

Meeting of:	CABINET
Date of Meeting:	22 SEPTEMBER 2026
Report Title:	APPROVAL TO ESTABLISH A TEMPORARY (SHADOW) GOVERNING BODY FOR THE NEW SCHOOL REPLACING AFON-Y-FELIN PRIMARY SCHOOL AND CORNELI PRIMARY SCHOOL
Report Owner: Responsible Chief Officer / Cabinet Member	CORPORATE DIRECTOR – EDUCATION, EARLY YEARS AND YOUNG PEOPLE CABINET MEMBER - EDUCATION AND YOUNG PEOPLE
Responsible Officer:	GAYLE SHENTON HEAD OF LEARNING DARREN JONES GROUP MANAGER SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT
Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:	There is no effect on the Council's Policy Framework and Procedure Rules.
Executive Summary:	This report seeks Cabinet approval to establish a temporary (shadow) governing body in Autumn 2026 to support the creation of a new primary school through the amalgamation of Afon-y-Felin Primary School and Corneli Primary School, which is scheduled to open on 1 September 2027. It also seeks authority to progress key pre-opening arrangements, including the appointment of a substantive Headteacher. The temporary (shadow) governing body will oversee strategic planning and governance arrangements for the new school during the transition period, while the existing governing bodies retain responsibility for their respective schools until closure on 31 August 2027. Key responsibilities will include appointing the Headteacher, approving the staffing structure, establishing policies and governance arrangements, and supporting transition planning for pupils, staff, parents and the wider community. Subject to approval, the temporary (shadow) governing body will be established in October 2026 and will oversee

	preparations to ensure the successful opening of the new school on 1 September 2027.
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1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To seek Cabinet approval to establish a temporary (shadow) governing body for the new school to be created through the amalgamation of Afon-y-Felin Primary School and Corneli Primary School. The shadow governing body will provide strategic oversight during the transition period and support preparations for the opening of the new school from 1 September 2027.
- 1.2 To seek authority to progress key pre-opening arrangements, including the recruitment and appointment of a substantive headteacher in advance of the new school's opening.

2. Background

- 2.1 Following a period of statutory consultation, Bridgend County Borough Council published a statutory notice on 26 April 2021 proposing to discontinue Corneli Primary School and Afon y Felin Primary School and establish a new English-medium community primary school to replace both schools.
- 2.2 The proposal formed part of the Council's School Modernisation Programme and included the construction of a new primary school on land off Gibbons Way, Plas Morlais. As part of the wider programme, a regulated alteration was also approved to enlarge Ysgol y Ferch O'r Sgêr.
- 2.3 Following the statutory notice period, objections to the proposal were received and considered. On 22 June 2021, Cabinet considered the objections and approved the proposal to discontinue both schools and establish a new replacement school.
- 2.4 The approved proposal was intended to:
 - maintain and improve educational standards;
 - ensure sufficient pupil places within the area;
 - provide modern learning environments through the replacement of ageing school buildings; and
 - remove significant maintenance liabilities associated with the existing school buildings.
- 2.5 The Council is now progressing the implementation phase of the approved proposal. This includes establishing a temporary (shadow) governing body to support the transition arrangements and oversee key pre-opening activities in preparation for the opening of the new school.

3. Current situation/ proposal

- 3.1 The proposed closure of Afon-y-Felin Primary School and Corneli Primary School, and the establishment of a new replacement school, are being progressed in

accordance with the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and the requirements of the Welsh Government School Organisation Code 2026.

- 3.2 A temporary (shadow) governing body is required to oversee the governance arrangements for the new school prior to its opening. The governing body will be constituted in accordance with the relevant Welsh legislation governing maintained schools and new school governance arrangements and will lead on key pre-opening functions, including the appointment of a substantive Headteacher and the development of the staffing structure.
- 3.3 During the shadow period, the governing bodies of Afon-y-Felin Primary School and Corneli Primary School will retain responsibility for the governance and management of their respective schools until their formal closure on 31 August 2027. The temporary (shadow) governing body will operate alongside the existing governing bodies to oversee preparations for the new school but will not assume responsibility for the operation of either existing school. The temporary (shadow) governing body will therefore have no statutory decision-making powers as those responsibilities will remain with the existing governing bodies until the temporary governing body is formally constituted and becomes the permanent governing body of the new school.
- 3.4 The temporary (shadow) governing body will be established to undertake specific pre-opening functions necessary to support the successful opening of the new school on 1 September 2027. Its role will be strategic and preparatory in nature and will focus on the completion of key milestones prior to the school's opening.

