1 The brief issued by Cadwyn Clwyd and Glyntraian Community Council explicitly required Cynlas to undertake rigorous consultation with the community. This was further emphasised at the inaugural project meeting and a programme of consultation was agreed.

3.2 Consultation Undertaken.

Initial Open Meeting (9th October 2019). Oliver Jones Memorial Hall.

This was attended by over 40 residents, and all were given the opportunity to share their thoughts and views on the future use of the site. This was an open-ended discussion with a range of views expressed. This initial event was also used as an awareness raising exercise, allowing the community to understand the process, timeline and methodology.

Comments Form.

An initial comments form (see Appendix II) was distributed to key locations within the community, including Pontfadog Post Office, Swan Public House and Oliver Jones Memorial Hall. This was the same form used at the initial event on the 9th October and was designed to seek the general views of the community on possible uses of the site. Several forms were returned with the comments used to help inform a more specific set of questions which were issued to the community in January 2020 (see below).

Awareness Raising

The Community Council undertook a range of awareness raising initiatives to ensure that the community was fully aware of the process. Effective use of social media, and a dedicated page on the Glyntraian Community Council website were augmented with hard copy information in the form of posters, leaflets and items in the local press.

In addition, on December 12th 2019, during the day of the General Election, GCC Councillors engaged with their electorate between 7 am and 7 pm at the Polling Station. Approximately two hundred conversations were had on that day.

'One to one' meetings.

The purpose of this exercise was to undertake more in-depth consultation with key people. The list of consultees was jointly developed by Glyntraian Community Council and Cynlas (See Appendix I).

Forty five people were interviewed; equating to over fifty individual meetings.

Detailed Questionnaire.

Based on the findings of the consultation undertaken between October and December 2019, a more detailed questionnaire was developed and distributed to the residents of Glyntraian via post.

This work was undertaken by Glyntraian Community Council, which provided stamped

addressed envelopes for residents to return the surveys. The analysis was undertaken by Steph Masters, the Community Council Clerk; an experienced market researcher and analyst.

Questionnaires were sent to 323 households in Glyntraian. 230 individual responses were received, including 31 completed by additional members in the same household. Therefore, the response rate was 71%. Ages of respondents range from under 18 to 80+. The sample represents 62% of households (199 of the 323 households), and 34% of the Glyntraian electorate, which is 657 residents. 226 individuals responding were over 18 and the remaining 4 responses, from under 18 residents and therefore not on the Electoral Roll.

The questionnaire uses a standard 1 to 7 Likert scale where 1 is of no perceived benefit and 7 is of high perceived benefit to the whole community.

The following analysis methodology was used to calculate the net perceived scores:

The weighted score was calculated by multiplying the number of responses for a given score by the score value for each idea separately. For example, if for idea A, 10 responses of 6 were received, then the weighted score would be 60.

A sum over the weighted scores for score values above 4 and below 4 was evaluated to produce two summary scores. The difference between the summary scores was calculated to give the net perceived benefit score. The higher the value the greater the perceived benefit. The values are plotted below.

