

Records of Public Meetings (in person and on-line)

- Cathays Community Centre (18 May 2023)
- Cathays Community Centre (25 May 2023)
- Virtual Meeting via Microsoft Teams (08 June 2023)



**Schools Programme
Record of Public Meeting
Cathays Community Centre - 18 May 2023
6pm – 7.40pm**



Present: Richard Portas (SOP), Brett Andrewartha (SOP), Michele Duddridge-Friedl (SOP), Rhian Carbis (SOP), Rosalie Phillips (SOP), Jo Phillips (SOP), Members of the public

Please note: The following is not a transcript but a contemporaneous note of the meeting.

Welcome and Introductions

Richard Portas (RP) opened the meeting, welcomed attendees and introduced officers.

Notes of the meeting were being taken and would form part of the consultation feedback.

There was a presentation from Brett Andrewartha (BA) setting out details of the proposal:

- What are we proposing to do?
- Why are the changes proposed?
- Who is consulting?
- Background
- Area-specific context
- Recent and future take up of places
- Recent admissions allocation
- Admissions: Reception Allocations
- Demographic data
- Quality and Standards of schools
- Site organisation option 1
- Site organisation option 2
- Federation and collaboration
- Site organisation option 3
- Additional Learning Needs provision
- Educational benefits
- Financial impact of proposals
- Other considerations
- What happens next?

During the presentation, one member of the public asked whether information had been sent out in other languages prior to the consultation. An answer was given that letters had been sent out in various languages using applications such as Class Dojo. There was an objection to the phrase 'those people' being used in the explanation. The concern was noted, and an explanation was given regarding context i.e., the phrase was used as a contraction of 'those people that need support to access', it was not derogatory.

Questions and Answers

RP invited questions from the public.

The questions asked by those who attended the meetings are set out in *italics* below with the officer response given directly below.

Q - When would the changes come into effect?

RP- From September 2025.

Q - With the huge amount of funding for Welsh medium from the Welsh Government why can't the council build a new school or extend Ysgol Mynydd Bychan?

RP - There is no land available in the area to build a new school and there is no space around Ysgol Mynydd Bychan to increase the size of the building.

Q - There is no data to support the change being made. Why is Allensbank the only school that doesn't have options? Why can't money and effort be put into growing Allensbank Primary School? Colleagues at the drop-in session mentioned increasing the catchment area by taking parts of other catchments.

MDF - Increasing the size of the Allensbank catchment area could have been an option to consider, but it wasn't chosen because many children already living in the current catchment are choosing not to attend the school. The proposals have to ensure the standard of education is maintained and resources are shared fairly. 1FE schools are currently struggling. This proposal is not closing schools but finding a better way to manage budgets. There are two options to retain Allensbank.

Q - Why is Ysgol Mynydd Bychan's budget better?

Schools receive the same amount of funding per head and also different floor allocation budgets depending on the size of the school building. Mynydd Bychan has more children in a smaller building and the number of teachers matches the number of children on roll. Allensbank Primary School has a much bigger building with fewer children.

Q - Would Ysgol Mynydd Bychan face the same issues with their school budget if they move into the Allensbank building?

MDF - Yes, they could but there are opportunities to use the extra space for income, for example hosting pre-school groups. It will be challenging at first, but if schools come to the council with ideas of how to use extra space, then the council will do its best to support that.

Q - Why would Allensbank Primary School have to move to the Gladstone Primary School site?

MDF – The option to move Gladstone Primary School to another site was considered, but there were reasons why this was not chosen. Both schools would be affected by the proposals regardless of which site they are on. If two schools are

closed, then the governing bodies are also dissolved. The same number of staff would not be needed. However, jobs for most staff are ringfenced so no one from outside the ringfence needs to be appointed.

Q - There are other school sites outside the area that could be used for Ysgol Mynydd Bychan. It would be beneficial to have cultural diversity across all the schools in the Heath area.

RC - Having Ysgol Mynydd Bychan on a larger site within the same local area would support the school to open its doors to everyone in the local community and increase the cultural diversity of the school. When Ysgol Hamadryad opened in Butetown the school went out to the local community rather than waiting for the community to come to the school.

Q - It is concerning that the proposals are looking to amalgamate two schools with similarly high levels of EAL, FSM etc. There are a lot of middle-class schools close by to the Cathays area. How can we breed cultural diversity? Giving a school in Butetown as a comparison is not helpful as Butetown is a different area.

MDF - It is not the same area but is still a useful comparison as it helps us to understand why people are choosing particular schools. We need to understand why people are making the choices they are. None of the Welsh-medium schools currently reflect the local community proportionately.

