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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 15<sup>th</sup> 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**

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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 21<sup>st</sup> 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**