

APPENDIX 9

Abertillery Learning Community – Adult Consultation Thematic Analysis and Council Responses

The primary emergent themes arising from the analysis of written responses including – emails and surveys, along with the frequency of each of the aforementioned themes is detailed below (from the most to the least prevalent issues noted) 9 themes in total:

Theme	Frequency	Council Responses
Top 6 Themes		
<p>Educational impact and class sizes</p> <p>The most frequently raised concerns related to the potential impact on children’s education. Respondents consistently highlighted risks associated with larger class sizes, reduced individual attention and increased pressure on teaching and support staff at the remaining campuses. Many respondents questioned how educational standards would be maintained, particularly for pupils who require additional support or thrive in smaller learning environments.</p> <p>Concerns about increased class sizes, overcrowding and reduced individual support.</p>	580-620	<p>The Council recognises that educational quality and pupil wellbeing were the most significant concerns raised during the consultation. Safeguarding and the maintenance of high standards of teaching and learning remain the Council’s primary considerations. Should the proposal proceed, provision across the remaining campuses would be carefully realigned to ensure that class sizes remain within statutory limits set by Welsh Government, including the maximum of 30 pupils per class, and that staffing structures enable appropriate levels of support for all learners.</p> <p>The Council would work closely with the leadership and governing body of Abertillery Learning Community to manage pupil distribution, deploy staff effectively and monitor educational outcomes. Pupil transfer and accommodation planning would be undertaken in a phased and managed way to avoid detrimental overcrowding, support targeted intervention where required, and ensure continuity of educational standards. The consolidation of provision across fewer campuses is intended to support more effective use of staffing and resources, strengthen professional collaboration, improve consistency of practice, and maintain – and where possible enhance, the quality of educational provision for all pupils.</p>
<p>Travel distance, attendance and fatigue</p> <p>Travel, attendance and safety were also major themes. Respondents raised concerns about longer walking distances for young children, adverse weather conditions,</p>	500-550	<p>The Council acknowledges concerns regarding increased travel distances, particularly for younger pupils and families without access to private transport. Attendance and punctuality are recognised as critical factors in educational success. Should the proposal proceed, the Council has confirmed that learner travel arrangements will be carefully assessed and managed in line with</p>

<p>limited access to private transport and the potential knock-on effect on attendance and punctuality.</p>		<p>existing Home to School Transport policies and the Council's statutory duties. Where pupils are eligible, free transport will continue to be provided to the nearest suitable school.</p> <p>The Council will work closely with school leadership to monitor attendance and wellbeing following any change, ensuring that appropriate mitigations and support measures are implemented to minimise fatigue, safeguard pupils, and maintain consistent attendance.</p>
<p>Traffic, parking and road safety</p> <p>These concerns were closely linked to travel distance above including road safety and traffic issues, with many respondents describing existing congestion and parking pressures at Six Bells and Tillery Street campuses as already problematic and potentially unsafe. Existing congestion and safety risk.</p>	<p>460-520</p>	<p>Concerns relating to congestion, parking and road safety around receiving campuses have been carefully noted. The Council has acknowledged these concerns and confirmed that traffic, parking and road safety considerations would be reviewed as part of any implementation planning. This would include working with relevant Council services and school leadership to monitor site arrangements, assess potential mitigation measures, and ensure that pupil safety remains a priority alongside the effective management of school operations.</p>
<p>Additional Learning Needs (ALN)</p> <p>Additional Learning Needs (ALN) featured prominently. Parents and carers expressed strong concern that pupils with ALN would be disproportionately affected by disruption, changes in routine and the loss of familiar staff and specialist spaces such as nurture or 'Nest' provision. Numerous responses highlighted the risk of increased anxiety, regression in learning and potential school avoidance if the proposal were to be implemented.</p>	<p>430-480</p>	<p>The Council fully recognises the sensitivity of change for pupils with Additional Learning Needs and the potential impact on routine, emotional regulation and learning progress. The Council has stated that the needs of pupils with ALN are a key consideration and that the proposal has been developed on the basis that provision can be maintained and delivered effectively across the remaining campuses. Should the proposal proceed, the Council would work closely with school leadership, ALN services and families to plan transitions carefully, retain specialist support and environments where required, and ensure that individual learner needs continue to be met in line with statutory responsibilities. The Nest is a school-funded intervention rather than a site-specific entitlement. Access is assessed through established school processes and support is allocated based on identified pupil need and progress,</p>

