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CORRESPONDENCE FOLLOWING THE COMMITTEE MEETING

Committee CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date and Time of Meeting TUESDAY, 15 JUNE 2021, 4.30 PM

Please find below correspondence sent by the Committee Chair following the meeting, together with any responses received.

For any further details, please contact scrutinyviewpoints@cardiff.gov.uk

- 7 **Schools Organisation Planning: Primary School Places to serve Cathays and parts of Gabalfa, Heath, Llandaff North and Plasnewydd** (*Pages 3 - 14*)

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**SWYDDFA'R DIRPRWY ARWEINYDD
DEPUTY LEADER'S OFFICE**

Fy Nghyf / My Ref: CM45931

Eich Nghyf / Your Ref:

Dyddiad / Date: 2 July 2021

Cllr Lee Bridgeman
C/O Members Services
County Hall
Atlantic Wharf
Cardiff
CF10 4UW

Annwyl / Dear Lee

Scrutiny - Sop Proposals

Thank you for your letter following the meeting on Tuesday 15th June.

I appreciate the questions raised by the Children and Young People's Committee and welcome suggestions that the Council should provide the Committee a clear picture of the long term strategic planning, but this will need to be done in a consistent way that doesn't apply a significant burden on Officers.

I suggest that an annual SOP update report/ presentation is presented in the Autumn Term each year, so the Committee can see latest trends and respective plans. I also agree the Committee should be involved in the development of larger policies when brought forward. Specifically, the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan is being drafted with Welsh Education Forum partners. Workshops are due to be held in the first half of July with the draft plan to be prepared by the end of the summer holiday period. In September, the draft will be shared with members of the Committee for discussion and further input to ensure that the final plan submitted it both informed by all as appropriate for Cardiff and its citizens.

In addition to policies I also think that it is important to update the Committee as projects progress. As you know, the Children and Young People's Committee reviews the School Organisation approval processes that are in place early in scheme development and designs/ plans are later presented to the Planning Committee, in accordance with statutory processes. Whilst the annual report will provide an update of project progress, I do think that school visions could be presented to the Children and Young People's Committee.

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GWEITHIO DROS GAERDYDD, GWEITHIO DROSOCH CHI

Mae'r Cyngor yn croesawu gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg, Saesneg neu'n ddwyieithog. Byddwn yn cyfathrebu â chi yn ôl eich dewis, dim ond i chi roi gwybod i ni pa un sydd well gennych. Ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

WORKING FOR CARDIFF, WORKING FOR YOU

The Council welcomes correspondence in Welsh, English or bilingually. We will ensure that we communicate with you in the language of your choice, as long as you let us know which you prefer. Corresponding in Welsh will not lead to delay.



In your letter also you raise a number of specific points that I have responded to below:

Catchment Review

To be completed when we have confirmed the capacity is in the system consistent with projected need and progression of the 21st Century Schools Programme.

Consultation and Engagement

With regard to the points specific to engagement and consultation with stakeholders on School Organisation Proposals, the School Organisation Code sets out that when conducting a consultation, it is explicit about who is to be included as set out in the excerpt from Section 3 of the code below:

‘Those bringing forward statutory proposals must publish a consultation document in hard copy and electronically on their website or that of the relevant local authority. Hard copies must be available on request. Consideration should be given to publishing in other formats where accessibility might otherwise be an issue.

The following must be advised by letter or email of the availability of the consultation document and that recipients can, if they wish, obtain a hard copy of the consultation document on request:

- *Parents (and where possible prospective parents) carers and guardians, and staff members of schools affected by the proposals; in the case of proposals affecting secondary provision, parents of pupils attending primary schools from which pupils normally transfer to that secondary school;*
- *the maintaining or proposed maintaining authority for any school likely to be affected by the proposals; any other local authority (including those in England, where appropriate) likely to be affected - including in the case of dedicated SEN provision any authority placing or likely to place pupils with SEN in it;*
- *the Church in Wales and Roman Catholic Diocesan Authority for the area in which any school likely to be affected is located;*
- *any other appropriate religious body for any school likely to be affected by the proposals;*
- *the governing body of any school which is the subject of the proposals;*
- *the governing body of other schools which the proposer consider are likely to be affected by the proposals;*
- *the Welsh Ministers*;*
- *Constituency and Regional Assembly Members (AMs) and Members of Parliament (MPs) representing the area served by/intended to be served by any school which is the subject of the proposals;*
- *Estyn;*
- *teaching and staff trade unions representing teachers and other staff at any school which is the subject of the proposals;*
- *the relevant Regional Education Consortium;*
- *the Police and Crime Commissioner for the area served by/intended to be served by any school which is the subject of the proposals;*
- *any community or town council for the area served by/ intended to be served by any school which is the subject of the proposals;*

- *in the case of proposals affecting nursery provision any independent or voluntary providers who may be affected including Mudiad Meithrin;*
- *in the case of proposals affecting nursery provision, the Children and Young People's Partnership and/or the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnerships where present;*
- *in the case of proposals affecting SEN provision, any relevant health or third sector bodies with an interest;*
- *in the case of proposals affecting secondary provision, any further education institutions serving the area of the school; and*
- *in the case of proposals affecting Welsh language provision, the Welsh Language Commissioner'.*

Furthermore there are specific requirements to ensuring that Children and Young People which include:

'Proposers must also make suitable arrangements to consult with pupils of any affected school (or part of a school in the case of provision reserved for children with SEN) and, where possible, with children and young people who are likely to attend those schools.

