

Llanishen to Grow Up In

A Children and Young People's
Plan for Llanishen, Cardiff

This is our plan for Llanishen

This is our plan for Llanishen. The plan **was co-created by the children and young people** of Llanishen alongside a team from Cardiff University, and the Child Friendly Cardiff and Curriculum Team of Cardiff Council.

This report describes the **neighbourhood plan** for Llanishen that children and young people co-created. It describes what they wanted and where in their neighbourhood, what they prioritised, and how they wanted specific features to be developed.

This plan should be used by **planners, designers, councillors** and decision-makers with responsibility in Cardiff to make Llanishen a more fun, safe, clean, green and inclusive place for children and young people to grow up in.

It can be used by children and young people to start discussions with **teachers, educators and youth workers** about what they want in their neighbourhood, and how they can advocate for their needs. It can be used as a starting point to develop more specific, detailed plans, such as planning green spaces, parks, streets and neighbourhood facilities.

It can be used by **children and young people** to show decision-makers with responsibility what they want, to discuss and debate what should happen next, and to advocate for their needs where they live.



How we made the plan

Children and young people from across Llanishen took part in **co-creation workshops** in their schools, before an event on the 4th of March 2024 at the All Nations Centre in Cardiff, where they shared their needs, plans and ideas for a better neighbourhood.

Children and young people took part from these schools:

- Llanishen High School
- Bryn Celyn Primary School
- Llysfaen Primary School
- Springwood Primary School
- Ton Yr Ywen Primary School

In total more than 200 children and young people took part in the co-creation process. There were **four steps** to the process, described below:

Step 1: Reflecting on our neighbourhood

Children and young people in their school classes reflected on their local neighbourhood – about what they liked and did not like, whether their neighbourhood was suitable for their needs, and what they might change. They did this through **walking tours** and making **photo essays** about their neighbourhoods.

Step 2: Overview Planning

In small groups, children and young people used satellite maps of their neighbourhood, with their school in the centre, to develop an overview plan for the neighbourhood with their ideas and choose areas to re-design. They used tracing paper to annotate the maps, and used stickers and post-it notes to show what they wanted and where.

Step 3: Prioritising Actions

Based on their ideas from the maps, the groups made a set of cards – with one idea on each card. They used the colour-coding of the cards to categorise their ideas under four themes: Green and blue spaces; Play and hanging out; Mobile, Safe and Clean; and Spaces for everyone. The cards were then sorted into short-, medium- and long-term priorities, and each column ranked with those at the top being the highest priority.

Step 4: Re-design a Place or Feature

Small groups (2-3) chose to either draw or make a model of one place or feature which was of high priority for them. Examples included re-designed parks, play spaces, hanging out spaces, and streets. Some groups presented their ideas to the rest of the group and video recorded their presentations.

Methods Toolkit: For more details of how to use these method, please see our toolkit: [Co-creating a neighbourhood plan with children and young people: A toolkit for planners, designers, teachers and youth workers](#) (Khan et al. 2023).

Children's Rights

Co-creating plans with children and young people can be one way to help realise their rights. Some of the children and young people found that taking part in this co-design process made them realise the ways in which their rights were not always being met at present in their neighbourhood.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Children (UNCRC, 2022) outlines the fundamental rights of every child. These are important for the planning of urban environments. Those which are particularly relevant in relation to children's co-creation of neighbourhood plans are that:

- The best interests of the child must be a top priority in all decisions and actions that affect children (**Article 3**).
- Every child has the right to express their views, feelings and wishes in all matters affecting them, and to have their views considered and taken seriously (**Article 12**).
- Every child has the right to relax, play and take part in a wide range of cultural and artistic activities (**Article 31**).
- A child with a disability has the right to live a full and decent life with dignity and, as far as possible, independence and to play an active part in the community (**Article 23**).

Many of the other articles are linked to children and young people's full participation in the urban environment, including children's freedom of association (the right to meet and socialise with other children); their protection from violence, abuse and neglect; and rights to education and healthcare.

Broadly applied, these rights are important for neighbourhoods, cities and all urban environments in terms of how children and young people access services, feel safe in their communities, and have the freedom to meet with others and play.

Not all children are aware of their rights, or how to advocate for them. Co-creating neighbourhood plans is one way that children and young people can express their own ideas and wishes – and these should be listened to and applied by adults with responsibility.



Our Future Llanishen

We analysed the children and young people's ideas from those expressed through the mapping, drawings and card-sorting to create four themed maps. Each map brings together their ideas for each category into an accessible format:

1. Green and Blue spaces

Where parks and green spaces can be improved, where there is more need for nature and greenery, and ways to make parks safer.

2. Play and Hanging Out

Creating more places to play and hang out, and improving existing spaces to make them more playful including for older children.

