



Schools Programme
Record of Drop in session
Glan yr Afon Primary School – Tuesday 18 September 2018



Present: Brett Andrewartha (SOP Team Manger), Rosalie Phillips (SOP Project Officer) and Shirley Kaseras (SOP Project Officer)

Please note: The following is not a transcript but a contemporaneous note of the meeting.

No	Heading	Action
	<p>The session was attended by a number of parents/grandparents of children currently at the school with the following points raised.</p> <p>What is going to happen to the site if the school closes? Officers advised that in the event of the school closing, consideration would be given to options for the site at that stage. The site sits within the floodplain and the options for development are limited.</p> <p>Why is the Council telling everyone that the school is closing? Officers set out that the Council is consulting on a proposal to close the school and is seeking the views of a wide range of people. At the school to get feedback from parents however at the end of the process the decision may be to close the school.</p> <p>What will happen if St Cadoc's RC Primary School does not expand? Officers advised that any proposal to expand St Cadoc's RC Primary would be a matter for the Governing Body of the School and would be subject to public consultation. If the decision was taken for St Cadoc's to remain at its current size, the Council would need to look at admission arrangements including catchment areas across the area.</p> <p>What are the options for those who did not wish their child to attend a faith school (namely St Cadoc's RC Primary School or St Mellons (CiW) Primary School given that there won't be sufficient places at the local community schools of Pen y Bryn or Bryn Hafod. Officers advised that there are places available in other community schools and the expectation was that these would be taken up in the first instance followed by available alternatives.</p> <p>What about the additional cost to parents? The Council is depriving children further. Officers set out the reasons behind the proposal. The low number of pupils at the school limits the level of funding available to the school and impacts on the school buildings, staffing, standards and outcomes for children.</p>	

	<p>The school has been categorised as amber by the CSC and continues to receive a significant level of support.</p> <p>How will transferring children from a class of 20 to a class of 60 help? Officers advised that if children were to transfer to other schools the maximum class size would be 30.</p> <p>There was concern that the next nearest community school was too far away to make walking to school practicably possible and not everyone has access to a vehicle. It was estimated by the parents that it could take them circa 45 minutes per trip. Officers noted the point.</p> <p>The logistical issues of attending several schools further away would be compounded as there is currently a level of support provided locally amongst parents in relation to the school commute. Officers noted the point.</p>	
	<p>There were concerns that siblings would not be offered places at the same school and parents queried whether their children would have priority for admission to alternative schools. Officer advised that any application to attend an alternative school would be processed in line with current admissions criteria.</p> <p>There were concerns about the road infrastructure and traffic issues along Ball Road and the impact that removing the school crossing patrol personnel employed by the school would have on this area. Officers noted the point.</p> <p>The community felt that the school had not had adequate support to enable them to build a good reputation which has contributed to the low numbers applying for the school. It was felt that this had been compounded by the numerous changes in leadership. Officers noted the point.</p> <p>Parents felt that the children are being well catered for by the staff at the school and that they are getting a good standard of education. It was felt that by being educated in a smaller school, the staff have good relationships with the children and a good understanding of the children's individual needs. There was a worry that the children's progress could regress if they had to move to a new environment away from their friends.</p>	

