

Meeting of:	COUNCIL
Date of Meeting:	23 SEPTEMBER 2026
Report Title:	SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE (SPG): EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES AND RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT
Report Owner: Cabinet Member / Responsible Chief Officer	CABINET MEMBER FOR REGENERATION AND HOUSING CORPORATE DIRECTOR – COMMUNITIES
Responsible Officer:	LOUIS PANNELL STRATEGIC PLANNING POLICY TEAM LEADER
Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:	There is no impact on the policy framework or procedure rules.
Executive Summary:	The purpose of this report is to provide Council with an overview of the public consultation exercise on the draft Educational Facilities and Residential Development SPG document. It also seeks Council approval to adopt the final form Educational Facilities and Residential Development SPG. Adoption of this SPG will support the effective implementation of the existing planning policy framework contained within the Replacement Local Development Plan adopted March 2024 (RLDP), the Council’s statutory land-use Planning document.

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Council of the outcome of the public consultation exercise on the draft Educational Facilities and Residential Development SPG document.
- 1.2 The Report also seeks Council approval to adopt the final form Educational Facilities and Residential Development SPG (**Appendix 1**), in order to support the effective implementation of the existing planning policy framework contained within the RLDP, the Council’s statutory land-use Planning document.

2. Background

- 2.1 The RLDP plays a key role in ensuring that there is sufficient and satisfactory educational provision for the children and young people generated by new residential developments.
- 2.2 The RLDP makes provision for 8,628 homes to promote the creation and enhancement of sustainable communities across the County Borough over the plan period (2018-2033). As a result, existing educational facilities will be inevitably placed under pressure to accommodate the additional pupils that will be generated through these planned residential developments. Therefore, the Planning system needs to ensure that the necessary steps are taken to avoid facilities being detrimentally affected and that adequate provision is available to cater for the learning needs of the children and young people of Bridgend.
- 2.3 Education capacity was a key consideration during preparation of the RLDP and directly informed the selection of strategic and housing allocations. The overarching strategy of the RLDP prioritises the allocation of large strategic sites of sufficient scale to support the delivery of a new primary school as a minimum. In addition, a number of smaller housing allocations have been allocated and will be required to contribute to improvements to existing educational infrastructure and/or the provision of new supporting infrastructure, where necessary, to ensure such development is acceptable in planning terms. These requirements are specified within Thematic Policies PLA1-5 of the RLDP and the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (**IDP**), providing clarity and certainty on infrastructure requirements associated with future development.
- 2.4 Furthermore, Policy SP10 of the RLDP sets the policy framework to ensure that all residential development proposals are supported by sufficient existing or new infrastructure. In order to mitigate likely adverse impacts and/or to integrate a development proposal, Policy SP10 requires that reasonable infrastructure provision or financial contributions must be provided by developers where necessary and secured by means of planning agreements/obligations where appropriate.
- 2.5 Development Control Committee was informed of the need to revise the Educational Facilities & Residential Development SPG 16 on the 2nd of October 2025. Councillors Hughes, Griffiths and Haines of Development Control Committee, volunteered to champion production of the revised Educational Facilities & Residential Development SPG, and have since been working alongside the Strategic Planning Policy Team Leader to progress the new SPG.
- 2.6 This draft SPG provides specific guidance on:
- Education requirements for residential developments including thresholds, pupil yields, additional learning needs provision, Welsh medium provision, cost per pupil place, investment in unsatisfactory school accommodation, new schools and how contributions will be used;

- How contributions are calculated - with a worked example; and
- The administration of policy through the various planning stages; Section 106, negotiations with developers and how issues surrounding development viability may be considered.

2.7 While a large proportion of the existing SPG 16 remains relevant, key areas requiring update include pupil yield rates and associated cost guidance. The latter is particularly necessary as costs have increased since the existing SPG's adoption in 2021.

2.8 The pupil yield rates have been revised using evidence from completed new build residential developments in the Borough, including schemes that have delivered a new primary school. Cost guidance has also been updated to reflect cost and size standards published by the Welsh Government.

3. Current situation / proposal

3.1 On the 10th of March 2026, a draft version of the SPG was presented to Cabinet. Cabinet resolved to approve that draft SPG as the basis for a public consultation period of 6 weeks. Cabinet also authorised officers to make appropriate arrangements for that public consultation before reporting the outcome back to Cabinet for approval to send a report to Council to seek adoption of the final SPG.

3.2 A 6-week public consultation period was held from 17th of March 2026 to the 28th of April 2026. The consultation was advertised in the following ways:

- Information on the consultation, including all the documentation, representation forms and how to make representations was placed on the Council's online Consultation Portal.
- Consultation details were sent directly to approximately 190 targeted consultees including all Elected Members, Town and Community Councils, planning consultants, house builders, Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) and all head teachers.
- A social media campaign was launched to promote the consultation across various social media platforms, aiming to generate awareness throughout the public consultation period. Periodic posts were made on the Council's X (formerly Twitter), LinkedIn and Facebook accounts.