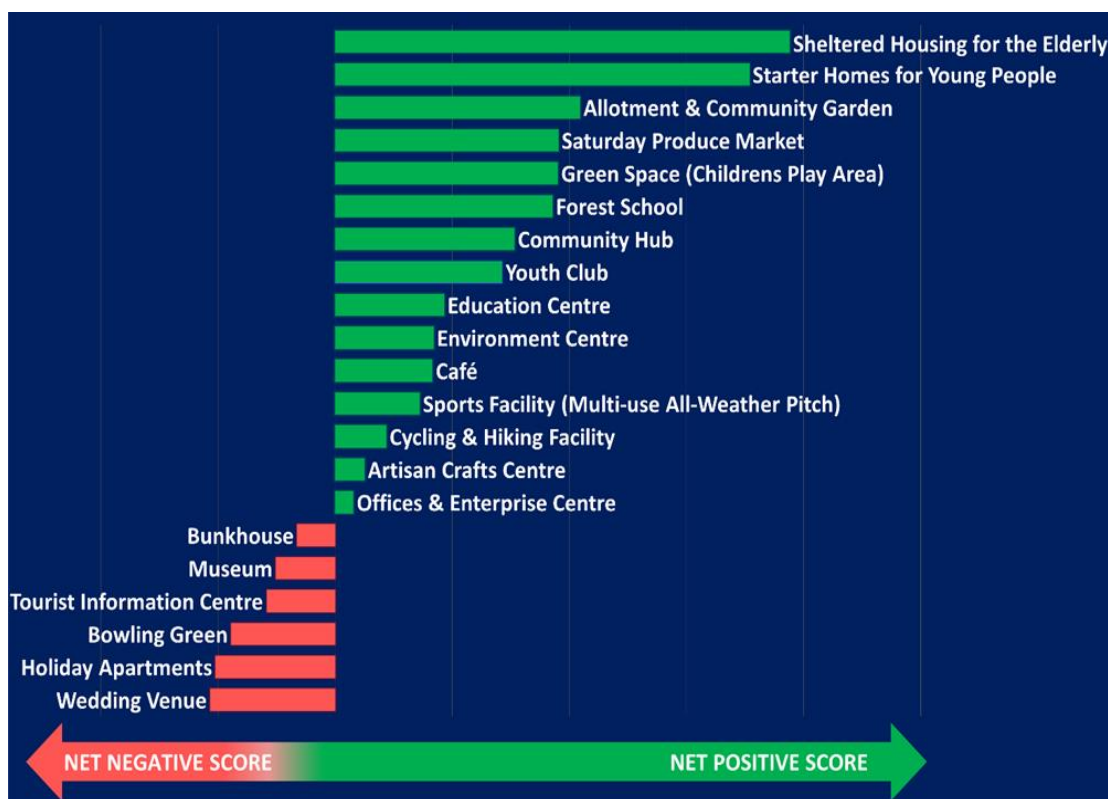


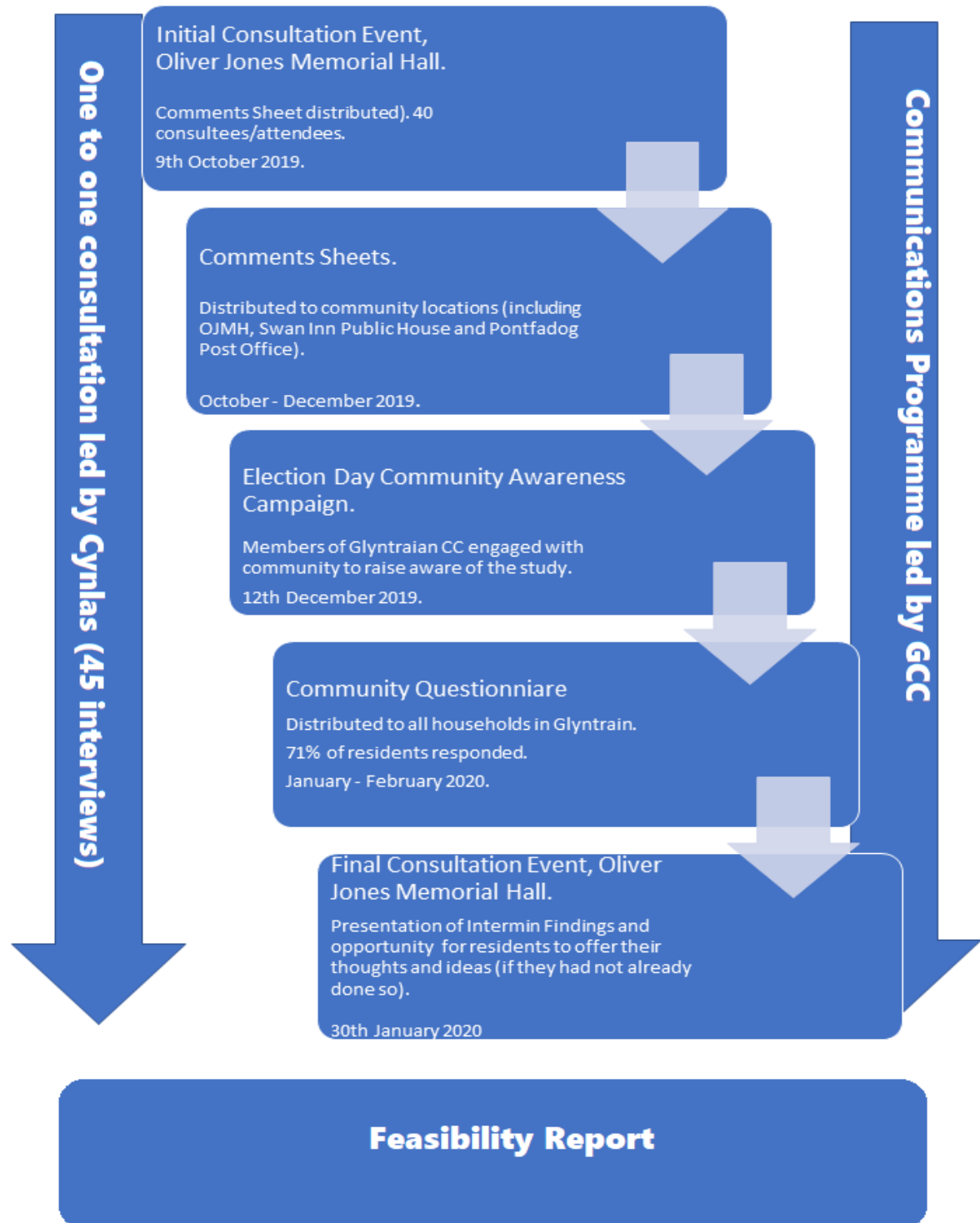
Figure 1 - Primary Results of the Questionnaire

The responses clearly show overwhelming support for housing both sheltered housing and starter homes for young people. There is also a good degree of support for a range of other

ideas, with very few projects returning a negative score.

The only project which has been formally developed by a section of the community – The Forest School, ranks positively, but ranks below Allotments, Saturday Produce Market, Green Spaces and Plays Areas.

The consultation process is set out diagrammatically here:



4. Considerations

4.1 Overview

In developing the options and feasibility study several considerations had to be factored in. These were:

- The Socio-economic profile of the area
- Conclusions of the consultation
- Emerging Ideas
- Heritage, Culture and History
- The Business Sector in the area
- Existing Services
- Strategies, Policies & Funding
- Market Demand.

4.2 Socio Economic Profile

Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019ⁱⁱⁱ

The Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) is the Welsh Government's official measure of relative deprivation for small areas in Wales. It identifies areas with the highest concentrations of several different types of deprivation. A range of indicators underlie the index ranks.

WIMD ranks all small areas in Wales from 1 (most deprived) to 1,909 (least deprived). The most recent review was undertaken in 2019, superseding the previous Index from 2014. It provides a useful snapshot of the prosperity or otherwise of a community.

The lowest level of detail regarding the economy and social fabric of the area is at a Lower Super Output Area (LSOA). Lower Layer Super Output Areas are a geographic hierarchy designed to improve the reporting of small area statistics in England and Wales. The Minimum population is 1000 and the mean is 1500.

For the purposes of this study, the lowest level of detail is for the LSOA for Glyn Ceiriog 3. This encompasses the villages of Llansanffraid Glyn Ceiriog, Dolywern and Pontfadog. It is one of 84 LSOAs in Wrexham County.

The latest update of the WIMD ranks was in 2019. This shows that against most indicators Glyn Ceiriog is relatively prosperous. Overall it is 1074 out of 1909 LSOAs in Wales, placing it among the 50% least deprived. Similarly, in terms of Income, Employment, Health, Community Safety and Physical Environment it also ranks within the 50% least deprived. However, in three specific areas Glyn Ceiriog's ranking is more concerning; these are Education (30-50% most deprived); Housing (20-30% most deprived) and Access to services (10% most deprived). In terms of "Access to Services" it is ranked 149 out of 1909 across Wales, and 4th out of 85 across Wrexham County Borough.