The responsibilities of the temporary (shadow) governing body will include:

- Headteacher appointment – leading the recruitment and appointment process for a substantive Headteacher for the new school from 1 September 2027 with any appointment made in accordance with applicable statutory requirements. The new substantive Headteacher will contribute to the development of the new school's vision, values, strategic direction and operational arrangements. Any additional costs incurred in supporting the transition to the new substantive Headteacher will be met from the delegated budgets of the two existing schools.
- Staffing structure – determining and approving the staffing structure for the new school and overseeing the implementation of staffing arrangements, including the establishment and management of an appropriate ring-fenced staff transfer process for employees of the two closing schools.
- School policies and organisation – the temporary (shadow) governing body will also be responsible for developing and approving key arrangements required for the successful establishment of the new school. This will include recommending a name for the new school, subject to Cabinet approval, agreeing the school uniform policy, supporting the development of the curriculum and strategic educational priorities, approving the school's budget plan and financial arrangements, and establishing other core policies and governance arrangements necessary to ensure the effective operation of the school from its opening date.

- The temporary (shadow) governing body will play a central role in developing and overseeing a comprehensive programme of transition and stakeholder engagement, ensuring that pupils, parents, staff, governors and the wider community are fully involved in shaping the new school. Particular emphasis will be placed on supporting vulnerable learners, including those with additional learning needs, those experiencing disadvantage and pupils requiring enhanced wellbeing support. Through targeted transition activities, individual support plans, close collaboration with families and partner agencies, and ongoing monitoring of pupil wellbeing and progress, the temporary (shadow) governing body will help ensure that all learners experience a positive and successful transition.

3.5 In accordance with the requirements for the establishment of a new maintained school in Wales, the Authority is required to determine the constitution of a temporary (shadow) governing body. The proposed composition reflects, as far as practicable, the categories and proportions prescribed within the Government of Maintained Schools (Wales) Regulations 2005 for a primary school operating on a normal basis.

3.6 It is proposed that the temporary (shadow) governing body comprises:

- four parent governors;
- three local authority governors;
- one teacher governor;
- one staff governor;
- interim executive headteacher; and
- three community governors.

This composition is considered appropriate to provide a balanced range of skills, experience and stakeholder representation to support the effective establishment of the new school.

3.7 It is proposed that the current Clerk to the Governing Bodies of both Afon-y-Felin Primary School and Corneli Primary School be appointed as Clerk to the temporary (shadow) governing body. In addition to undertaking the statutory duties associated with the role, the Clerk will provide an effective link between the temporary (shadow) governing body and the two existing governing bodies.

3.8 This arrangement will promote continuity, facilitate effective communication and information sharing, and support the coordination of governance matters throughout the transition period, whilst recognising that each governing body will continue to exercise its separate legal and operational responsibilities until the schools formally close on 31 August 2027.

3.9 The Authority will support the temporary (shadow) governing body through regular attendance at meetings, providing advice, guidance and relevant information to assist members in fulfilling their strategic responsibilities throughout the transition

period. In addition, the School Improvement Partner will work closely with the interim leadership team across both schools to support effective transition planning and the alignment of policies, procedures and operational practices. This will include the development of consistent approaches to curriculum design, teaching and learning, assessment and learner support, ensuring continuity of provision and the successful integration of both school communities into a single, inclusive learning environment.

- 3.10 Subject to approval of the proposal, a number of key milestones have been identified to support the establishment of the new school:

Key Milestone	Target Date
Establishment of Temporary Governing Body	October 2026
First meeting of Temporary Governing Body	November 2026
Recruitment process and appointment of substantive Headteacher	Spring Term 2027
Dissolution of existing governing bodies and Shadow Governing Body	31 August 2027
New Headteacher formally takes up post	1 September 2027
Establishment of new school governing body	1 September 2027
Opening of the new school (the new school will operate over the current two sites until the completion of the new school building)	1 September 2027

4. Equality implications (including Socio-economic Duty and Welsh Language)

- 4.1 The proposed composition of the temporary (shadow) governing body includes representation from parents, staff, the local authority and the wider community, providing opportunities for a broad range of perspectives to inform decision-making. The governing body will be expected to ensure that all decisions connected with the establishment of the new school comply with the Equality Act 2010 and promote equality of opportunity for all members of the school community.
- 4.2 The proposal relates to the governance arrangements required to establish a new English-medium community primary school and does not, in itself, change the medium of instruction. However, the amalgamation forms part of the Council's wider School Modernisation Programme, which includes a significant expansion of Welsh-medium education provision across the county borough. As part of the overall programme, additional Welsh-medium primary school places are being created,

contributing to the Council's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan objectives and supporting the Welsh Government's ambition to increase the number of Welsh speakers. The proposal is therefore not considered to have an adverse impact on opportunities to use the Welsh language.

