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CORRESPONDENCE FOLLOWING THE COMMITTEE MEETING

Committee CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date and Time of Meeting TUESDAY, 17 OCTOBER 2023, 4.30 PM

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

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

9 **Correspondence following Committee Meeting**(Pages 3 - 14)

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Date: 18 October 2023

My Ref: CYP/SOP_CathaysPrimaries_Oct23



County Hall
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Councillor Huw Thomas
Leader of the Council
County Hall
Atlantic Wharf
CARDIFF
CF10 4UW

Dear Huw,

**CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 17 OCTOBER 2023 -
SCHOOL ORGANISATION PLANNING: PRIMARY SCHOOL PLACES TO SERVE
CATHAYS AND PARTS OF GABALFA, HEATH, LLANDAFF NORTH AND
PLASNEWYDD**

Please accept my thanks on behalf of the Committee for attending the Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee to provide us with the opportunity to consider the draft report on School Organisation Planning: Primary School Places to serve Cathays and parts of Gabalfa, Heath, Llandaff North and Plasnewydd, prior to Cabinet on the 19 October 2023. Please also pass on our thanks to Melanie Godfrey; Richard Portas; Michele Duddridge-Friedl; and Brett Andrewartha.

The comments, observations and recommendations below were captured during the Committee's discussion at the Way Forward.

The committee commends the report to Cabinet and supports the recommendations contained within it. Other comments and observations are as follows:

General comments

We asked about whether the proposal gave a good balance of Welsh and English medium provision and were satisfied with the response. We also asked whether the Cathays primaries consultation had highlighted need elsewhere; and whether you were confident about capacity of Welsh medium places for the future.

We were informed that the SOP Strategy would provide further details of this information, and this is currently being developed. We would therefore **request** you provide details of when the SOP Strategy will be available for this committee to review, prior to implementation. The committee would welcome input into the draft strategy (through policy development work, rather than pre-decision scrutiny) and would welcome your thoughts on this. The SOP Task & Finish Group could provide a positive contribution to the development of the Strategy away from formal committee. If agreeable, please provide some indicative timelines of when the Group could contribute to the development of the Strategy and we will timetable accordingly. As the SOP Strategy also featured in the “Fairwater Campus” Agenda item at this meeting, we will also be seeking assurances from Councillor Merry on this proposal.

Communication

Members asked a number of questions relating to communications and ensuring that conveying Option 1 to parents and wider stakeholders is done effectively. Members also suggested that sharing information on equal provision (particularly in relation to funding) between Welsh medium and English medium provision be shared, to ensure that all parties are clear on this issue. Members stated that, given the results of the consultation suggested a potential “option 4”, the rationale behind not considering this option also be included in communication with stakeholders.

Members felt that it was critical that parents, staff and wider stakeholders are given clear, consistent messaging to encourage early buy-in to Option 1 and encourage a smooth transition to new arrangements. We asked around staff displacement as a result of the proposals, and again, we felt it critical that this is handled sensitively.

To this end, Members **request** that the development of an effective, informative communications strategy be explored and reported back to this committee. A response on whether the SOP Team will be developing such a strategy (which should include clear information regarding the rationale for the decision; FAQs using consultation responses as examples etc.) should be included in the response to this letter.

Financial Implications and Challenges

Members asked a range of questions on finance and viability of the Cathays Primaries proposal. We asked about costs in relation to renovation of current buildings; the implications and challenges of writing off deficit budgets in two of the schools; and whether there were any financial implications in relation to the swap in

diocese. Whilst we were satisfied with the responses, we would like to be assured that these challenges are manageable, so would **request** some further narrative from yourself in terms of this.

To **recap**, we are requesting:

1. You provide details of when it is likely that the SOP Strategy will be available for this committee to review, prior to implementation; and seek agreement that the SOP Task & Finish Group be included in a policy development role. If agreeable, please provide some indicative timelines of when the Group could contribute to the development of the Strategy and we will timetable accordingly. Please note that Cllr Merry will be asked for the same assurances in relation to the Fairwater Campus.
2. The development of an effective, informative communications strategy be explored and reported back to this committee; and that the strategy include clear information regarding the rationale for the decision; FAQs using consultation responses as examples etc.
3. Further assurances on the manageability of the financial implications and challenges of this proposal.

There are no formal recommendations arising from this letter.

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

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'L. BRIDGEMAN', written over a light grey rectangular background.