3.3 At the close of the public consultation period, one representation was received on the draft SPG, submitted by a planning consultant acting on behalf of a housebuilder. Given the extensive publicity undertaken during the consultation, together with the targeted engagement of key consultees, the limited number of responses is considered a positive outcome, indicating that no fundamental objections were raised to the content for overall approach of the draft SPG.

- 3.4 The representation primarily sought clarification on, and raised concerns regarding, specific aspects of the guidance. These included the potential for double counting where development is required to provide both land for on-site education provision and financial contributions towards the delivery of strategic sites; the revised pupil yield assumptions; and the proposed increase to cost per pupil figures, together with the potential implications for development viability.
- 3.5 A summary of the representation, alongside the Local Planning Authority's (LPA's) responses and the reasons why certain suggested amendments have not been incorporated, is provided in **Appendix 2**. Having considered the comments received, it is concluded that only minor amendments to the SPG are necessary. These amendments have been incorporated into the final draft SPG, attached as **Appendix 1**. For ease of reference, the paragraphs amended following consultation are reproduced in full at the end of **Appendix 2** and include:
- An amendment to clarify that Section 106 agreements may include a review clause to account for any subsequent reduction in the number or type of residential units proposed, particularly where changes arise through reserved matters planning applications. The inclusion of such a review clause will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
 - Additional wording to improve clarity and transparency regarding the assessment of whether surplus school places can be considered available and taken into account when determining developer contributions, in the context of safe walking routes from a development site to a school. A route is considered to be available if it is safe for a learner without a disability or learning difficulty to walk the route alone or with an accompanying adult if the learners age and levels of understanding require this.
 - Minor amendments to clarify the purposes for which education contributions may be used, including the provision and design of new school facilities.
- 3.6 A report will be presented to Cabinet on 22 September 2026 informing Members of the outcome of the public consultation exercise and seeking approval to present the final form Educational Facilities and Residential Development SPG to Council to seek its adoption. If adopted, the SPG will support the effective implementation of the existing planning policy framework, provide more detailed advice and guidance to applicants preparing planning applications and will become a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

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

- 4.1 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 on 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 (Wales) Act 2015 implications and connection to Corporate Well-being Objectives

5.1 The new SPG for Educational Facilities and Residential Development will provide additional guidance and material weight to support adopted RLDP Policies and seek to provide clarity in respect of their future interpretation, setting out what the Council expects from applicants in respect of satisfying those policies' detailed criteria. This is a key contributory factor to delivering Local Well-being Objective 3: *'Enabling people to meet their potential.'*

5.2 The new SPG, once adopted, will also contribute to the following goals within the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015:

- A prosperous Wales – Ensuring there is sufficient education provision in response to new residential development, directly supporting skills, employability and the future workforce.
- A healthier Wales – Ensuring education provision can be accessed by safe walking routes from new housing developments.
- A more equal Wales – Ensuring equal access to education provision, including Welsh-medium and Additional Learning Needs provision.
- A Wales of cohesive communities – Ensuring that education provision is provided in relation to new residential development to avoid pressure on existing schools.

6. Climate Change and Nature Implications

6.1 There are no direct climate change and nature implications from this report, although the new SPG, once adopted, will provide additional guidance to ensure that existing education provision can be accessed by safe walking routes from new housing developments. This will help to encourage a sustainable modal shift, reducing carbon emissions that are released from car-born travel.

7. Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications

7.1 There are no safeguarding and corporate parent implications arising from this report.

8. Financial Implications

8.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

9. Recommendations

9.1 It is recommended that Council:

- a) Note the contents of this Report and the Officer's consultation responses to the representations received following public consultation on the draft SPG for

Educational Facilities and Residential Development, together with resultant amendments set out in attached **Appendix 2**;

- b) Adopt the final form Educational Facilities and Residential Development SPG (**Appendix 1**) for immediate application in making development management decisions and in the determination of planning applications along with the adopted RLDP;
- c) Delegate authority to the Corporate Director – Communities and Group Manager – Planning and Development Services to make minor presentational changes, typographical or factual corrections as necessary prior to publication of the adopted Educational Facilities and Residential Development SPG; and
- d) Delegate authority to the Corporate Director – Communities and Group Manager – Planning and Development Services to undertake and publish annual index-linked updates to Table 2 – Cost per Pupil Place (page 14), of the final form Educational Facilities and Residential Development SPG, to ensure such costs remain up to date.

Background documents

None