		<p>with provision distributed across campuses to support pupil improvement.</p> <p>The Council is committed to minimising disruption by maintaining familiar staffing where possible and ensuring access to appropriate specialist environments.</p>
<p>Community Impact and Deprivation</p> <p>The role of Roseheyworth Road Campus as a community hub was repeatedly emphasised. Many respondents viewed the school as a stabilising presence within a deprived area, supporting families, early years provision and community cohesion. The proposal was widely perceived as likely to exacerbate inequality and remove an important local asset, particularly for families with limited resources.</p>	410-450	<p>The importance of Roseheyworth Road Campus as a valued community asset within an area of deprivation is acknowledged. The Council has acknowledged the strength of community attachment to the site and confirmed that community and socio-economic impacts have been considered as part of the assessment process. Should the proposal proceed, the Council would continue to work with school leadership and partner services to ensure that pupils and families are supported and that access to educational provision and support services is maintained.</p>
<p>Safe Routes to School</p> <p>Many respondents had concerns regarding road safety, gradients, lighting and road crossings emphasising the need to have a safe route to school. The proposal was widely perceived as likely to have a detrimental effect on pupils and their families.</p>	380-420	<p>The Council accepts the concerns raised regarding gradients, lighting, road crossings and overall route safety. These matters are integral to the Council's Safe Routes to School considerations and form part of the wider assessment of the proposal. Should the proposal proceed, designated school routes and associated risks would be reviewed through Safe Routes to School and existing transport and road safety arrangements, with appropriate mitigation measures and ongoing monitoring implemented to support pupil safety and wellbeing.</p>
Other Themes		
<p>Financial case and leadership structure</p> <p>While some respondents acknowledged the financial challenges facing the Abertillery Learning Community as a school, there was limited or low confidence in the financial case for closure of Roseheyworth Road Campus. A significant number of responses questioned governance arrangements, leadership structures and whether alternative</p>	330-370	<p>The Council notes stakeholder concerns regarding the robustness and transparency of the financial case. The Council has stated that the proposal is driven by the need to address an increasingly unsustainable financial position, noting that Abertillery Learning Community is projecting a significant deficit in the 2025/26 financial year which, if left unaddressed, is expected to increase substantially over the next five years. The proposal forms part of a</p>

<p>options to preferred closure Roseheyworth Road Campus had been fully explored.</p>		<p>wider strategic approach to reduce surplus capacity, improve financial sustainability and secure long-term viability.</p> <p>Robust governance, financial monitoring and review processes will continue throughout the statutory process and any subsequent implementation.</p>
<p>Consultation process and trust</p> <p>Concerns were also raised about the consultation process itself, with some respondents expressing a lack of trust and a perception that decisions were predetermined. There was also reference to the timing and transparency.</p>	<p>290-330</p>	<p>The Council recognises that some respondents felt the consultation lacked transparency or that outcomes were predetermined. The Council has confirmed that the consultation was undertaken in full compliance with the Welsh Government School Organisation Code, including statutory timescales, prescribed consultees and engagement requirements. All responses received have been considered objectively and reported transparently to Cabinet. The proposal is also subject to elected Member oversight, scrutiny and challenge through the Council's established decision-making and governance arrangements, ensuring that no final determination is made prior to full consideration of consultation feedback.</p>
<p>Early Years, Nursery and Childcare Provision</p> <p>Respondents have concerns about the youngest pupils especially those in the current nursery setting of Roseheyworth Road Campus moving into other campuses. There was also reference to the campus being in a Flying Start area and what will happen to the private childcare provider 'Mini Me's as a wraparound childcare provision.</p>	<p>250-300</p>	<p>The Council has acknowledged the importance of continuity in Early Years provision and the role of childcare and Flying Start services in supporting families. Should the proposal proceed, the Council would work closely with school leadership and, where possible, engage with <i>Mini Me's</i> and other early years partners to understand potential impacts, support transition planning and seek to maintain access to appropriate childcare provision for families.</p> <p>Engagement with families, Early Years services and private providers would be undertaken to minimise disruption and ensure provision continues to meet local need.</p>