

## CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

5 JULY 2022

Present: Councillor Bridgeman (Chairperson),  
Councillors Boes, Davies, Ferguson-Thorne, Hopkins, Joyce,  
Simmons and Singh

Co-opted Members: Patricia Arlotte (Roman Catholic representative)  
and Carol Cobert (Church in Wales Representative)

Mia John ( Youth Council Representative)

### 1 : APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR, COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP AND TERMS OF REFERENCE

RESOLVED:

To note that Council, at its Annual Meeting, on 26 May 2022:

- Appointed Councillor Lee Bridgeman as Chair of the Committee;
- Appointed Councillors Boes, Davies, Hopkins, Joyce, Lewis, Melbourne, Robinson and Singh; and
- Agreed the attached Terms of Reference

The Chair welcomed Councillors Ferguson-Thorne and Simmons to the Committee, who had been appointed by Council at its meeting on 30 June 2022.

### 2 : DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest in accordance with the Members Code of Conduct.

### 3 : APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Melbourne and Councillor Sarah Merry, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Education.

### 4 : MINUTES

The minutes of the meetings held on 1 and 8 March 2022 were approved as a correct record of these meetings and signed by the Chair.

### 5 : SCHOOL ORGANISATION PROPOSALS: PROVISION FOR CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE WITH ADDITIONAL LEARNING NEEDS (ALN) - COMPLEX LEARNING NEEDS AND AUTISM SPECTRUM CONDITION PROVISION FOR PRIMARY AND SECONDARY AGED PUPILS

The Chair welcomed Melanie Godfrey (Director of Education & Lifelong Learning), Richard Portas (Programme Director of School Organisation Planning), and Brett Andrewartha (School Organisation Programme Planning Manager) to the meeting.

Richard Portas (Programme Director of School Organisation Planning) provided Members with a statement outlining the background to the three reports/ papers being considered. Consultations have taken place, the results have been reported back and statutory notices have been issued. The report follows the objection period.

The Chair invited questions from Members:

- Members asked information as to whether it would be right to assume that, in strategic terms, the key drivers of the recommendations are projected future growth in need, the sufficiency of places to meet need, the location of those places across the city and efficiency savings, that's to say the potential to offset the additional costs from the growth in provision by reducing the spend on Out of County Places and in independent schools? Officers advised that as a result of the provision mapping exercise that has been carried out the indication is that the cost per pupil, both in and out of county and transport is likely to decrease. There is certainly an increase in need.
- Members asked for some insight into how the financial evaluations will be progressed and the timescale for that, and whether any modelling has taken place on the extent to which Out of County savings can be achieved and the implications if they do not materialise. Officers advised that an assessment has been carried out against the Out of County places that do exist; ultimately there are not places out there if we do not provide the provision being put in. All of the proposals brought forward will sit in the Education Asset Programme which covers condition, suitability and sufficiency. When bringing these proposals forward the most appropriate procurement route is considered.

It is difficult to provide an exact figure as to what might happen if we were heavily reliant in future on provision in the independent sector. The reality of it is that they are practically at capacity at this point; we can benchmark against the figures they charge the Local Authority at this point. If we relied on the independent sector the costs would be roughly a £50,000 per year per pupil increase.

Officers advised we would expect per pupil costs to decrease, but most likely there will be a reduction in escalated costs.

- Members asked for an update about the calibre of the available staff bearing in mind that there are a number of SRB's due to open in September and that whilst HR policy states that staff can be relocated and redeployed, surely that will not happen as it is such a specialist area? Members were advised that the question relates also the Emotional Health and Wellbeing report; work has been going on for the best part of 9 months, there are a number of teams working with

each of the schools individually. It has been necessary to look at it on a case-by-case basis when looking at each of the provisions that have been brought forward. A number of the proposals are already in place temporarily and the increases are being formalised now. Officers acknowledged that the ALN provision and the pressure on schools is across the board and in the future, there will be further expansions in due course. Whilst there are no difficulties envisaged for September, workforce development needs to continue to ensure that there is sufficient staffing going forward from there, that relates not only to teaching staff but also to support staff. There has to be support structures in place also.

