

My Ref: Scrutiny/Correspondence/MJH

13 December 2017

Councillor Sarah Merry
Cabinet Member - Education and Skills
County Hall
CARDIFF CF10 4UW



County Hall
Cardiff,
CF10 4UW
Tel: (029) 2087 2087

Neuadd y Sir
Caerdydd,
CF10 4UW
Ffôn: (029) 2087 2088

Dear Sarah

On behalf of the Committee, I would like to thank you for attending the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee on 12 December 2017 to provide an opening statement and answering questions on the **21st Century Schools – Band B Priorities – draft Cabinet Report**

I would also like to thank Nick Batchelar, Director of Education and Lifelong Learning, for the report and answers to Members questions. Members really appreciated the opportunity to scrutinise this issue at such an early stage. The Members also wished to express their appreciation for all the hard work that the Education Directorate staff have undertaken to ensure that these proposals were presented to the Welsh Government.

The Committee welcomed the announcement by the Welsh Government of their approval, in principle, of the strategic outline case submitted by Cardiff Council to the value of £284M, half funded by the Welsh Government and half funded by the Council. Members noted this approval is subject to the approval of individual project business cases.

The Committee agreed to commend the report to Cabinet.

During the way forward section of the meeting the Members considered the information in the report, together with answers to their questions, and agreed to provide you with the following comments, concerns and recommendations your consideration prior to Cabinet approving the report.

The Committee considered that communication of the plans and projects was critical to the success of the Plan B priorities and wished to seek your assurance that all stakeholders will be kept informed of the progress of the Plan B schemes, in addition to the statutory consultation.

The Committee did express concern that the funding of the revenue consequences of the proposals would be dependent on the significant annual capital financing costs being included in the annual budget report and failure to fund these costs would severely restrict the essential improvements to the school estate.

The Committee also expressed concern around the maintenance of the school estate, and recommended that a detailed maintenance programme is developed and integrated into future school and council budgets.

The Committee was particularly concerned that communities should also benefit from the programme of new builds. A member highlighted that access to communities facilities at Eastern High may be managed by a private company. The Committee recommended that, as the operational arrangements of the community facilities at Eastern High had not yet been finalised, the operational arrangements must be kept in-house.

Finally the Members noted that a series of reports will be presented to Cabinet as each other the separate projects move forward. The Committee requested that these reports be presented to this Committee prior to their consideration at Cabinet.

I hope that these comments will be of use and support in the future development of the School Estate in Cardiff and implementation of the Plan B priorities, and the Committee looks forward to working with the Directorate and Cabinet in the future.

Yours sincerely

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

COUNTY COUNCILLOR LEE BRIDGEMAN
Chairperson – Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

CC: Nick Batchelar, Director of Education and Lifelong learning
Jo Watkins – Cabinet Business Manger