As a minimum, this must include consultation with the school councils of the affected schools, but should also include consultation with individual learners where this is appropriate and practicable.

Governing bodies must help facilitate this aspect of the consultation. The information given to children and young people must be presented in such a way that it is relevant to their age and level of likely understanding and allows them to reach an informed opinion'.

In Cardiff we are keen to involve as many stakeholders as possible and in addition to meeting our statutory obligations as set out above, we routinely seek to consult with the wider public through the promotion of our consultations in local media and through targeted social media posts. We also consistently seek to ensure that there are opportunities for stakeholders to engage directly with officers to enable questions to be asked and responses given.

In the past we have implemented a range of methods where we have faced challenges engaging with some stakeholders through traditional methods. Amongst others, these have included tapping into local networks known by local Councillors, community organisations and schools. This has resulted in officers delivering bespoke consultation opportunities and attending existing forums/sessions where those that have traditionally been hardest to reach already trust the setting and organisation. This has ranged from supporting women ESOL classes and girls groups in Butetown to attending the two main traveller sites in Cardiff to speak directly with individuals willing to share their views along with trusted members of Traveller Education staff.

Normally our engagement activities involve face to face meetings and drop in sessions but during the pandemic this has taken the form of online webinars and individual Teams appointments or phone calls in line with the individual's requests.

Given the recent relaxing of aspects of the Covid distancing we have been offering face to face opportunities for the public to meet with officers and senior representatives of the schools outdoors where possible for example as part of the current public engagement on the redevelopment of Willows High School. In person workshops were also provided to those primary schools that were comfortable officers attendance on site could be accommodated within their Covid Risk Assessments bespoke to each venue.

Going forward we are keen to explore whether the use of further digital software such as the online exhibition room currently being used for the LDP consultation along with face to face opportunities designed to suit the different locations brings together a wider range of different ways to contact us that suit a wider audience. This type of format provides written information along with videos and pictures to support understanding. This combination would give us a greater range of tools in the event we are required to minimise or cease face to face gatherings as well as supplementing the normal practice which may not always fit in with individual's family/work routines.

We are also exploring the potential to use software such as Minecraft or similar to enable the views of our children and young people to be included in the visions and building designs of the future alongside our more conventional facilitated workshops. We are keen to understand the priorities for our younger citizens both in terms of school organisation as a whole and for each scheme. Whilst we have established ways to interact with both secondary and primary schools (including special school provision) which are well received by the pupils and staff we are keen to build on our interaction to build in more creative platforms and embrace the ways young people like to interact with others to inform our programme.

Cathays High School Proposal

Cardiff employs a robust projection methodology for planning school places which takes account of NHS GP registration data and school census data (PLASC) submitted by and verified by all Cardiff schools. As projections can only take account of historic and current information the Council also identifies trends within projections, and analyses school preference data and other contextual information to produce forecasts on a city wide basis and in each locality.

Data analysis allows projections to be prepared based on localised patterns at primary school catchment area level, by secondary school catchment area and on a city-wide basis. Each of these provide differing contextual information to inform the forecasting on the number of places that may be needed to meet the requirements of each area and of Cardiff as a whole. Specialist provision is considered on a city-wide basis.

Members can be assured that:

- The analysis is (set out in table 5) is robust and builds in the opportunity to future proof a high quality central education asset which is to the benefits of the city regardless of any future change to demographics or preferences as it is able to support surrounding catchments owing to its position on the central transport networks. Based on the various projections there is a sustainable need of 8 forms of entry for a school in this location for the foreseeable future. Beyond this, the issue is not whether it is appropriate to have a school in this location at 8FE but how the schools around it can/may change, including how the city's provision evolves as a response to Cymraeg 2050.

- Traffic and Transport Analysis – officers shall ensure Members have sight of the output of this analysis as soon as it is available.
- Funding – officers shall ensure that assurances regarding the details associated with funding for this proposal be made available at the earliest opportunity.

Primary Schools Proposal

Members can be assured that the revised Primary Schools proposal will include:

- Effective modelling, detailed projections and long-term strategy with regard to any future proposals for this area; and
- Effective, meaningful and detailed engagement and consultation of any new proposals brought forward.