3. Mobile, Safe and Clean

Improving independent mobility for children and young people, and making neighbourhoods safer and cleaner.

4. Inclusive Spaces

Making spaces suitable for all abilities, for different ages and genders, with more diverse options for all.

The maps can seem **busy** with lots of suggestions – which shows that children and young people from across this geographically large neighbourhood wanted improvements and more facilities near their homes, as well as places they visited in the wider area.



1. Green and Blue Spaces

This theme focusses on where parks and green spaces can be improved, and where there is a need for more space for nature.

Children and young people wanted to improve green and blue spaces in Llanishen, by having more trees and green areas, better habitats for wildlife, and with different and more varied types of vegetation along the streets and in parks

They also wanted parks to be safer and to have more amenities – particularly more benches and better street lighting, so that they could make use of them when it is dark early in the afternoon and evening. This was particularly important for girls to feel safer in parks, as one young woman said in the workshop:

"Girls can feel safer when there's more lights in parks."

Some children found dogs threatening in parks and suggested that some parks should have separate dog walking areas away from the spaces they play and hang out in.

Children and young people also wanted parks to be more playful, with more play areas located within existing parks, and more dedicated play spaces in smaller parks close to their homes and schools.



MORE TREES



MORE BENCHES



STREET LIGHTS



MORE PLAY AREAS
IN PARKS



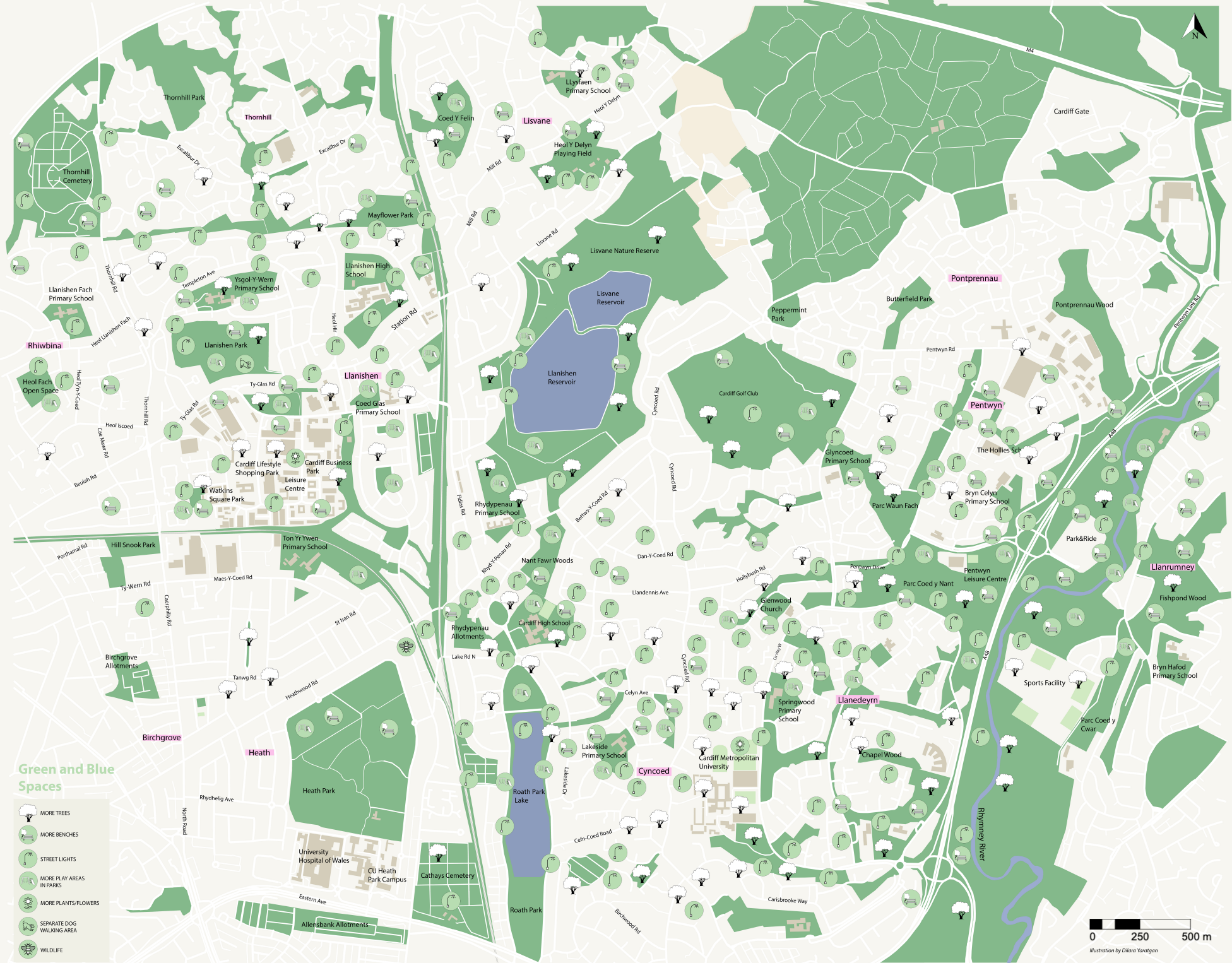
MORE PLANTS/FLOWERS



SEPARATE DOG
WALKING AREA



WILDLIFE



2. Play and Hanging Out

One of the most important categories for children and young people was to improve parks, playgrounds and play spaces, and have more diverse and safer ways to hang out locally.