COUNCILLOR LEE BRIDGEMAN
Chairperson – Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

CC: CYPSC Members
Melanie Godfrey - Director of Education and Lifelong Learning
Richard Portas - Programme Director for the School Organisation Programme
Brett Andrewartha - School Organisation Programme Planning Manager
Michele Duddridge-Friedl - Operational Manager, School Organisation Programme Strategy

Claire Deguara – Cabinet Support Office
Deborah Said – PA to the Leader
Helen Eager - PA to the Director of Education & Lifelong Learning
Paula Williams – PA to the SOP Director
Tim Gordon and Jeremy Rhys – Media and Comms
Gavin McArthur – Chair, Governance & Audit Committee
Cllr John Lancaster – Group Leader
Cllr Rodney Berman – Group Leader
Cllr Andrea Gibson – Group Leader

Date: 18 October 2023

My Ref: CYP/SOP_Fairwaterpublic_Oct23



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PUBLIC LETTER

Councillor Sarah Merry
Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Education
County Hall
Atlantic Wharf
CARDIFF
CF10 4UW

Dear Sarah,

CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 17 OCTOBER 2023 – SCHOOL ORGANISATION PLANNING: FAIRWATER CAMPUS BAND B REDEVELOPMENT

Please accept my thanks on behalf of the Committee for attending the Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee to provide us with the opportunity to consider the draft report on Fairwater Campus Band B Redevelopment, prior to Cabinet on the 19 October 2023. Please also pass on our thanks to Melanie Godfrey; Richard Portas; Michele Duddridge-Friedl; Brett Andrewartha; and Wayne Ganderton.

The comments, observations and recommendations below were captured during the Committee's discussion at the Way Forward.

The committee commends the report to Cabinet and supports the recommendations contained within it. Other comments and observations are as follows:

The committee welcome the ambitious and exciting proposals for the Fairwater campus and the news that this will be the largest development of its kind in the UK. The committee looks forward to monitoring the development closely going forward.

Timelines and timescales for delivery

Members sought assurances relating to the delivery of such a project and asked whether you were confident that timescales were achievable; and that the project would remain at the quality proposed and would provide value for money. We were

satisfied with responses given at the meeting, but Members agreed that, given the scale of the project and its unique status, we will be seeking to monitor and review the project regularly (including site visits) to ensure that Members are satisfied that the project is being delivered on time and to budget. We would **request** that you provide Members with known timelines where this committee could receive updates and we will timetable these accordingly.

The SOP Task & Finish Group could provide a positive contribution to this work away from formal committee, if required.

Community-related matters

Members asked a question in relation to the social value aspect of the proposal. We were informed that this will be a major focus for the SOP Team, and the committee would welcome an update in due course. Therefore, we **request** an indicative timeline when the output of this work could be reported back to committee.

Members enquired about the location of the community facilities and any safeguarding issues in relation to this and were satisfied with the response.

Members questioned you about the parking on-site and whether this was sufficient. Members were concerned about the impact on the community in relation to this matter; and would **request** that, when Fairwater Campus next comes to committee, officers from Highways be included to give their views and perspective. This issue is a matter that we will monitor closely. Please provide contact details of relevant officers.

Financial Matters

In the open session, Members sought clarification about the Welsh Government contribution to the project, and were informed that mainstream school contributions are usually 65%; and special schools at 75%; therefore this project would average approximately 70% WG contribution, with the remaining 30% being funded by the Council via borrowing and reserves.

In addition, Members asked whether funds for future maintenance and upgrades to facilities at the site had been factored in and were told that this is an area that is being considered carefully at the moment. We would therefore **request** further information on this issue and seek assurances that maintenance and upgrade issues are being included.

Future Proofing

Members asked a number of questions relating to surplus places; the impact of other developments (e.g. Plasdwr); and ensuring capacity at Cantonian; Woodlands and Riverbank during the transition period. Whilst Members were satisfied with the responses at the meeting, this will be an issue that we will continue to monitor closely going forward.

To **recap**, we are requesting you:

1. Provide Members with known timelines where this committee could receive updates in relation to the whole project.
2. An indicative timeline when the output the social value aspect of this proposal could be reported back to committee.
3. Agreement that, when Fairwater Campus next comes to committee, officers from Highways be included to give their views and perspective. Please provide contact details of relevant officers.
4. Provide further information and assurances relating to future maintenance and upgrades to facilities at the site.

There are no formal recommendations arising from this letter.