- Members enquired about the work done with teacher training institutions to examine the scope for teachers of the future. Officers advised that the Council works very closely with institutions on ITT and WESP.
- Members asked about the number of ALN teachers needed and whether there was a requirement for ALN teachers to have Welsh language skills. Officers advised that the Council works with schools on a case-by-case basis. The Council is already looking to the future around how it can phase provision around Band B etc, and will continue to consider this as it works through the process. Regarding Welsh medium education, working groups and action plans will be set up in the next 6 months around the WESP. Workforce development outcomes are critical to ensure the success of WESP. There will be clear action plans to support schools and achieve the targets laid out in the strategy.
- Members asked why the cost of transport was projected to rise significantly more than the proportion of pupils. Officers advised that there were significant increases in the cost of fuel that were driving pressures on the system. There are also additional numbers of pupils that are also increasing pressure on costs.
- Members asked what car to pupil ratio the Council is aiming for taking into account Active Travel plans, or whether space would be made available for one car park space per pupil in all the schools considered. Officers advised that some pupils are brought into special schools by taxis and supported transport. This is factored into modelling. Staff and schools are expected to have Active Travel plans. Work is being done on improving awareness of One Planet Cardiff objectives and factoring them into the curriculum. A lot of work is needed on the One Planet Cardiff objectives but the Council is starting to put together the workstreams to improve behaviours, which helps reduce reliance on non-Active Travel means of transport. It is something that will continue to evolve over coming years.
- Members asked whether work had been done in relation to travel issues for pupils of Ty Gwyn, and how much impact the additional 40 places are expected to have. Officers advised that the additional pupils would be phased over a number of years with the first intake in

September. Work is progressing on car parking and drop-off and pick-up times, and improving routes in and out.

- Members pointed out that the cost of independent placements was in part due to their in-house multi-disciplinary teams and asked how confident the Council was that the existing Learning Disability teams could meet the needs, as they are already at capacity. Officers advised that the places are flagged in the system very early, and there are regular strategic meetings with Health to ensure support is factored in.
- Members asked whether the programme would be manageable given the number of schemes. Officers advised that the larger schemes were underway. Schemes have been designed and procured in parallel to papers going through because of the urgency of the proposals. Contingency measures are in place with each of the schools. A number of expansions have already happened.
- Members asked how the requirement for schools to devise their own Active Travel plans would correlate with children with Additional Learning Needs, and what schools would be expected to do to facilitate Active Travel for such pupils, recognising that for many of these pupils Active Travel is not a viable option. Would this be reflected in plans for infrastructure such as parking spaces? Officers advised that there is a higher ratio of parking spaces to pupils at special schools than mainstream schools. Officers work closely with Highways colleagues and are looking at addressing highways issues through the asset programme. The current proposals supplement work that is already ongoing. For a number of pupils it is not appropriate to consider Active Travel, and ways are being considered to reduce transport across the city by increasing local provision.

#### RESOLVED:

That the Chairperson writes to the Cabinet Member on behalf of the Committee expressing their comments and observations captured during the way forward.

#### 6 : SCHOOL ORGANISATION PROPOSALS: PROVISION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WITH ADDITIONAL LEARNING NEEDS (ALN) - EMOTIONAL HEALTH AND WELL BEING PROVISION FOR PRIMARY AND SECONDARY AGED PUPILS

The Chair welcomed Melanie Godfrey (Director of Education & Lifelong Learning), Richard Portas (Programme Director of School Organisation Planning), and Brett Andrewartha (School Organisation Programme Planning Manager) to the meeting.

Richard Portas (Programme Director of School Organisation Planning) provided Members with a statement outlining the background to the papers provided. The proposals being brought forward are well-suited to ensure there is the right balance of provision within the city.

- Members asked whether the Plasdwr development was expected to

put further pressure on the sites, and how the plans interact with the LDP generally. Officers advised that the proposal was looking at emotional health and wellbeing and there was a further discussion to be had around strategically planning places around the city and how that linked with the LDP. It was factored in closely in relation to provision. The Council will be looking to bring forward balance in every catchment in relation to emotional health and wellbeing and complex needs. Currently need was concentrated in the east and west of the city. Officers advised that the yield of primary-age pupils from the new LDP sites is less than the fall in birth rate and drop in intake. The projected reduction in primary school intake from the 2015-2016 peak will be around 25%, or 1,000 pupils citywide per year group. The yield from the new housing developments is not expected to exceed 200-300 pupils per cohort.