They wanted more and better play opportunities, as well as appropriate play areas for children and older young people. They also need more and better facilities for different types of play, from specific sporting facilities and pitches, and skate parks. They need these spaces to be close to their schools and homes, as one said:

"In the local school, we want a bigger play area into more trees to provide shade in the summer."

Children and young people also value and need spaces to safely hang out and socialise, including picnic tables and shelters in parks and other community spaces.

They have diverse definition of play and hanging out, which are not limited to parks and public spaces. Children and young people wanted food places and gaming centres where they could play and socialise indoors, and a community centre that could host more diverse activities.



BETTER PLAY OPPORTUNITIES



CHALLENGING PLAY EQUIPMENT



PLAY AREA FOR YOUNG CHILDREN



SPORT ACTIVITIES



FOOTBALL PITCH



RUGBY PITCH



SKATE PARK



PICNIC TABLES



SHELTER FOR CHILDREN



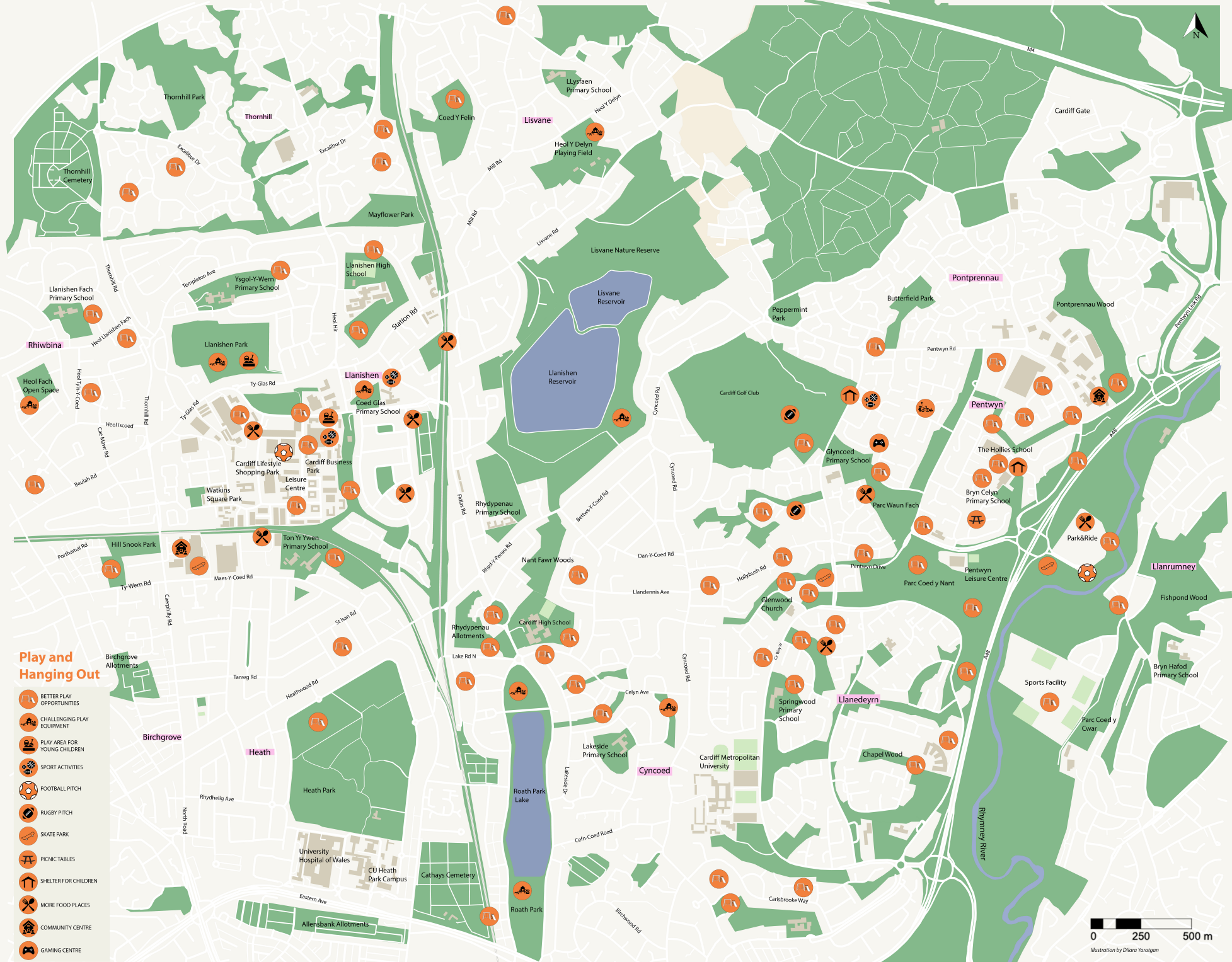
MORE FOOD PLACES



COMMUNITY CENTRE



GAMING CENTRE



Play and Hanging Out

- BETTER PLAY OPPORTUNITIES
- CHALLENGING PLAY EQUIPMENT
- PLAY AREA FOR YOUNG CHILDREN
- SPORT ACTIVITIES
- FOOTBALL PITCH
- RUGBY PITCH
- SKATE PARK
- PICNIC TABLES
- SHELTER FOR CHILDREN
- MORE FOOD PLACES
- COMMUNITY CENTRE
- GAMING CENTRE

3. Mobile, Safe and Clean

Children and young people felt that their lack of independent mobility- i.e. opportunities to get around the neighbourhoods by themselves was a real problem.

To spend more time outside, and to be more independently mobile, they needed safer streets, particularly to reduce risks from cars. They wanted designated cycle lanes to allow them to bike to school. Cycling and scooting were also recreational activities for them, and they wanted better opportunities to do these in safe places such as existing parks.

They wanted more zebra crossings, and measures to slow down and control traffic, including traffic lights and speed bumps. They also wanted better street signage in parks and streets to improve how they navigate around their neighbourhood.

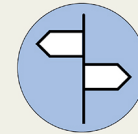
Children also wanted the streets and footpaths to be clean and expressed the need for more bins, including for recycling, as well as more available and accessible public toilets.