Members Recommendations

The recommendations in relation to greater visibility and opportunities to scrutinise specific aspects relating to projections and populations along with how this translates to and influences school sizes, catchment areas and investment priorities are noted.

Following consideration as to the best way to ensure comprehensive information in a manageable format that is routinely planned in each year, it is proposed that officers prepare an annual report to be shared in the Autumn Term. This will improve the two way sharing of information and enable robust scrutiny of the data by members which will support an enhanced understanding of the issues presenting across the city along with progress and impact in the preceding year.

Yn gywir / Yours sincerely



Councillor / Cynghorydd Sarah Merry
Deputy Leader / Dirprwy Arweinydd
Cabinet Member for Education, Employment & Skills
Aelod Cabinet Dros Addysg, Cyflogaeth a Sgiliau

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Date: 17 June 2021

My Ref: SS/CYP/SOPProposals



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Councillor Sarah Merry
Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Education, Employment & Skills
County Hall
Atlantic Wharf
CARDIFF
CF10 4UW

Dear Sarah,

CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 15 JUNE 2021 – SCHOOL ORGANISATION PLANNING PROPOSALS

Please accept my thanks on behalf of the Committee for attending the Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee to facilitate the consideration of Cabinet proposals relating to Cathays High School and Primary School places to serve Cathays and parts of Gabalfa, Heath, Llandaff North and Plasnewydd. Please also pass on our thanks to Mel Godfrey, Richard Portas and Brett Andrewartha. The comments, observations and recommendations below were captured during the Committee's discussion at the Way Forward.

General Comments

The Committee acknowledged that, for both proposals, their stages in the process resulted in a lack of detail in what information is currently available. We feel that we need to be assured that when the detail is being developed, we are given an appropriate opportunity to scrutinise this and have the information we need to be able to support and challenge them as appropriate.

This Committee agreed at this meeting to commence its work programming for the current municipal year, and to that end, we **recommend** that we work with yourself and officers in drawing up a comprehensive programme of sessions on both the 21st Century Schools Programme and other School Organisation proposals, to enable us to work with you in developments going forward. This may present opportunities for us to work with you in a more informal capacity and for us to be involved in developments at an earlier stage than just pre-decision scrutiny. The knowledge and experience of CYPSC Members on this issue could provide further opportunities to

support yourself and officers in developing this process. The following should form part of this work.

Modelling and long-term strategic planning

Members asked a number of questions about the robustness of some of the modelling and capacity analysis. We also asked questions relating to other schools in Band B, population changes over the next decade and whether the proposed capacity proposals are the right ones.

We welcomed the responses from officers in terms of population projections and are pleased that this work is being undertaken. However, we feel that the Committee needs a mechanism developed for us to monitor population projections over the period ahead, and that this mechanism allow us to monitor it in more detail, including identifying different needs for each ward or area of the city (to be agreed with you), breakdown in demographic etc.

Members agreed that along with monitoring population projections, we would also wish to gain a better view on agreed and proposed developments that are taking place across the City and the impact these may have on demand for school places. We therefore request that our work link closer with Planning and the LDP as part of this work.

Members welcomed the news that the Welsh Medium Education Strategic Plan is being developed over the coming months, and wish to highlight again that Members of this Scrutiny Committee are included in the consultation process and have sight of the draft Plan as soon as it's available. You have committed to provide us with this in your letter dated 1 April 2021.

Whilst Members acknowledged that decisions on Band B schools had been agreed by Cabinet in 2017, we discussed the decision-making process, reasoning behind proposals and how decisions were made. Whilst we will continue to support and challenge Band B proposals, we feel that we need to have greater input in the development of future proposals (particularly Band C), and should you agree to our recommendation above, that this will be key part of our work going forward.

Catchment Review

We have previously recommended that a Catchment Review be undertaken and you have committed to provide us with notification of this.

We wish to reiterate our recommendation for a city-wide review to be carried out at the earliest opportunity, as this will be critical with future planning, particularly in relation to Band C.

Consultation and Engagement

Whilst the Committee welcomed the raft of Appendices attached to the Cabinet report arising from the consultations undertaken on both schools, there was acknowledgement that there were some gaps and opportunities missed in this process.

Members stated that meaningful and comprehensive consultation and engagement with a wide range of stakeholders should be the driving force behind these proposals, and noted the change in direction following feedback arising from the primary school consultation also considered at this meeting.

