

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

14 NOVEMBER 2022

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

Co-opted Members: Carol Cobert (Church in Wales Representative),
Bridgid Corr (Parent Governor Representative) and Celeste Lewis
(Parent Governor Representative)

Emily Gao (Cardiff Youth Council)

21 : APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Patricia Arlotte.

22 : DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Boes declared a personal interest in Item 4 as a Governor of Cantonian High School, and Councillor Davies declared a personal interest in the same item as a Ward Member.

23 : MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 July 2022 were approved as a correct record of the meeting and signed by the Chair.

24 : SCHOOL ORGANISATION PLANNING: FAIRWATER CAMPUS AND BAND B DEVELOPMENT

The Committee was advised that this item would allow Members to undertake pre-decision scrutiny of the Band B redevelopment relating to the Fairwater campus.

The item was divided into two parts, the first in open session and the second in closed session.

The Chairman welcomed Councillor Sarah Merry (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Education); Melanie Godfrey (Director of Education and Lifelong Learning); Richard Portas (Programme Director for School Organisation Programme); Michelle Duddridge-Friedl (Operational Manager: School Organisation Programme Strategy); Brett Andrewartha (School Organisation Programme Planning Manager); Jennie Hughes (Senior Achievement Leader Inclusion, E&LL); and Mian Saleem (Operational Manager, Capital Delivery, Economic Development) to the meeting.

Cllr Merry provided Members with a statement giving a brief overview of the scheme, which is thought to be the largest school scheme in the UK and involves three schools and an SRB. Cantonian High School will be expanded from 6FOE to 8FOE; Woodlands Special School from 140 to 240 pupil places; and Riverbank Special School from 70 to 112 pupil places.

Melanie Godfrey provided the Committee with a statement outlining the ambition of the project and the need to sequence projects to ensure delivery within the affordable resources.

Richard Portas supplied Members with a presentation which gave further details about the redevelopment, including an update on the project's progress; an explanation of the project and cost increases; an outline of alternative options; and an outline of early works orders.

The Chair invited questions from Members:

- Members sought assurance on the budgetary situation given the uncertain financial circumstances. Officers advised that a cost increase had been highlighted and that the project was affordable within the Band B envelope. Further details related to confidential commercial matters.
- Members sought information on plans for traffic management on Doyle Avenue. Officers advised that the Doyle Avenue entrance would not be the main entrance for the ALN schools or Cantonian High School; that would be on Fairwater Road. There will be vehicular access from Doyle Avenue for up to 5-6 cars in special circumstances when parents need access to their children. There will also be temporary vehicular access via Doyle Avenue during enabling works.
- Members sought clarification on whether buses would run along Fairwater Road and Doyle Avenue during enabling works. Officers advised that a temporary path would be constructed from Fairwater Road to Doyle Avenue.
- Members were interested in hearing about plans to coproduce the project with the local community. Officers advised that contractors were asked to evidence how they would bring social value to the project and the local area. The contractor has committed to developing the designs with the school and the community. A community governance group to allocate resources against bids to support the community is being set up. There is an extensive plan for community benefits; and targets within the tender developed with the contractor range from active travel to onsite work experience. The caretaker's house will be transformed into a facility for the school.
- Members sought clarification on whether water bodies were included as part of the plans. Officers advised that capital projects need to include sustainable drainage in order to comply with legislation. Designs must therefore encompass suitable attenuation. This does not necessarily mean open ponds which could pose a health and safety risk. Conversations are continuing within the team on the details. It will be some form of attenuation that will fill up at certain times of the year.
- Members were interested in whether the Council would use the project as a blueprint for future developments. Officers advised that a set of design specifications had been created for the project, changing the way design briefs for the school programme were developed. The brief was driven by a strong

education vision which has been replicated in future projects. Smaller schemes are following the same approach.