Of noteworthy concern is the deterioration in the housing ranking from 2014. Although some caution must be applied (as the process of assessment has changed and been

amended), housing has shown a significant change in five years, from a ranking of 1464 in 2014, within the 20% least deprived LSOAs in Wales, to 402 in 2019, placing it amongst the 20-30% most deprived.

The WIMD 2019 index defines the Housing indicator as follows:

“Conceptually, the purpose of a housing domain is to identify inadequate housing, in terms of physical and living conditions and availability. Here, living condition means the suitability of the housing for its inhabitant(s), for example in terms of health and safety, and necessary adaptations.

The indicators are:

- *Proportion of people living in overcrowded households (bedrooms measure)*
- *A new modelled indicator on poor quality housing, which measures the likelihood of housing being in disrepair or containing serious hazard”*

Census

Census data is available at the Glyntraian level^{iv}. Of note is the following:

There has been a steady decline in the population of the Glyntraian area since 2001, falling from 878 in 2011 to an estimated 800 in 2018

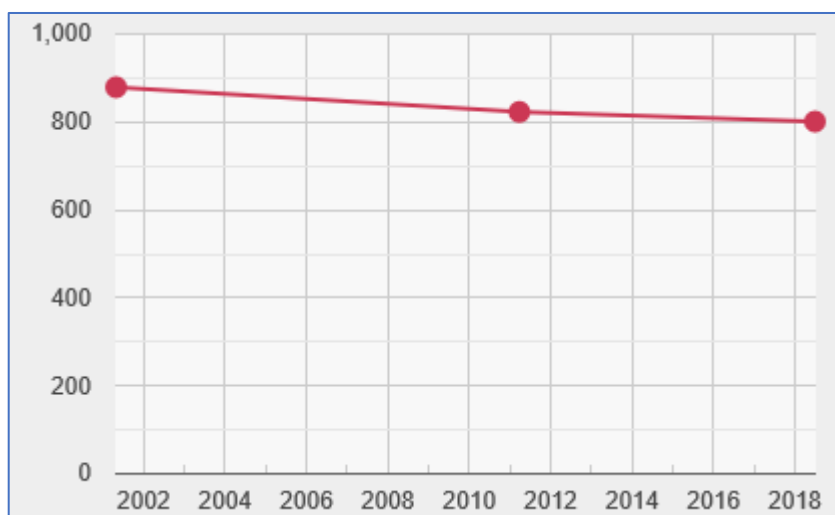


Table 2- Glyntraian Population Decline 2011-2018. Source City Population

There is a growing ageing population, with a significantly higher proportion of people over the age of 65 as compared to Wrexham and Wales as a whole. The closure of the school in 2019 has the potential of increasing the proportion further as younger families look elsewhere to establish their roots.

The comparison is shown on the next page:

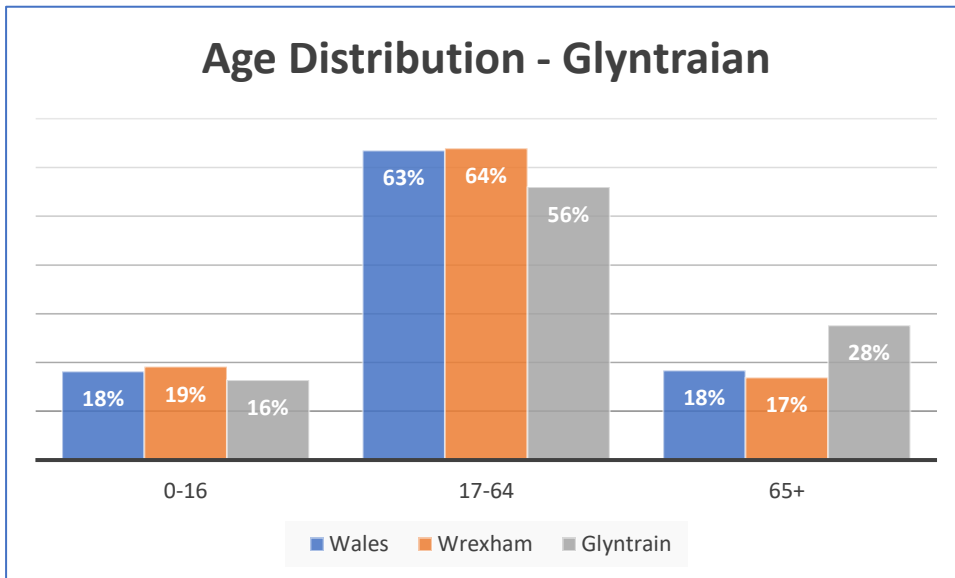


Table 4 - Age Distribution, Glyntraian, Wrexham, Wales

4.3 Conclusions of the Consultation

These were set out in detail in the previous section. In summary the results show greatest support for housing. They also suggest support for some form of allotment or community garden. The Forest School notion and Community Hub have some support, but there appears to be little appetite for tourist related developments, such as a Museum, Tourist Information, Bunkhouse and Holiday Apartments.

The overall consultation and feedback suggest that these ideas and thoughts can be packaged into general categories:

- Housing
- Community Services
- Education and the Environment
- Green Spaces
- Leisure
- Culture
- Tourism.

It is also important to note that some people's primary concern was to ensure that the school building itself was retained, with ideas put forward to ensure its retention and to secure its future.

4.4 Emerging Ideas

The initial brief issued by Cadwyn Clwyd and Glyntraian Community Council set out a range of possible ideas. In addition, a small number of new ideas emerged during the process of consultation. These include:

- Environmental Hub – building on the natural attributes of the valley, including the river and the species of fauna and flora
- Specialist Education
- Health and Care in the Community
- Youth Facilities
- Library.