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

Yours sincerely,



COUNCILLOR LEE BRIDGEMAN

Chairperson – Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

CC: CYPSC Members
Melanie Godfrey - Director of Education and Lifelong Learning
Richard Portas - Programme Director for the School Organisation Programme
Brett Andrewartha - School Organisation Programme Planning Manager
Michele Duddridge-Friedl - Operational Manager, School Organisation Programme Strategy
Wayne Ganderton – SOP Team
Claire Deguara – Cabinet Support Office
Melanie Jackson – PA to the Deputy Leader
Helen Eager - PA to the Director of Education & Lifelong Learning
Paula Williams – PA to the SOP Director
Tim Gordon and Jeremy Rhys – Media and Comms
Gavin McArthur – Chair, Governance & Audit Committee
Cllr John Lancaster – Group Leader
Cllr Rodney Berman – Group Leader
Cllr Andrea Gibson – Group Leader

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

Fy Nghyf / My Ref: CE:0043412

Eich Nghyf / Your Ref: CYP/SOP_Fairwaterpublic_Oct23

Dyddiad / Date: 22 February 2024

Cllr Lee Bridgeman
Chair – Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee
County Hall

Annwyl / Dear Lee

CYP 17 October 2023 – SOP Fairwater Campus

Thank you for inviting us to present to the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee on 17 October 2023, and for the opportunity to provide further information in relation to the requests of Members outlined in your letter of 18 October 2023.

I am pleased to provide the further information requested by the Committee on the following areas:

Project timelines and timescales for delivery

I can now report that the project is in contract for the main building works. It is expected that Cantonian High School will occupy the new building by January 2026 and Woodlands and Riverbank by September 2026.

The Council awarded the main contract for the construction of the Fairwater Campus new schools to ISG Ltd on 22nd December 2024.

The scheduled completion of the programme is as follows

Health & Wellbeing block: April 2025

Cantonian High School: December 2025

Woodlands High School and Riverbank Special School: June 2026

External works: June 2026

It would therefore be appropriate for me to provide a general update to the Committee within the SOP Annual Report, and a comprehensive update provided on all aspects of the project by the Summer 2025.

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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.



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Community-related matters

The planning to ensure that Social Value is maximised in line with the contract is underway. The contract includes a wide range of targets to be met by the contractor and their supply chain. The Council is working in close partnership with the main contractor to refine the detail of individual targets with its overall Social Value Plan. This updated plan is expected to be complete by summer 2024. Delivery of targets is already underway, an update on progress against the targets will be provided to the Committee in summer 2025.

Cardiff's LDP outlines the approach the Council will take to increase the proportion of people travelling by sustainable modes and to achieve the 50:50 modal split target.

Cardiff's Managing Transportation Impacts Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) sets out the Council's approach to assessing and managing the transport impacts of developments. Within this, the provision of cycle parking and changing facilities, and safe pedestrian and cycle are prioritised, whilst the SPG places limits on the number of parking spaces that can be provided on school sites to 1 space per 30 pupils.

The Council has considered the impact of such limits on special schools, with higher staff: pupil ratios and in accordance with the guidance, the Fairwater Campus will provide 45 no parking spaces temporarily and 111 on the permanent scheme in line with the SPG.

The Council recognises that, historically and currently, many staff employed at schools travel significant distances to their place of work. The Council has worked closely with each school to develop their Active Travel Plans and to reduce car use and encourage active travel. A range of measures have been progressed to help support pupils, parents and staff to travel more actively for their journey to school. To support the school and local residents in the short term, the Council is considering the use of Rookwood Hospital, the Fairwater Social Club, the Fairwater Ski Centre and other options to support with contractor and school parking. The Council is in regular discussion with trade union colleagues and others to monitor the parking arrangements.

Financial Matters

Funding for future maintenance and upgrades to facilities is managed within the Council's asset maintenance programme but has been factored in at every stage of the project.

Ongoing maintenance is managed through the Council asset programme which is currently in a balanced position. At present, all school condition and suitability issues identified are prioritised and assessed by qualified surveyors along with consultation with Council Health & Safety (H&S) officers, to ensure urgent priorities are being met, and that other priorities can be mitigated in the short term and then later addressed permanently.


Significant improvements have been made to the longer-term planning of asset renewals, and in 2022/23 alone the Council invested £29.0m against the highest priorities. However, the Council has been unable to prioritise lower priority condition, general maintenance, lifecycle, specialist and general teaching upgrades.

The SOP Strategy and Rolling Programme will bring together the long-term position for Education investment, which will consider any capital financial commitments.

I trust this responds to the requests made by the Committee for further information.

Should you require any further clarification you are welcome to contact me.

Yn gywir / Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sarah Merry".

Councillor / Cynghorydd Sarah Merry
Deputy Leader / Dirprwy Arweinydd
Cabinet Member for Education
Aelod Cabinet Dros Addysg

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