- Members sought clarification on the references in the report to requests by Estyn for further details in relation to the Court proposal being on two sites, and noted that the governing body at Fairwater Primary School has also asked for more detail, and asked whether more detail would be provided at the design stage for the scheme. Officers advised that the design has been worked up in parallel and that initial sketches have been shared with Fairwater Primary School. A pre-planning consultation will be brought forward shortly, providing the proposals are approved.
- Members sought clarification on the financing of The Court proposal, referring to a statement in the report about capital receipts of £25 million. They requested information on how the figure had been derived, and how it fits alongside the Welsh Government grant of 75%, the 25% Invest to Save borrowing requirement, and how the School Organisation planned revenue reserve will be used. Officers advised that the £25 million was originally made up of land receipts from the existing Fitzalan, Woodlands and Riverbank sites. It was not expected that these would be realised in one go as the Programme needs to be delivered before any capital receipts can be realised. The £25 million Invest to Save is modelled within the Education Asset Programme and the disposals are factored into the reserve. The budget is in a balanced position.

#### RESOLVED:

That the Chairperson writes to the Cabinet Member on behalf of the Committee expressing their comments and observations captured during the way forward.

#### 7 : EXPANSION OF PENTYRCH PRIMARY SCHOOL AND ESTABLISHMENT OF NURSERY PROVISION AT THE SCHOOL

The Chair welcomed Melanie Godfrey (Director of Education & Lifelong Learning), Richard Portas (Programme Director of School Organisation Planning), and Brett Andrewartha (School Organisation Programme Planning Manager) to the meeting.

Richard Portas (Programme Director of School Organisation Planning) provided Members with a statement outlining the background to the paper provided. The proposed expansion has been brought forward in the context of planning and pupil data. The Council is aware that pupil numbers will be reducing due to the birth rate, however fewer pupils are expected to travel outside the catchment as a result of the nursery provision. Objections have been raised in relation to parking and transport and from the local nursery.

- Members asked whether the Cardiff Influencers Programme would be utilised, and if so how they would ensure it was as representative as possible. Officers advised that it was doing so across the whole programme on issues of particular importance. The Council is looking toward bringing forward a long-term plan with a set of principles to support the SOP programme. Work is being done with a group of children and young people to bring them up to speed with matters relating to the programme. A number of stakeholders and businesses are supporting the work.
- Members asked whether officers were confident that surplus places were not being built into Pentyrch Primary School in the longer term. Officers advised that Pentyrch is a difficult village to travel in and out of using active modes of travel, nevertheless parents are choosing to do so to access nursery and primary school provision. Over time the new LDP schools will be brought forward and there will be a reduction in the number of surplus places in existing schools. The proposal will ensure that a full range of services including nursery and primary teaching and wraparound care will be available on one site.
- Members raised residents' concerns about parking and congestion at school drop off and pick up times, and asked whether the Council had explored the possibility of using land adjacent to the school for staff parking and parent drop off and pick up. Officers advised that expanding the school site had not been considered. It is expected that an Active Travel plan will be developed. Parking would also be considered with a major development.
- Members observed that having an Active Travel plan in place would not necessarily stop parents driving to the school, particularly those living in outlying areas. They asked whether S.106 money could be spent on a solution to parking issues. Officers advised that Highways was looking at a Park and Stride in the area. Members were advised that the Council is able to seek S.106 funds in accordance with its published LDP and Infrastructure Plan and supplementary planning guidance. Under the education planning guidance S.106 funds can be claimed where the Council can demonstrate there is a need for additional places. In this case the money is ring-fenced to provide the 70 additional places and comes directly from the Goytre Bach housing development.
- Members asked how crucial the S.106 monies are to the expansion in places at Pentyrch, how guaranteed they are and what might be the implications if they did not materialise. Officers advised that the

monies had already been received.

RESOLVED:

That the Chairperson writes to the Cabinet Member on behalf of the Committee expressing their comments and observations captured during the way forward.

8 : URGENT ITEMS (IF ANY)

No urgent items were tabled.

9 : WAY FORWARD

Members discussed the information received and identified a number of issues which the Chairman agreed would be included in the letters that would be sent, on behalf of the Committee, to the relevant Cabinet Members and Officers.

10 : DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next scheduled meeting is to be confirmed after the meeting of Council on 21 July 2022.

The meeting terminated at 5.45 pm