	<p>Officers advised that there would be a meeting with pupils to record their views which would form part of the report to Cabinet.</p> <p>Parents were unhappy about having to purchase new school uniform if children have to move school, especially if this was only for a year.</p> <p>Officer advised that under previous school organisation proposals funding had been made available to help with this but not in a position to confirm this at present.</p> <p>It was suggested that Pen y Bryn Primary School which shares facilities with St Mellons CiW Primary School and Bryn Hafod Primary School could be closed and moved to a larger site along with Glan yr Afon Primary School to form a new primary school to serve the area.</p> <p>Officers advised that there were no proposals relating to Pen y Bryn or Bryn Hafod Primary Schools and the point was noted.</p> <p>It was suggested that the onsite Flying Start accommodation could be amalgamated with a smaller Glan yr Afon Primary School as part of a phased closure. A closure over a longer period e.g. three years would be more favourable to the community than the proposed closure at 31 August 2019 as it would allow parents more time to apply for places elsewhere.</p> <p>Officers noted the point.</p> <p>Parents queried what would happen in the event of there being more children than expected from housing developments in the local area.</p> <p>Officers advised that developments are assessed on the basis of the number of children likely to result from these developments.</p> <p>Parents queried why regeneration projects were being afforded and new schools were being built if proposing to close Glan yr Afon.</p> <p>Officers noted the point</p> <p>Parents queried what would happen in the event that they refused places at an alternative school.</p> <p>Offices advised that all options should be considered. Admissions to St Cadoc's are managed by the school.</p> <p>It was suggested that parents would opt to home school their children.</p> <p>Officers advised that parents had the right to do so however this is not supported and the advice is that children are better off within a school. The number one priority is to support children.</p>	
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<p>Parents queried whether in cases where children would be required to travel a bus pass would be provided. Officers advised that if parents made a decision to take up a school place out of the area and places were available within two miles, transport costs would not be met. Individual circumstances would be discussed with parents.</p> <p>Parents queried what the chances were of the school closing. Officers advised that this was a consultation and wanted as many views as possible. No decision has been made.</p> <p>Parents queried how the criticism of staff can be justified? Offices advised that the information in the consultation document regarding standards had been taken from Estyn and CSC.</p> <p>Parents queried whether children with SEN would have the same 1:1 support at another school. Officers advised that support would be provided in-line with any statement of need.</p> <p>Parents queried why additional ALN units are not established at the school. Officers advised than SEN provision is city wide and the funding allocated is for the children in the unit only.</p> <p>The view that St Cadoc's should only take in catholic children was expressed. Officer advised that c50% of the children at St Cadoc's were not baptised catholic but that parent had chosen to send their children to the school.</p> <p>Parents felt that other schools had had different support; children had suffered; the school had had a series of different Headteachers during a period of upheaval for staff who have done their best for the children. Officers outlined the support available to schools. The school has been supported as a Red school (the highest level of support) in recognition of the challenges. Estyn identified the most important issues and the school has been supported to make progress however the pace of change has been slow. Schools in other area of Cardiff facing similar challenges are performing better e.g. Herbert Thompson.</p> <p>Parents queried how they can help the school to improve. Officers advised that parents helping a school is always a positive thing. Falling numbers impact on the ability of schools to sustain standards; low pupils number compound difficulties.</p>	
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	<p>Parents expressed the view that they were fighting a losing cause. Officers advised that they were at the school to explain the process. This is a consultation and no decision had been made.</p> <p>It was suggested that half of the building be closed off and children accommodated in the infant buildings. Officers noted the point.</p> <p>Officers advised that the views expressed would be reported to Cabinet, thanked those present and the drop in session closed.</p>	
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Present: Beverly Bailey (SOP Project Manger), Rosalie Phillips (SOP Project Officer) and Ian Warburton (SOP Project Officer)

Please note: The following is not a transcript but a contemporaneous note of the meeting.

No	Heading	Action
1	<p>A parent of a child currently in Y4 at the school attended the session. He did believe the proposal to close the school was fair and expressed concern about the impact on children who would be split up from their friends, staff who would lose their jobs and parents who would have to find new school places for their children further away which was not being considered.</p> <p>He advised that his family had not applied for a place at St Cadoc's as they had not wanted a catholic education and were still of the same view.</p> <p>He felt that a decision to close the school had already been made and was concerned that there would not be sufficient places available at other schools in the area with the potential for siblings to be split up.</p> <p>He asked what would happen to children with additional learning needs as there are a significant number of children at the school with needs.</p> <p>The alternative schools are a significant walk from Glan yr Afon and there is likely to be issues with attendance and lateness as parents struggle to get children to school.</p> <p>He queried why the Council is not investing in the school?</p> <p>Officers explained the reasons for the proposed closure, assured the parent that no decision had been made at this point, provided details of the remaining drop in sessions and public meeting and outlined the next stages.</p>	



**Schools Programme
Record of Drop In Session
Glan Yr Afon Primary School – Tuesday 9th October 2018
10am-12pm**



Present:

Michele Duddridge Hossain (Operational Manager, SOAP)

Rachel Burgess-Willis (Project Officer, SOAP)

Jo Phillips (Project Officer, SOAP)

Please note: The following is not a transcript but a contemporaneous note of the meeting.

No	Heading	Action
	<p>9 people in total attended the Drop In session:</p> <p>1 parent:</p> <p>Parent with English as an additional language (EAL) spoke to MDH regarding explanation of the proposal and what consequences would be.</p> <p>MDH explained that no decision had been made, that it is still a proposal at this stage and that the Council are seeking views from the community and other stakeholders.</p> <p>MDH assisted parent to fill in the form, writing down his words & then reading back to ensure he understood. Asked if he understood the reasons for the proposal – yes.</p> <p>Parent explained that Glan Yr Afon help his family to understand letters etc and provide them with support. They chose Glan Yr Afon as it is close to their home and neither he or his wife drive. Children in Reception, year 1 and a pre-nursery child attending the Flying Start provision on the school site. Concerned that his family may have to move schools and lose the support network of the school. Transport cost concerns as on very low income.</p> <p>Group of 5 parents:</p> <p>MDH explained process. Cabinet decision and then revised proposal or proceeding to statutory notice. MDH explained what “mitigation” means e.g. means of providing free transport to everyone – stressed this was not going to happen but was an example.</p> <p>1 parent: Spoke to JP – help filling in form</p> <p>1 parent: Spoke to RBW – added additional info to her response</p> <p>1 parent: Spoke to MDH who assisted with filling in form. Little or no English (Syrian refugee) so was assisted by another EAL</p>	



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