- 4.3 The proposal supports the Council's duty to have due regard to reducing inequalities of outcome resulting from socio-economic disadvantage. The temporary (shadow) governing body will help facilitate the smooth establishment of a modern, purpose-built school designed to provide improved learning environments and educational opportunities for all pupils. In undertaking its functions, the governing body will be expected to have regard to the needs of vulnerable learners and to ensure that policies and practices promote equitable access to education and support.
- 4.4 The proposal supports the Council's wider objectives of providing high-quality, sustainable educational provision, improving access to modern learning environments, and increasing Welsh-medium education opportunities across the county borough, thereby contributing to improved outcomes for learners and communities.
- 4.5 An initial Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) screening has identified that there would be no negative impact on those with one or more of the protected characteristics, on socio-economic disadvantage or the use of the Welsh Language. It is therefore not necessary to carry out a full EIA on this policy or proposal.

5. Well-being of Future Generations implications and connection to Corporate Well-being Objectives

- 5.1 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 Assessment provides a comprehensive summary of the outcomes expected from the implementation of the service.

Long-term	The establishment of a temporary (shadow) governing body supports the long-term sustainability and success of the new school by ensuring that key governance, leadership, staffing and operational arrangements are in place well in advance of opening. Early appointment of a substantive Headteacher and the development of the school's strategic direction will help create a strong foundation for delivering high-quality education and improved outcomes for learners over the coming years.
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Prevention	The proposal adopts a preventative approach by addressing governance, leadership and organisational requirements before the new school opens. Establishing a temporary (shadow) governing body reduces the risk of delays in decision-making, staffing arrangements and policy development, helping to ensure a smooth transition from the two existing schools to the new
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school and mitigating potential disruption to pupils, staff and families.

Integration The proposal supports the Council's School Modernisation Programme and contributes to wider objectives relating to educational improvement, community wellbeing, and the efficient use of public resources. The temporary (shadow) governing body will consider educational, financial, workforce and community factors collectively when preparing the new school for opening, promoting an integrated approach to service delivery.

Collaboration The temporary (shadow) governing body will bring together representatives from a range of stakeholder groups, including parents, staff, the local authority and the wider community. It will work collaboratively with the governing bodies of Afon-y-Felin Primary School and Corneli Primary School, school leaders, local authority officers and other partners to support the successful establishment of the new school.

Involvement The proposed composition of the temporary (shadow) governing body ensures representation from key stakeholder groups and provides opportunities for parents, staff and community representatives to contribute to decisions relating to the establishment of the new school. This inclusive approach will help ensure that the views and experiences of those affected by the proposal are considered during the transition and implementation process.

The proposal demonstrates all five ways of working set out in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 by taking a long-term approach to school improvement, preventing potential implementation risks, integrating educational and organisational objectives, fostering collaboration between stakeholders, and ensuring meaningful involvement in the development of the new school.

6. Climate Change and Nature Implications

6.1 There are no climate change and nature implications arising directly from this information report.

7. Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications

7.1 There are no safeguarding or corporate parent implications arising directly from this information report.

8. Financial Implications

8.1 For the first year of the opening of the new school, the school will be formula funded for the appropriate proportion of the financial year - if the school opens in September, it will be resourced for 7 months of the financial year (7/12 of the formula allocation).

- 8.2 As the former/ other schools are scheduled to be closed during the 2027-28 financial year, the schools will only receive formula funding for the appropriate proportion of the financial year for which they are open – that is if the schools close on 31st August they will only be resourced for the first 5 months of the financial year, equating to 5/12 of the formula allocation.

9. Recommendations

Cabinet is recommended to:

- 9.1 Approve the establishment of a temporary (shadow) governing body for the new school to be created through the amalgamation of Afon-y-Felin Primary School and Corneli Primary School, in accordance with the relevant Welsh education regulations;
- 9.2 Approve the size and composition of the temporary (shadow) governing body for the new school, that has been determined including its responsibilities and the appointment of the Clerk, as outlined at section 3 of the report, having regard to the relevant statutory requirements;
- 9.3 Authorise the temporary (shadow) governing body to undertake all necessary pre-opening activities, including the commencement of the recruitment and appointment process for the Headteacher and the development and agreement of the new staffing structure noting that any appointments will be made in accordance with applicable statutory requirements and agreed policies and procedures;
- 9.4 Note that Afon-y-Felin Primary School and Corneli Primary School will formally close on 31 August 2027, and that the new amalgamated school and permanent governing body will formally come into existence on 1 September 2027.
- 9.5 Delegate authority to the Corporate Director – Education and Family Support, in consultation with the Cabinet Member – Education and Young People, to take any necessary consequential actions and make any necessary arrangements arising from the establishment of the temporary (shadow) governing body, provided that such actions are consistent with the decisions of Cabinet and relevant statutory requirements.

Background documents

None.