Whilst we acknowledge your previous response on this issue in your letter dated 1 April 2021, and that the consultation on Cathays HS followed the Welsh Government SOP Code and included our suggestions made at that time, Members agreed that further engagement needs to be built into consultation processes on school proposals and this should be wide ranging, meaningful and go further than statutory requirements. This should include:

- Consultation with the wider school community that will be affected by the proposal;
- Other schools that could potentially be affected by the proposal, so they are given the opportunity to comment on issues such as impact on intake within their own schools; and
- Wider Stakeholder Groups affected by the proposal

Given that further consultation will need to be undertaken when the design brief becomes more detailed and heads into the statutory stage, we request that you provide us with further information on how this will be done and how you will improve the process.

In relation to the specific proposals, we wish to make the following comments:

21st Century Schools, Band B: Expansion and Redevelopment of Cathays High School

Scale of Proposal

Members noted responses in relation to the changes in proposals highlighted in your statement; timelines for the Bay developments and those at the Cathays site; green space; sustainability of the site; and safety and security proposals

Linked to issues already highlighted, Members asked about the proposed increase in capacity to 8 forms of entry. Members considered the implications in relation to the fact that 60% of pupils come from outside of the catchment area, and the school is therefore subject to the ebb and flow of school numbers in other schools. With this in mind, Members request your views on how robust the analysis is (set out in table 5) and whether there is a sustainable need of 8 forms of entry for the foreseeable

future. We would also be interested in whether those families outside of the catchment were also consulted.

Traffic and Transport Analysis

Members noted that a traffic and transport analysis would be undertaken later in the development stages – at planning stage. We therefore request that we have sight of the output of this analysis as soon as it is available.

Funding of the Proposal

Members remain cautious about the funding proposals and are committed to ensuring that funding is closely monitored as further details become available. We need to be assured that funding proposals on this scale are detailed and costed accordingly and we are seeking full openness and co-operation with yourself and officers on this issue. We need to be able to have access to this information and be able to monitor:

- Risks of budget escalation;
- How the capital costs outside of the MIM are going to be met;
- Revenue implications;
- Slippage and impact into the next iteration of the 21st Centuries School Programme.

We would welcome your assurances on this issue.

School Organisation Planning: Primary School Places to serve Cathays and Parts of Gabalfa, Heath, Llandaff North and Plasnewydd

Members acknowledged the withdrawal of proposals and will welcome a revised proposal in due course, and indication of timelines of when this is likely to happen would be welcomed. We would like to reiterate the need to carefully consider some of our proposals set out in this letter, including:

- Effective modelling, detailed projections and long-term strategy in planning for this proposal; and
- Effective, meaningful and detailed engagement and consultation of the new proposals.

To recap, the Committee **is requesting**:

Welsh Medium Education Strategic Plan – agree that Members of this Scrutiny Committee are included in the consultation process and have sight of the draft Plan as soon as it's available.

Consultation and Engagement – your views on improvements to the current consultation and engagement process, which should include:

- Consultation with the wider school community that will be affected by the proposal;
- Other schools that could potentially be affected by the proposal, so they are given the opportunity to comment on issues such as impact on intake within their own schools; and
- Wider Stakeholder Groups affected by the proposal

Consultation and Engagement - Further information on how you will consult on school proposals when the design brief becomes more detailed and enters into the statutory stage and how you will improve the process.

Cathays High School Proposal

Scale of Proposal - Members request your views on how robust the analysis is (set out in table 5) and whether there is a sustainable need of 8 forms of entry for the foreseeable future.

Traffic and Transport Analysis - request that we have sight of the output of this analysis as soon as it is available.

Funding – continued assurances that details funding for this proposal be made available at the earliest opportunity.

Primary Schools Proposal

Assurance that the revised Primary Schools proposal will include:

Effective modelling, detailed projections and long-term strategy in planning for this proposal; and

- Effective, meaningful and detailed engagement and consultation of the new proposals.

The Committee is **recommending** and will formally monitor:

That a comprehensive programme of sessions on both the 21st Century Schools Programme and other School Organisation proposals be developed and agreed to enable CYPSC to work with Cabinet and officers in developments going forward. This work be both formal and informal. The remit of this work should include:

- Modelling and long-term strategic planning;
- Population Projections, demographics and detailed analysis of need in different areas of the city;
- Catchment Review;
- Development of Band C;
- Improvements in consultation and engagement processes;
- Financial monitoring; and
- Linking with Planning and LDP developments to inform future proposals

Once again, on behalf of the Committee, please pass my sincere thanks to all who attended Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee. I look forward to a response.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'L. BRIDGEMAN', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

COUNCILLOR LEE BRIDGEMAN

Chairperson – Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

CC: CYPSC Members

Melanie Godfrey, Director of Education & Lifelong Learning

Richard Portas, Programme Director for the School Organisation Programme

Brett Andrewartha, School Organisation Programme Planning Manager

Gary Jones, Head of Democratic Services

Joanne Watkins, Cabinet Officer Manager

Melanie Jackson, PA to the Deputy Leader

Helen Eager, PA to the Director of Education & Lifelong Learning