

**Request: Any new correspondence related to an application for a replacement school for Godre'r Graig since the previous Freedom of Information Request ATISN 24503, dated 6 March 2025.**

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**From:** Andrew Thomas

**Sent:** 16 April 2025 13:11

**To:** Emyr Harries; WG Official 1 (SCfL); Cymunedau Dysgu Cynaliadwy / Sustainable Communities for Learning

**Cc:** NPT Official 1

**Subject:** Godre'rgrraig Primary Replacement School WLIA Mitigations

Good Afternoon,

Please find attached mitigations to be included with the WLIA submitted earlier this year, as requested, to support the proposal for a new build replacement school for Godre'rgrraig .

To clarify, this will be a replacement English-medium school in the same community, not a new English-medium school. As you will be aware from the original variation submission, a replacement Godre'rgrraig Primary in the village of Godre'rgrraig will be a much-needed community resource and has the potential to provide support for local families which is currently not available in the village. It is anticipated that it will mitigate the lack of resources in an area of multiple deprivation and support the Welsh Government directives, including Community Focussed Schools and Flying Start initiatives.

I would be grateful if you could consider the attached mitigations, with a view to including the scheme in the 9 year rolling programme.

Could you also advise me of the processes which will now be followed and when I can expect to receive a response from you regarding this proposal for the new build replacement Godre'rgrraig Primary School.

Kind Regards,

Andrew Thomas

Director of Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning / Cyfarwyddwr Addysg,  
Hamdden a Dysgu Gydol Oes

Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council / Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Castell-nedd  
Port Talbot

**Attachment – ATISN 25031 Doc-1**

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**From:** Emyr Harries

**Sent:** 04 July 2025 09:49

**To:** Andrew Thomas; WG Official 1 (SCfL); Cymunedau Dysgu Cynaliadwy / Sustainable Communities for Learning

**Cc:** NPT Official 1; WG official 2 (SCfL); WG Official 3 (SCfL)

**Subject:** RE: Godre'rgraig Primary Replacement School WLIA Mitigations

Dear Andrew,

Thank you for submitting your mitigations following the completion of your WLIA for the Godre'rgraig project. Whilst the mitigations propose addressing some of the Welsh language concerns, many have already been actioned and therefore the mitigation is already in effect. Examples of this include investment in Welsh medium schools including YGG Pontardawe, YGG Trebannws and YGG Ystalyfera Bro Dur (north campus). There are also unknowns within the mitigations which would require further investigation such as whether a new school would attract learners from within the catchment who attend English medium schools in Powys to ensure that the new school is not under capacity and/or attracting learners who would otherwise attend a Welsh medium school.

From the discussions I have had with internal colleagues, we believe it is highly unlikely that members of the Business Case Scrutiny Group (BSCG) and Education Investment Panel (EIP) would recommend the proposal for approval. The reasons for this are not solely related to the Welsh Language impact. The high costs due to site constraints are also a significant concern. To put this into perspective the cost per square meter could be greater than that of your Sustainable Schools Challenge project at Ysgol Rhosafan. As you are aware Ysgol Rhosafan is pushing boundaries in terms of sustainability, and we would expect the costs to be higher which is why we have awarded the first £15million at 100% funding. We are also actively following progress at the school and using it as a case study to help future projects. There are also concerns around the viability of the school from a school organisation and capacity perspective; for example, whether a new school would adversely affect other (English medium) schools in the area. Whilst the SCfL programme does support small schools, they tend to be in rural areas where options for learners at other schools are limited. It is also worth being mindful of our grant condition around clawback for schools which are undercapacity.

We would be happy to meet with you to discuss the above or indeed to provide a sounding board as to whether any alternative proposals are likely to meet our investment criteria.

Best wishes,

Emyr

**Emyr Harries**

Dirprwy Gyfarwyddwr | Deputy Director

Yr Is-adran Seilwaith, Llywodraethiant a Chyllid Addysg | Education Infrastructure, Governance and Finance Division

Y Grŵp Addysg, Diwylliant a'r Gymraeg | Education, Culture and Welsh Language Group

Llywodraeth Cymru | Welsh Government