These will all be considered further in the next section.

4.5 Heritage, Culture and History.

The Ceiriog Valley is rich in heritage, culture and history, and the school itself and its association with the early days of modern education in Wales, needs to be considered fully in developing new options for the site. In addition to the school's noteworthy history, the wider valley has both spawned and attracted people of noteworthy achievement in a wide variety of fields. This includes Welsh literary figures such as John Hughes (1832 – 1887) Huw Morus (1622 – 1709) and the Rev. Robert Elis (1812 – 1875) was a Baptist minister in Glyn Ceiriog from 1838 until 1840. The Ceiriog Memorial Institute in the village of Glyn Ceiriog was built as a memorial to them all and contains stained glass windows dedicated to each of their memories.

In the 20th Century novelist Islwyn Ffowc Elis, author of the ground-breaking Welsh novel, *Cysgod y Cryman*, spent most of his childhood years in the valley.

Hollywood actress Sarah Edwards was born in the valley, and was likely one of the first Welsh people to breakthrough into American cinema.

Notable Educationalist Sir Alfred T Davies made the Ceiriog Valley his home, and Lancelot Hogben, an experimental zoologist and medical statistician of global reputation lived out his later life here.

Any future option for the development of the school must, by necessity, take this rich heritage and wonderful tapestry of historic figures into consideration, and where and if possible, integrate that heritage and history into the project.

4.6 The Business Sector in the Area.

As noted earlier, the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation suggests that, like many other rural areas of Wales, access to services is vital. The purpose of this domain is to capture deprivation as a result of a household's inability to access a range of services considered necessary for day-to-day living, both physically and online. This covers both material deprivation (e.g. not being able to get food) and social aspects of deprivation (e.g. not being able to attend after school activities).

There are several key facets of a community that determine this domain's level of deprivation, including primary and secondary schools, a chemist, petrol station and GP. These are weighted, with access to a chemist considered most significant. However, access to a shop and a GP rank high on this list.

Pontfadog and Dolywern only have a small number of enterprises, each of which work tirelessly to ensure the viability of their business, whilst also ensuring the vitality of the community. It is therefore critical that the development of a proposal must avoid any form of displacement where possible, and conversely attempt to generate additional income for the existing businesses.



Figure 2 - Photo taken by Ceiriog Valley Service Centre showing the Post Office and Shop, Swan Public House and the Service Centre. The lifeblood of the village of Pontfadog.

4.7 Services.

The same argument applies to the provision of services. Within Glyntraian itself, the Oliver Jones Memorial Hall in Dolywern delivers a host of community services, houses the Community Council's administrative operations and is the venue for the much valued fortnightly "Lunch Club" and "Fish and Chip Suppers". These are held every other week, with the Lunch Club held on a Thursday, and the Fish and Chip Supper the following week on a Friday.

However, facilities are limited, and the work that goes in to sustaining the activities that are delivered in the Oliver Jones are herculean. It should also be noted that in the short term, the Oliver Jones Memorial Hall is scheduled for significant capital investment, with £17,000 set aside to be used as match funding for significant improvements to the services and infrastructure of the building.

There is therefore a profound need to ensure that services and activities proposed for the Ysgol Pontfadog site avoid duplication and the dilution of these much appreciated and much needed services.

4.8 Strategies, Policies & Funding

The development of any option must consider the wider policy context and strategy context. Any project proposed must demonstrate its alignment with partners and stakeholders and

its contribution to that agenda. Where feasible and realistic, the drivers of the proposal also seek to influence future strategies, particularly at a local and county level. This garners support and makes it more likely to attract funding from grant aiding bodies, government and trusts and foundations.

This includes:

- The Wellbeing of Future Generations Act 2015^v
- Welsh Government's Prosperity for All National Strategy & Economic Action Plan^{vi}
- Successful Futures – Welsh Government's Report on Education (Prof Donaldson)^{vii}
- Visit Wales – Partnership for Growth (2013 – 2020), and alignment with future strategy^{viii}
- Wrexham CBC Council Plan (2020 – 22)^{ix} and other consultations now ongoing.
- Wrexham CBC Community Strategy 2009 – 2020^x
- North Wales Growth Deal^{xi}.

4.9 Market Demand

Finally, any proposal reliant on generating business or responding to commercial need must evidence how and where that business will be generated.

The Ceiriog Valley has a finely balanced business ecosystem. The level of business offer is reflective of the current climate. It is one of Wales' hidden gems, and as such does not attract the visitor numbers that places such as the Clwydian Hills, or Snowdonia draw. However, neither does it have the infrastructure to cope with such demand.

Any proposal dependent on increasing business must therefore ensure that it:

- Does not displace existing business
- Is sensitive and appropriate, and adds value to the current Ceiriog Valley offer
- Can clearly demonstrate market demand.

4.10 The above considerations will be factored into the options appraisal process set out in the next section.

5. Options Appraisal Process

5.1 The options appraisal allows for several different delivery model options to be explored and evaluated against a set of criteria. This set of criteria will be primarily based on the brief issued by Cadwyn Clwyd and Glyntraian Community Council, and in turn leads to the selection of a preferred option (or short list of preferred options).

5.2 To evaluate the various options, four main themes for investigation will be used:

5.2.1 **Community need and desirability** - the degree to which each option meets the community's need and demands, but also the strategic objectives and priorities of stakeholders, both locally and regionally.

5.2.2 **Viability** - the degree to which each option is financially viable and sustainable.

5.2.3 **Feasibility** - the degree to which each option can be implemented.

5.2.4 **Economic and Social Impact** – the degree to which each option impacts positively on the community of Glyntraian and the wider valley.

This leads to a final recommendation about the preferred delivery model(s) which can then be taken forward and presented as a business case to the community, other stakeholders and most critically to Wrexham CBC.