ZEBRA CROSSING



CYCLE LANE



STREET SIGNS



WASTE BINS FOR
RECYCLING



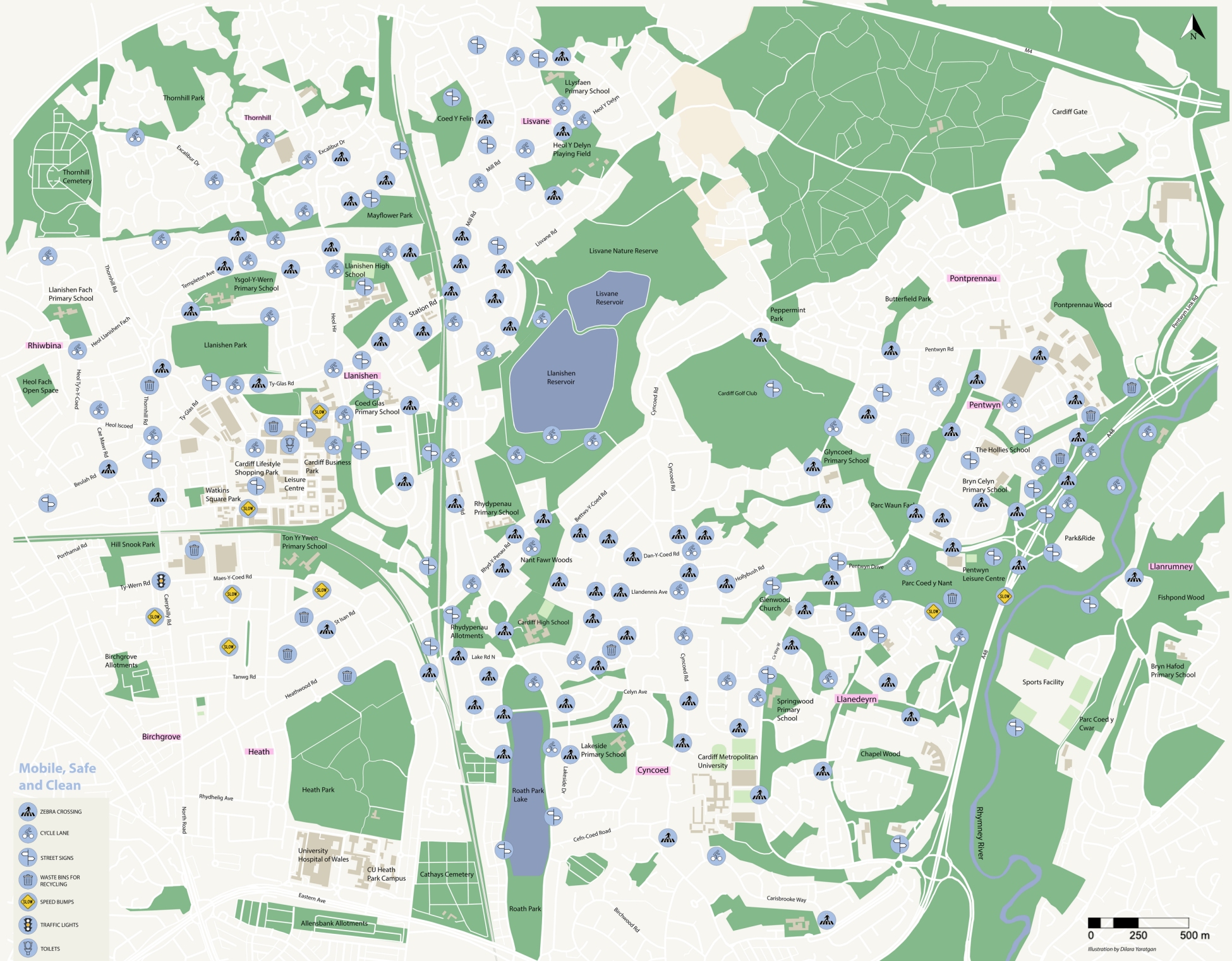
SPEED BUMPS



TRAFFIC LIGHTS



TOILETS



4. Spaces for everyone

The children and young people of Llanishen wanted their neighbourhood to be more inclusive, with facilities for all abilities, ages and genders.

They expressed concern that the existing playgrounds do not offer enough and appropriate equipment for disabled children.

More generally the children and young people shared a need for places and activities for girls and young women, and younger and older children. Their suggestions included more shops and pop-up shops, and safe cafes for children – providing safe, child friendly spaces for socialising and play. One young participant highlighted the need to reinforce children's rights:

"If more people knew about children's rights, things would be better all round."

They showed great care towards others, and wanted facilities that went beyond the immediate needs of children and young people to others in their communities. Examples included a care home and a well-being centre which provide support for everyone in the neighbourhood.