- Members wished to hear what was being done differently to meet Net Zero goals. Officers advised that targets had been identified for regulated and unregulated energy. The intention is to produce 100% of the energy required to run the building on site. This is facilitated by making the buildings very highly energy efficient. All roof areas, as well as additional canopies, will be covered with PV panels. The second target is to reduce the embodied carbon in the project.
- Members were interested to know what vulnerabilities had been identified in the project. Officers advised that there was a costed risk register in a confidential appendix of the report. In general terms demolition and asbestos are probably the key risks. Cantonian High School are occupying the buildings that will be demolished. Intrusive work had to be undertaken to understand the level of asbestos in the building, and the areas involved had to be made good. It is critical for the Council that the momentum of the project is maintained. Scrutiny is part of the process.
- Members sought clarification on the plans for Cantonian High School students during construction. Officers advised that temporary school buildings will be built on the south of the site. This will allow the contractor to close off the north of the site, demolish the buildings there and construct new ones. Work has been undertaken to ensure the temporary buildings are suitable for the duration of the project's construction phase.
- Members sought information on whether there were plans to carry out Child Rights Impact Assessments on future projects. Officers advised that there was a commitment to ensure that Child Rights Impact Assessment were carried out along with other assessments. Going forward the Council will need to undertake Child Rights Impact Assessments as regulations change and to ensure that every aspect of a project's impact is assessed to inform planning.
- Members wished for an insight into why the current option was the preferred one, on arrangements being put in place to ensure that children's learning was not adversely affected during construction. Officers advised that this would be discussed in the closed part of the session.
- Members sought clarification around the tender process and the scope to change aspects of the design following the award of the contract. Officers advised that the legal parameters were set out in Appendix 2.
- Members discussed the impact of siting 2 ALN schools together when Active Travel of pupils may not be achievable due to either proximity or ability. Officers advised that the project forms part of a wider set of proposals coming forward in terms of ALN provision. It is important that places are provided as there is a significant need coming through. Riverbank and Woodlands schools are already being expanded due to increased need and this will help with the transition into the new build. There are also SRB's that provide bespoke places across the city. Mainstream schools are also responsible for working with children with special needs.

Members were advised that the Council promotes Active Travel for learners with ALN where possible. Work is undertaken to provide independent travel training particularly with older pupils, and some of the older pupils of Woodlands will be encouraged to travel independently. Many younger pupils will need to be transported to the site, but that would be the need wherever the schools were sited. Much thought is going into the design of the SEN transport drop-off point.

- Members sought further information on plans for development to be the community and multi-agency hub, and whether work was being undertaken with the health board and other stakeholders to ensure that designs take into account their needs. Officers advised that the health board was one of the key partners in developing the multi-agency hub and had been assessing how much they could resource the campus. It is a community campus and it is intended to make it available to the community as much as possible.

Members were advised that a community café will be open during the school day, and other facilities such as the sports hall, dining room and central hub space will be available for booking. Safeguarding will be ensured in all areas accessible to the public.

The question was raised whether a visit to a newbuild school could be arranged.

- Members sought information about the occupational therapy playground. Officers advised that this encompassed a sensory garden and would be accessible to the community. Work is being done to ensure the facility encompasses life skills for ALN pupils, such as a cycle workshop and car washing facility, and a Forest School. The sustainable drainage will encompass a biodiversity area.

The Committee moved into closed session to discuss information deemed exempt in accordance with paragraphs 14 and 21 of Part 4 of schedule 12a of the Local Government Act 1972.

RESOLVED:

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

25 : COVID19 - RECOVERY IN SCHOOLS

This item was deferred to the meeting of the Committee on 13 December 2022.

The Committee agreed to request that a headteacher from the southern arc of the city be invited to address the Committee in addition to the heads from Corpus Christi RC High School and Radyr Primary School.

26 : URGENT ITEMS (IF ANY)

There were no urgent items.

27 : 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.

28 : DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Committee will be on 13 December 2022.

The meeting terminated at 6.10 pm