5.3 However, it should be noted that while the options appraisal is important in helping to identify a preferred option, not all questions will necessarily be resolved by the end of this stage.

In particular in assessing the above there is a need to take full account of Glyntraian Community Council's position regarding the transfer of the school site, as well as Wrexham CBC's position regarding disposal.

At a meeting of the full Community Council In July 2019, it was reported that in a meeting of the Community Council's Communications Committee with the Rural Skills Group a question was raised as to whether the Council would assume responsibility for the management and maintenance of the school site following its closure. They (the Rural Skills Group) were informed that the Community Council would not assume such an obligation.

The minutes of the full Council meeting of 17th July 2019 note the following:

"CF (Chris Fitcher, former Chairman) said that at a meeting with the Communications Committee the Rural Skills Group had asked whether GCC would be taking on the management and maintenance of the school from 19th July 2019. They were informed that the Council would not. Subsequently, the Communications Committee did consider various options following the closure.

However, SM (Steph Masters, Clerk to the Council) as RFO (Responsible Finance Officer) had strongly advised Councillors the financial risk was too great so taking on responsibility was

not an option and it was agreed the ownership should remain with WCBC.

Since the meeting TB (Trevor Bates) has confirmed that the school site will remain under the ownership and responsibility of WCBC until there is an acceptable proposition for the future use, so it is no longer an issue”.

During the period of this study this position has remained steadfast, and is a fundamental factor that needs to be considered in appraising the various options. In many instances of asset transfer, Local Authorities have passed on assets to community and town councils. This is considered as a reasonable safety net; Town and Community Councils have a range of statutory powers, are publicly accountable and transparent, have fund raising powers and, in larger councils the staff and resources to take on such assets.

However, Glyntraian is one of the smaller Community Councils in Wales, has a modest precept of only £15,900 set for the next fiscal year, and has only one dedicated member of staff, who works two days week.

It is understandable and appreciated why Glyntraian Community Council has adopted such a position.

5.4 The position of Wrexham County Borough Council.

As also noted in the council minute of July 19, the local County Councillor, Cllr Trevor Bates informed Glyntraian CC that Wrexham CBC would retain ownership of the site until such time as a concrete proposal emerged.

However, following detailed discussions with officers of the Local Authority it is understood that Wrexham CBC expects a proposal within this financial year. The County Borough Council has also made it clear that in the absence of any emerging proposal of merit, it may dispose of the asset on the open market.

5.5 The Options Appraisal considers the primary projects proposed and emerging during the period of the study and tests them against the criteria referred to above. They also reflect the considerations set out in the previous section.

These criteria are set out in more detail below:

5.5.1 **Community Needs and Desirability**

- Addresses the issues that resulted from the closure of the school (Population, Economic, Social, Educational)
- Responds to the needs of the community identified through the consultation process
- Address issues in the social and economic fabric of the community, including those identified in the census and Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation.

5.5.2 Viability

- The extent to which each option demonstrates an appreciation of the capital and revenue implication of the proposal
- The extent to which the proposal is likely to secure external funding
- Demonstrates long term financial sustainability
- The extent to which each proposal allows for further growth and commercialisation.

5.5.3 Feasibility

- The extent to which each option can be implemented within required tolerances, most particularly cost and time
- The extent to which each option has appropriate management and governance arrangements in place
- The extent to which each option has the resources and capacity to implement the project
- The alignment of the project with current policies and strategies
- The extent to which each option has the resources and capacity to address issues of risk and mitigate against such risks.

5.5.4 Economic and Social Impact

- The degree to which the positive social and economic impacts of each option have been identified
- The likelihood of those social and economic impacts being achieved, and within what timescale
- The mitigation in place to negate any potential negative social and economic impacts, including displacement of any existing businesses and services
- The level and methodology of response to the social and economic challenges of the community (as set out in the previous section).

5.6 The above criteria will be tested against the projects identified positively during the consultation process. These are set out in the next section.

6. The Projects

6.1 The following projects have been considered in the Project Appraisal process.

- Social Housing – Sheltered Housing for the Elderly
- Social Housing – Starter/Affordable Homes
- Pontfadog Forest School and Community Hub
- Education and Science Hub
- Green Space and Allotments, Community Garden
- Sports Facility
- Café
- Artisan Centre
- Office Space.

These represent the key projects that have emerged during the consultation process and have demonstrated varying degrees of community support. It should also be emphasised that the projects are not necessarily mutually exclusive, and there is a significant degree of synergy and compatibility between many of the projects. This is reflected in the current business plan of the Forest School, which has incorporated many of the above ideas into the wider community hub offer.

Some ideas have been clustered as by themselves, they do not present a viable standalone proposition.

The options therefore considered in more detail are:

- Sheltered Housing for the Elderly
- Starter Homes
- Pontfadog School and Community Hub
- Education and Eco-Science Hub
- Sports Facility
- Green Space and Allotments.

6.2 Projects considered negatively by the community have not been considered. These were:

- Bunkhouse
- Museum
- Tourist Information Centre
- Bowling Green
- Holiday Apartments
- Wedding Venue.

Nevertheless, some of those ideas could potentially also be incorporated into any future solution for the site, e.g. Tourist Information Point. These should not therefore be totally discounted.

6.3 Each project has been measured against a set of parameters; these are:

- Estimated Cost
- Timescale
- Organisation in Place (Capacity)
- Evidence of Community Need and Desirability
- Viability
- Feasibility
- Economic and Social Impact.