PLAY EQUIPMENT FOR
DISABLED KIDS



SHOPS/POP-UP SHOPS



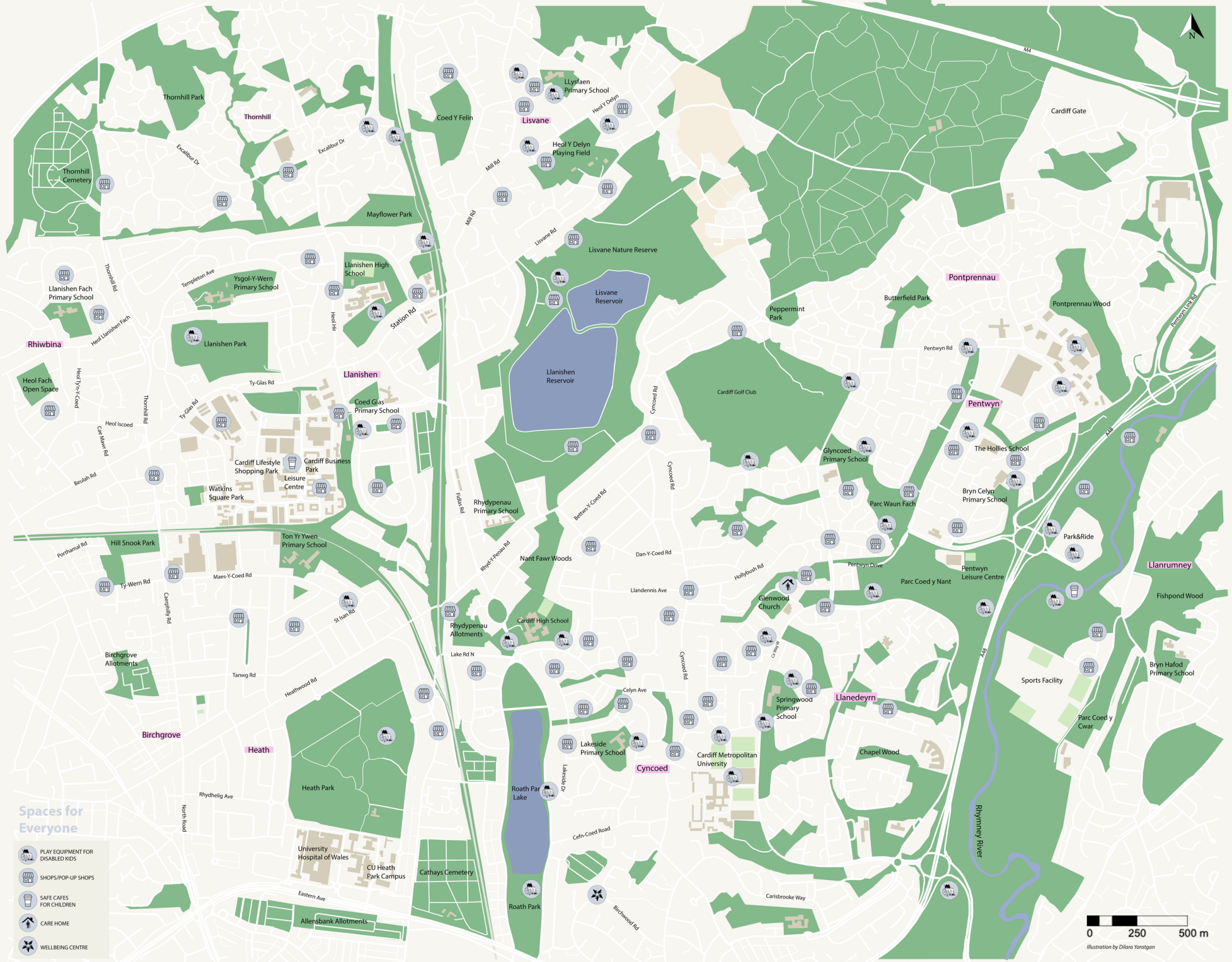
SAFE CAFES
FOR CHILDREN



CARE HOME



WELLBEING CENTRE



Spaces for Everyone

- PLAY EQUIPMENT FOR DISABLED KIDS
- SHOPS/POP-UP SHOPS
- SAFE CAFES FOR CHILDREN
- CARE HOME
- WELLBEING CENTRE

0 250 500 m

Illustration by Dilara Yaratgan

Priorities: Short, Medium and Long-Term

The children and young people prioritised their ideas into what should be done in short term (now), medium term (2-3 years) and long term (4+ years). They talked about their ideas together, and decided in small groups what the most important things were from the ideas they had put on the maps. Each school group had different priorities, so these are presented by group on the following pages. Note that Springwood and Bryn Celyn primary schools shared a room during the workshops, so their priorities are presented together.

Across the five schools there emerged key priority actions for the short-, medium- and long-term. These were:

Short-term key priorities

1. Better **access** and **opportunities for all** – particularly for those with **disabilities** – including to **parks and playgrounds**.
2. **Clean spaces**: Increased litter picking, recycling, and better availability of bins and dog bins.
3. **Safer Crossing**: More zebra crossing points.
4. **Increased greenery**: particularly on roads and streets.
5. Improved opportunities for **cycling** and **scooting**.
6. **Safer streets**: reducing and slowing traffic.

Medium-term key priorities

7. More **streetlights**.
8. More **playgrounds** – to suit the full diversity of children: including older children, those with disabilities, and more interesting play spaces like skateparks and treehouses.
9. Making **shops, cafes** and **restaurants** more **accessible**, friendly and safe for children, and increasing the number of shops.
10. Increasing **neighbourhood policing** to enhance safety.
11. More **public toilets**.

Longer-term key priorities

12. Better **sports facilities** and leisure centre provision, including a community pool.
13. More **clubs** and **activities** for children and young people.
14. A new **community centre** and **bigger library**.
15. **Improved school grounds** – including better play spaces and greenery.
16. A **community farm**.
17. Improving **housing** for all including the homeless.

The following pages show the priorities by school groups:

Llanishen High School: Priorities

Now

Better access for all

Clubs for kids with disabilities

More litter picking and bins

More zebra crossings

2-3 years

More lights on the streets

Neighbourhood police for safety

Inclusive parks e.g. with wheelchair ramps

Playgrounds for older children

Gardening clubs

4+ years

Better sport facilities

More sports pitches and fields

More planting and trees in residential areas

Community support to grow green nature

Llysfaen Primary School: Priorities

Now

Litter picking and bins

Trees & flowers along roads

Wheelchair Ramps

Benches in the woodlands

More zebra crossings

Bee and bug friendly gardens

Safer areas

More cycling paths

More bike stations

2-3 years

More street lights

More public toilets

Playgrounds for all kids

Safer shops for kids

Skateparks and playgrounds

More signs in the streets

Making pedestrian zones

More sport activities for all

Build Tree houses

Nieghbourhood farm

Cafés around reservoir

4+ years

Playground for kids with disabilities

Build community centre for all

Build a bigger library

Food shops / restaurants / coffee shop with playgrounds

Soft play areas

More leisure centres

Springwood and Bryn Celyn Primary Schools: Priorities

Now

Litter picking and bins

Trees, bushes and flowers

More Streetlights

More zebra crossings

Ramps for people with disabilities

Community gardens

More green paths

More e-bikes

Climbing walls

Sport Facilities

2-3 years

Better playground equipment

More playgrounds for all kids

Skateparks

Paths for disabled people

More shops

More sports pitches

More dog waste bins

Recycling facilities

Community pool

More healthcare centres

More lakes

4+ years

Safer school area

A community centre

More benches

Build a community farm

Greener school grounds

Playground in school yard

Build a homeless shelter

Build dog shelters

Build a museum

Ton Yr Ywen Primary School: Priorities

Now

Slower cars

More litter picking and bins

More opportunity for cycling and scooting

More community activities

2-3 years

More trees and plants

Build more homes for all

Tree houses

More play areas

Soft play spaces

4+ years

Activity centre for people with disabilities

Better play equipment

More clubs and activities for children

A shopping centre

More food stalls / food shops / coffee shops

More theatres

Re-designing for future neighbourhoods

Following prioritisation, the children and young people chose one feature to re-design for their future neighbourhood. They used model making and drawings to show what their idea would look like. Below are some examples of the different designs.

A. Watkins Square Park

One clear priority was **playparks**. One of the groups chose Watkins Square Park, a small park which is nearby their houses, to re-design. They mentioned that the existing park had a safety problem, and they felt there was antisocial behaviours in this park.