6.4 The project assessments are set out on the following pages:

Project	Social Housing - Sheltered Housing for the Elderly.
Description	<p>Potential to develop a scheme to support some of the community's older generation who have a growing need for more support, whilst retaining a degree of independence.</p> <p>This also reflects a concern of latent rural poverty beneath the surface and would allow for better monitoring of the welfare and wellbeing of older residents.</p>
Estimated Cost	tbc
Timescale	18 months – 2 years.
Organisation in Place	Such a development would likely need to be undertaken by a Registered Social Landlord (RSL), such as North Wales Housing, Clwyd Alyn Housing Association or Grwp Cynefin.
Community Needs and Desirability	<p>This need came out top in the questionnaire issued to residents.</p> <p>The latest census figures also suggest a significant ageing population, much higher than both the Wrexham and Wales average.</p> <p>Further, the latest Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation suggests a significant deterioration in the quality of the housing stock within Glyntraian.</p>
Viability	Such a development would be undertaken by a Housing Association which has the resources, experience and strategic support of the Local Authority and Welsh Government.
Feasibility	<p>Housing Associations have demonstrable track records in taking such projects forward and are not reliant on more discretionary funding such as the Lottery.</p> <p>Such organisations also have the technical resilience, infrastructure and capacity to manage such a process.</p> <p>Part of the site currently falls outside the Local Development Plan boundary. However, to make this development feasible the whole site would likely need to be used. Therefore, discussions regarding this part of the land being classed as an exception site would need to be had with Wrexham CBC.</p>
Economic and Social Impact	<p>Such a project would address some key issues prevailing in the Glyntraian area.</p> <p>Such a development would not, however, directly address the issue of depopulation and ageing.</p>

	Any development of this type would need to be accompanied by a wider social benefit, potentially addressing some of the other ideas supported by the community, e.g. community hub, green space etc.
Project	Social Housing – Starter /Affordable Homes
Description	<p>Potential to develop a starter home project, housing up to possibly 6-8 houses for young families.</p> <p>There is an evident need to provide new homes for younger people and families.</p> <p>This project would seek to work with a Housing Association to provide a ‘Tenure Neutral’ basis which would offer the option of either renting the properties to people off a local lettings policy, and shared ownership.</p> <p>This type of tenure will also allow a resident to look at staircasing to part ownership as their financial circumstances change in the future.</p>
Estimated Cost	tbc
Timescale	18 months – 2 years.
Organisation in Place	Such a development would likely need to be undertaken by a Registered Social Landlord (RSL), such as North Wales Housing, Clwyd Alyn Housing Association or Grwp Cynefin.
Community Needs and Desirability	<p>This need came second in terms of priorities in the questionnaire issued to residents.</p> <p>The latest census figures also suggest a significant ageing population, much higher than both the Wexham and Wales average and a need to ensure the balance is redressed.</p> <p>Further, the latest Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation suggests a significant deterioration in the quality of the housing stock within Glyntraian.</p> <p>The provision of such housing would also encourage younger people to establish roots in the community and contribute to the social and economic vibrancy of Glyntraian.</p>
Viability	Such a development would be undertaken by a Housing Association which has the resources, experience and strategic support of the Local Authority and Welsh Government.

<p>Feasibility</p>	<p>Housing Associations have demonstrable track records in taking such projects forward and are not reliant on more discretionary funding such as the Lottery.</p> <p>Such organisations also have the technical resilience, infrastructure and capacity to manage such a process.</p> <p>Part of the site currently falls outside the Local Development Plan boundary. However, to make this development feasible the whole site would likely need to be used. Therefore, discussions regarding this part of the land being classed as an exception site would need to be had with Wrexham CBC.</p>
<p>Economic and Social Impact</p>	<p>Such a project would address some key issues prevailing in the Glyntraian area.</p> <p>It would specifically address the issue of depopulation and ageing, and the quality of the housing stock.</p> <p>Increasing the population would also help support the existing businesses within Glyntraian.</p> <p>Any development of this type would need to be accompanied by a wider social benefit, potentially addressing some of the other ideas supported by the community, e.g. community hub, green space etc. Further, a firm policy which deters short term and transient resident arrangements will need to be addressed.</p>

Project	Pontfadog Forest School and Community Hub
Description	<p>This project has been developed over the last 12-18 months by a group of residents who, between them have experience of education, business and child welfare.</p> <p>The proposal would be to retain the school building and to develop the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forest School – Scandinavian concept of educating children outside • Community Hub • The old school dining room converted into café • Museum • A produce table in the café • Library • Desk rental • Allotment and garden. <p>The Group has now incorporated as the Pontfadog Forest School and Community Hub Community Interest Company (CIC). The company was incorporated on the 14th of February 2020.</p> <p>The main aims of the CIC are stated as follows:</p> <p><i>The objects of the Company are to carry on activities which benefit the community and in particular (without limitation) to benefit the whole community, from new-born babies through to the elderly. The Forest school is at the forefront of our plan as this is going to be used as the main source of capital for the community hub to run on.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Pre-school nursery children</i> • <i>Primary school aged children</i> • <i>Secondary school aged children</i> • <i>Students</i> • <i>Adults</i> • <i>Elderly.</i>
Estimated Cost	£20,806.
Timescale	6-12 months (based on the current business plan)
Organisation in place	Yes.
Community Needs and Desirability	The idea of a Forest School and Community Hub is generally supported by the community, although not as highly as other ideas put forward during the consultation process.

	<p>It also addresses key issues of access to services as well as responding to some of the key negative impacts of a school closure.</p>
Viability	<p>The existing business plan (Dated 14th Feb 2020) suggests that there is still significant work to do to demonstrate a full appreciation of the likely long-term investment required. A sum of £20,000 for start-up costs has been set aside. This appears very low in comparison to other similar developments that Cynlas has been involved in.</p> <p>The likelihood of securing external funding will be dependent on the strength of the business case and demonstrable alignment with key strategies. At present, the business plan does not provide a strong enough proposal at either level.</p> <p>The market analysis needs further work and there is little reference to the governance and day to day management required to take this forward as a community hub.</p> <p>A significant sum is allocated to wages, which appears overburdensome for a new venture.</p> <p>We also have concerns regarding the long-term trends in relation to the development of Forest Schools, with evidence suggesting that many schools are now developing such resources on their own school sites.</p>
Feasibility	<p>There is now an incorporated organisation in place, but no funding and no evidence that the team has the capacity at this point to take the project forward.</p> <p>There is the potential to demonstrate alignment with a number of current policies and strategies, but the evidence offered is limited.</p> <p>It is also doubtful that the sums allocated will enable the project to move forward at the level proposed.</p>
Economic and Social Impact	<p>There are a range of economic and social benefits potentially accruing from this project, including the creation of jobs and encouraging health and wellbeing.</p> <p>However, the review of the business plan also raises significant concerns about the displacement of existing services and businesses, and there is little detail to demonstrate that the services being delivered will not, in any way, impact on, for example, the activities and services offered at the Oliver Jones Memorial Hall.</p>

Project	Education and Eco Science Hub
Description	<p>This idea emerged during the consultation process and was put forward by local resident Sarah Hawkes.</p> <p>This would include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retrofitting the school building to be carbon neutral with running costs as close to zero as possible • Advice and practical help to bring every house, every business and every way of working in the valley to a net zero carbon • An agricultural ambition shift towards permanent pasture and carbon sequestering, making the Ceiriog Valley completely clean again with no pesticide or herbicide use and make it valuable to the people who live and work here. • Marketing initiative for nationally sold Ceiriog Valley meat and vegetable produce • Agricultural courses to enable no till agriculture and market gardening by providing a window on the future • Provide space for pop-up businesses in the building • Outside on the field there could be space for events • Demonstrate a 100-year journey for soil as part of the agriculture 'back to the future' programme to sell the valley's produce • Regular testing paid for by participants of the scheme to stay in produce group • Music lesson spaces in the building for adults and children and rehearsal space for local choirs and film makers, drama groups • Adult education in the main hall for the village and valley. Term courses in a broad range of subjects • Marketing wool in the valley • Allotments linked to garden meetings/training.
Estimated Cost	Not known
Timescale	Not known
Organisation in Place	No
Community Needs and Desirability	This project has a distinct resonance with the social and economic fabric of the Ceiriog Valley.
Viability	Undetermined. The proposal is at a very early stage.

Feasibility	There is no organisation in place identified that would be prepared to take this project forward at present.
Economic and Social Impact	Potentially significant economic and social return, with the Ceiriog Valley's unique natural, historic and cultural heritage being used to benefit the residents and businesses of the area.

Project	Sports Facility
Description	The development of a sports related facility on the site, including 3G multi use pitch.
Estimated Cost	Not known
Timescale	2 – 3 years.
Organisation in Place	No
Community Needs and Desirability	There is an evident need for space for sporting activity, locally, although the size of the population within the Ceiriog Valley and the existence of other facilities in Glyn Ceiriog as an example, raise questions about the level of provision required.
Viability	It would not appear to be a priority area for Wrexham Council and the potential costs involved would far exceed the likely benefit and social return on investment e.g. number of users per £1,000 of investment.
Feasibility	Such a solution would need a management organisation in place to oversee the control and maintenance of the site. However, the Community Council does not have such resources, and there is no other “local” organisation identified who could or would take on such an undertaking.
Economic and Social Impact	It would have some social impact, and act as an agent for community cohesion.

Project	Green Space & Allotments / Community Garden
Description	A combined solution, offering recreational areas for people of all ages and to provide space for a community garden.
Estimated Cost	Unknown, but there would likely be significant demolition costs as well as landscaping.
Timescale	18 months.
Organisation in Place	No
Community Needs and Desirability	The need for green space and allotments ranked highly on the survey results. It would also provide a gathering place for the community and support social cohesion.
Viability	Significant demolition costs and ongoing maintenance. However, maintenance costs could be minimal. Some very small income could also be generated through the allotments
Feasibility	<p>This project would require significant short-term commitment from Wrexham CBC, but this is unlikely to be forthcoming.</p> <p>The Community Council does not have the resources to manage and maintain this facility. There is a well-established village tidy group that could potentially take on the responsibility; however, its membership is dwindling.</p>
Economic and Social Impact	Some social impact through the provision of green space, encouraging healthier eating and wellbeing activities. Little direct economic impact over the long-term.

Considering all the above, in the next section the preferred option is set out, accompanied by the key steps required to move the preferred option forward.

7. Recommendations and Next Steps

7.1 In coming to a preferred option for the Ysgol Pontfadog site several factors need to be taken into consideration.

The prevailing social and economic factors shaping Glyntraian's future. It is of concern that the overall population appears to be in long term decline, and proportion of those over the age of sixty-five on the increase. If this is not addressed the long-term vitality and wellbeing of the community is at risk.

The WIMD's housing indices suggest a worrying trend in the quality and range of domiciles in Glyntraian. Again, this is something that will need to be fully considered in drawing up conclusions and recommendations on a preferred option.

Also in relation to the WIMD , the results of the 2019 assessment indicates that Glyntraian continues to struggle to provide adequate services for its community. We therefore need to be mindful of offering a solution that supports the growth of service provision, but does not, at the same time, displace services being delivered, such as the Post Office in Pontfadog and the Oliver Jones Memorial Hall in Dolywern.

Glyntraian Community Council and Cynlas have worked hard to ensure that as much community engagement as possible has taken place over the last five months. We therefore need to give due regard to the outcome of that consultation when drawing up conclusions and recommendations.

The results of the extensive consultation have also been fully considered. The support and view of the community is critical; not only now, but in any development or implementation in the future.

Most importantly, we have considered which of the projects identified have any likely chance of moving forward.

7.2 Based on the evidence presented in this report, the recommended option for the school site is for its redevelopment as a site for Starter/Affordable Homes. This is the only viable solution presented during the period of study, and the only one which would ensure that the issues negatively impacting on the vitality and future prosperity and wellbeing of the community are addressed. The results of the extensive engagement work and survey with the community also indicate significant support for such a development for the Ysgol Pontfadog site.

The development of sheltered housing for the elderly has some merit, but it does not respond to the demographic need within Glyntraian.