They designed playgrounds for younger and older children with more trees in the park. They wanted the park to offer more play opportunities and equipment for them, with basketball hoops, football goal, climbing walls, swings and slide. One of the children commented:

"This is going to help younger children because they can go out and freely enjoy playing and there will also be something for older children in the park."

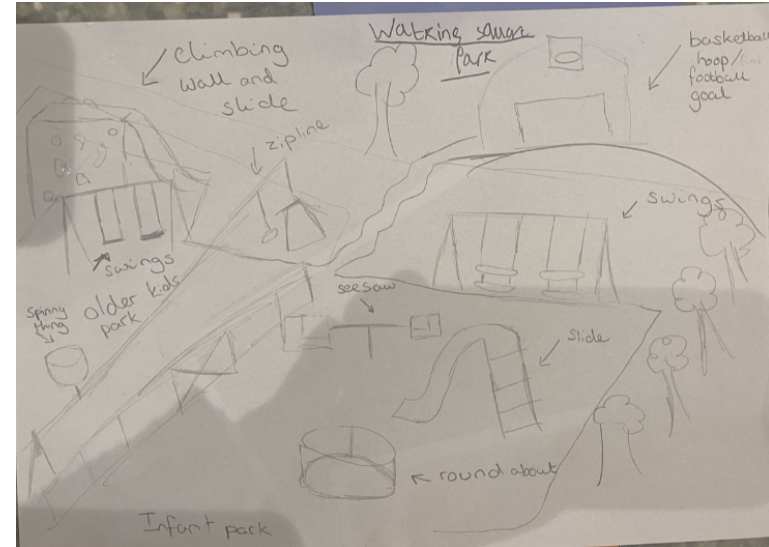


Figure 1: The children redesigned Watkins Square Park for children of different ages



Figure 2: Their model shows different play equipment in the park, including swings, a slide, see-saw and roundabout

B. Hub Community Centre

A **community centre** was a longer-term priority for children. One group re-designed a “hub” (community centre) nearby the Tax Office on the Ty-Glass Road. This site was a particular focus for children and young people in this area, who wanted to see it redeveloped.

They focussed on people with both **physical and learning disabilities** – another key priority. They designed a wheelchair ramp at the entrance and a ‘simulation wall’ for all. They wanted to provide more opportunities for people who cannot easily go to all the existing places (such as play parks) in the neighbourhood. They said of their design:

“This would be good to provide everyone a welcoming place no matter their disadvantages.”



Figure 3: A community centre for people with disabilities near the Tax Office

C. 3G Pitch for All

Sport facilities were another longer-term priority. One group re-designed the Tax Office site as a 3G pitch (artificial grass pitch) with a shelter and seating areas so that children and young people had a quality space to play football in the local area.

They mentioned that this kind of pitch, with sheltered space to hang out and watch, will allow young people to be sociable with their friends outdoors. They designed their pitch so it would be suitable for everyone, including having a wheelchair ramp for easy access.



Figure 4: The children redesigned a 3G pitch for all.

D. Playgrounds for Older Children

Several of the children and young people mentioned that most of the parks in the Llanishen area are for younger children, and there are few places suitable for older children.

They designed a **playground for older children** who are between 9-15 years old, but also for all ages. They considered an eco-friendly design approach with different activities such as monkey bars, see-saw, swing, zipline, spinning chair, a 'really tall' climbing frame, trampoline, and so on. They added bins, a seating area, and a picnic bench.



Figure 5: A new playground for older children.

Another group also focused their redesigned area on the old Tax Office by proposing a new playground for all ages, including adults. The playground has swings, slides, spinning ring, balance beam, stepping stones, and so on. They said of their design:

"Parks are not just for young children, they can be for anyone."



Figure 6: A new playground for all ages.