The current and previous iterations of the Forest School Business Plan (Forest School and Community Hub) have been reviewed in detail. As noted in the last section, there are significant lacunas in the document which cause concern and question the viability and feasibility of the proposal.

The other projects set out in section 6 have no impetus or organisation structure behind them. They cannot, therefore, be considered as stand-alone projects. Nevertheless, some of those ideas could, potentially, be incorporated in any future development or at different locations in Glyntraian.

7.3 The development of Affordable Homes or Social Housing on the Ysgol Pontfadog site is therefore recommended.

The key reasons for this as a preferred option are:

7.3.1 A clear empirical and demonstrable need for such housing

7.3.2 Significant community support

7.3.3 A discernible economic and social benefit

7.3.4 Redresses the population decline and ageing population issues in Glyntraian

7.3.5 Demonstrable alignment with a number of strategies, including:

- The Wellbeing of Future Generations Act 2017
- Independent Affordable Housing Supply Review 2019 for Welsh Government ^{xii}
- Wrexham County Borough Council Housing Strategy 2018 – 23. ^{xiii}

7.3.6 The potential for an additional social benefit through a section 106 agreement or firm commitment by a developer

7.3.7 Track record of Registered Social Landlords (Housing Associations) in delivering community projects alongside housing developments.

7.4 In coming to this conclusion, Cynlas Cyf is mindful of the Community Council's position regarding the transfer of the asset from the Local Authority. Glyntraian Community Council does not have the capacity to take on the asset, and we therefore need to consider options that involve organisations that have an appreciation of the community's needs and also have the capacity and vision to successfully manage the site in the medium to long-term. The alternative is a do-nothing scenario and/or allowing Wrexham to go out to the open market.

7.5 There is much to commend the Forest School and Community Hub proposal and the Directors are encouraged to forge ahead with their ideas, but to explore other options and identify other locations within Glyntraian for this venture. However, as noted previously, there are also several areas of concern within the current business plan, and the Directors of the company are encouraged to work with other interested parties with similar ideas and projects. They are also encouraged to continue to seek out the support and advice of the advice of business support and third sector agencies.

7.6 It is our considered opinion that to transfer the asset to the CIC at this stage would present a significant risk of delay, and / or potential business failure. This would be in no party's

interest and return the position back to where it was in July 2019.

7.7 In recommending the preferred solution the following actions to move the project forward are recommended.

- 7.7.1 Immediate discussions with Wrexham CBC regarding the preferred option.
- 7.7.2 Discussions with Wrexham CBC regarding the rear of the site in relation to the Local Development Plan.
- 7.7.3 Engage with Wrexham CBC to determine the most appropriate route required, and if appropriate, identification and initial engagement with Housing Associations operating in the Wrexham area, including North Wales Housing and Clwyd Alyn Housing Association. According to Community Housing Cymru^{xiv} there are six Registered Social Landlords working in Wrexham, with a total of nine working across the North Wales region. It is recommended that exploratory discussions are held to discuss ideas and thoughts on a development on the Ysgol Pontfadog site.
- 7.7.4 To move the project further forward, further extensive consultation on the specific needs of the community in relation to housing is undertaken by Wrexham CBC and/or a nominated RSL. This consultation should also further develop ideas regarding additional community benefits.
- 7.7.5 Key to this is the development of a tangible community project that is developed as part of the housing development; with a view to incorporating some of the ideas emerging from this consultation.
- 7.7.6 The final design for the site also needs to incorporate and reflect the architectural features of the school as well as the rich historic tapestry, and cultural heritage of the area,
- 7.7.7 Glyntraian Community Council to work with Wrexham CBC to ensure that any approval on the development is subject to a legally binding commitment to deliver a community project alongside the housing development. Further that the development is also tied into a Nominations Policy^{xv} that is, itself, tied into a Section 106 agreement.

End. RMR. 26/02/2020

ⁱ Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011. <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/mwa/2011/4/contents>.

ⁱⁱ The Good Councillor's Guide For Community and Town Councillors. Welsh Government. 2017.

ⁱⁱⁱ Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019. <https://gov.wales/welsh-index-multiple-deprivation-full-index-update-ranks-2019>

^{iv} Glyntraian Census data 2001 – 2008.

https://www.citypopulation.de/en/uk/wales/admin/wrexham/W04000226_glyntraian/

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- ^v Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. <https://futuregenerations.wales/about-us/future-generations-act/>
- ^{vi} Prosperity for All. The National Strategy. Welsh Government. 2017. <https://gov.wales/prosperity-all-national-strategy>
- ^{vii} Successful Futures Looking at the Curriculum and Assessment Arrangements in Wales. Professor Graham Donaldson. 2015. <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-03/successful-futures-a-summary-of-professor-graham-donaldsons-report.pdf>
- ^{viii} Tourism Strategy (Partnership for Growth) 2013 – 2020. Welsh Government. <https://gov.wales/tourism-strategy-partnership-growth>
- ^{ix} Wrexham CBC Council Plan (2020 – 23). http://www.wrexham.gov.uk/english/council/documents/council_plan.htm
- ^x Wrexham CBC Community Strategy. https://www.wrexham.gov.uk/english/council/documents/community_strategy.htm
- ^{xi} North Wales Growth Deal. <https://northwaleseab.co.uk/resources/north-wales-growth-deal>
- ^{xii} Independent Review of Affordable Homes Supply for Welsh Government 2019. https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-04/independent-review-of-affordable-housing-supply-report_0.pdf
- ^{xiii} Wrexham CBC Housing Strategy 2018-2023. https://www.wrexham.gov.uk/assets/pdfs/housing/documents/local_housing_strategy.pdf
- ^{xiv} Community Housing Cymru list of RSLs operating in North Wales. <https://chcymru.org.uk/en/get-involved/-map/#t-Wrexham>
- ^{xv} Wrexham CBC Housing Association Nominations. <https://www.wrexham.gov.uk/assets/pdfs/housing/nominations.pdf>