E. Greener Parks

Increasing greenery was an important short-term priority. Several children across the groups mentioned the need for more trees, bushes, and different type of plants in existing parks in their neighbourhood. Two groups remodelled their local parks, adding more trees, bushes, wooded areas, and made provision for dealing with litter problems in these spaces by adding bins. They highlighted these areas can be completed in the medium term.



Figure 7: Two models of greener parks.

F. Better Playparks for Younger Children

Several groups redesigned playgrounds for younger children, since many felt there was not enough quality playparks nearby. One example, below, included a soft play area, zip wire, tunnel and bins.

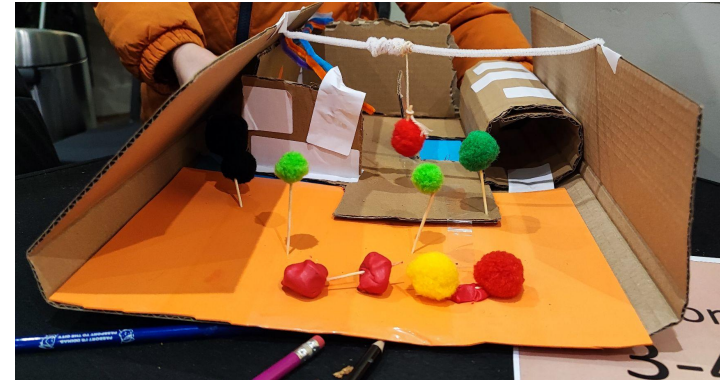


Figure 8: A playground for younger children.

G. Dog-Friendly Restaurant

Many groups felt that there were not enough cafes and restaurants that were welcome for young people and children. One group designed a dog friendly restaurant for children and families.

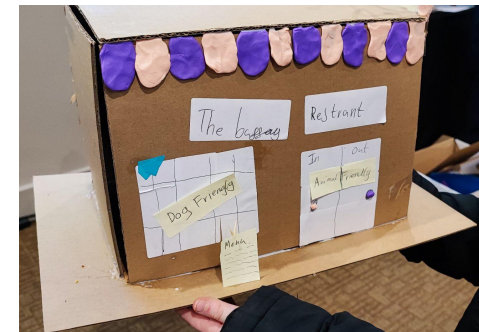


Figure 9: A new dog friendly restaurant in the neighbourhood.

What should happen next?

The children and young people from Llanishen need help from a whole range of people to make their plans happen. The neighbourhood plan presented above can act as a blueprint for councillors, planners and designers to:

- A. **Locate** what children and young people want where in their wider neighbourhood of Llanishen.
- B. Understand children and young people's **priorities**, that can be applied across the neighbourhood (e.g. safer and cleaner streets, greener spaces, inclusive access).
- C. See how children and young people would **re-design spaces** when given the opportunity – showing more precisely what they want in spaces like parks. For example, the old tax office was a space children wanted to help re-design, and a small-scale co-design process could help them achieve that.

Children and young people need these people to help them put this plan into action:

- Local councillors to represent their ideas.
- Those who work for Cardiff City Council who manage streets, parks and community spaces.
- Planners and designers who work for the council.
- Local youth services and charities who can help make some ideas happen.
- Other services, including mental health and wellbeing services.
- Businesses in the area, such as shops, cafes, and restaurants, to make their spaces more child- and youth-friendly.

The limits of this project

This project and the report have some important limitations:

- The outputs, like maps and models, were co-produced with children, and the researchers wrote this report based on them. As adults we might mis-interpret children – reinforcing the need to keep co-producing with children beyond these plans.
- We reached a lot of children and young people– but there are many more in Llanishen who did not participate who might have different opinions and want their voices heard.
- These methods allow children to express their ideas in some ways, but not others. We encourage adults with responsibility to use varied creative methods to allow children and young people to express their ideas.

Thank You!

A whole range of people and organisations helped to make this **co-created plan** possible. Thank you to:

- All the children and young people who took part in their schools and at the workshop!
- Teachers and helpers at the participating schools: Llanishen High School; Bryn Celyn Primary School; Llysfaen Primary School; Springwood Primary School; Ton Yr Ywen Primary School.
- The Child Friendly Cardiff Team.
- The Curriculum Team of Cardiff Council.
- The Cardiff University Team: Tom, Matluba, Neil and Dilara.

The Cardiff University Team

The Cardiff University team who co-created this plan with children and young people from Llanishen are:



Tom Smith



Matluba Khan



Neil Harris



Dilara Yaratgan

They are all interested in co-creating places as geographers, urban designers, planners and architects.

If you want to know more about this plan or how it was made, please feel free to contact Tom at:

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Find out more about other children and young people's neighbourhood plans, and a toolkit for using these methods:



[Grangetown to Grown Up in – Children and Young people's plan](#)
[Toolkit: Co-creating a neighbourhood plan](#)