Q - The Ysgol Mynydd Bychan pupils don't live locally. Where will parents park when they drop their children at school? As a zone C4 resident I see the early morning parking is all full before school drop off time. The road is full every morning with Ysgol Mynydd Bychan parents' cars.

RP - There are different travel measures outside different schools. Residents' parking could be increased. The expectation is that Ysgol Mynydd Bychan will have more children attending from the local area.

Q - A lot of people who don't speak English will not want their children taught in Welsh. The proposal is disadvantaging certain people.

Q - There will be less surplus if lots of people move into the area. Faith schools are not an option for some people so surplus in those schools shouldn't count.

MDF - The proposal is not reducing the number of English medium community places. Allensbank Primary School is already capped at 1FE, as the school has consistently been unable to attract more than a 1FE intake. Gladstone Primary School is in the same situation. Places are not being reduced; we are reconsidering how the schools are arranged. The number of places and the opportunity to access them will not change. Allensbank Primary School may no longer have a nursery, but children could still attend nursery on the same site.

Q - It is concerning that all the people attending the public meeting are white and can't speak for other members of the community.

Q - There are only white faces representing the council.

MDF - Some people may have issues with language, coming out in the evening or family support. Some people may feel less confident questioning authority. We have been offering lots of opportunities for people to contact us and have been asking the schools to help reach people. We have arranged drop-in sessions at the schools. There are issues with language, for example some people may speak a language but be unable to read it. We have used Class Dojo, as the schools use it to communicate with their families. We have already contacted mosques and are looking at other places to reach people such as language classes. We are always looking for better ways to find out people's views and would be happy to listen to suggestions.

Q - Most groups have smart phones so perhaps there could be a QR code to send out that takes people to a website that translates. C2C have lots of languages available on the helpline, maybe C2C employees could help to make videos to send out. The decision makers are not part of the community.

RP - The Cabinet are the decision makers, and many Cabinet members have links to the community.

Q – There is no demand for Welsh-medium and the proposals are policy driven. Why is the effort of growing Welsh medium schools not being put into growing English medium schools? Marlborough Primary School has had problems with oversubscription for a long time, but English medium provision is not being increased.

MDF - Howardian Primary School was built because of the oversubscription issue at Marlborough. However, the decision to increase English medium provision was not just based on that one school, but also on neighbouring schools. When a school and schools in the surrounding area do not provide enough capacity that justifies building a new school.

Q - Will you look at the wellbeing of the children if the changes go ahead? There is no CAHMS or counselling at the school. Will money be spent on wellbeing?

MDF - Money ringfenced from the schools closing could be used to provide support.

Q - *Why is the aim not to improve teaching of Welsh in English medium schools?*

MDF - This is part of the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP). The 'English with significant use of Welsh' model is being brought forward in new schools built under the Local Development Plan.

There were no further questions and RP thanked everyone for attending and expressing their views.

The meeting ended at 19:40



**Schools Programme
Record of Public Meeting
Cathays Community Centre
25 May 2023 at 6:15pm**



Present: Michele Duddridge-Friedl (SOP), Rhian Carbis (SOP), Rosalie Phillips (SOP), Cai Maxwell (SOP), James Eul (Welsh Translator),

Please note: The following is not a transcript but a contemporaneous note of the meeting.

There were no attendees and the meeting closed at 6:45pm



**Schools Programme
Record of virtual Public Meeting
Teams
08 June 2023 at 6pm**



Present: Michele Duddridge-Friedl (SOP), Rhian Carbis (SOP), Rosalie Phillips (SOP), Cai Maxwell (SOP), James Eul (Welsh Translator), Cllr Taylor, Cllr Wood and four members of the public

Please note: The following is not a transcript but a contemporaneous note of the meeting.

Welcome and Introductions

Michele Duddridge Friedl (MDF) opened the meeting and welcomed staff.

The meeting was part of the formal consultation on proposed changes to the primary school provision serving the area. The meeting was being conducted through the medium of English however questions were welcome in both English and Welsh with translation facilities available.

Notes of the meeting were being taken and would form part of the consultation feedback.

What is being proposed?

There was a presentation from MDF setting out details of the proposed changes:

- What are we proposing to do?
- Why are the changes proposed?
- Who is consulting?
- Background
- Area specific context
- Recent and future take up of places
- Map of English-medium provision
- Recent and future take up of English-medium community school places
- Map of Welsh-medium provision
- Recent and future take up of Welsh-medium community school places
- Recent admissions allocation data (Reception): Albany Allensbank and Gladstone
- Recent admissions allocation data (Reception: Ysgol Mynydd Bychan
- Admissions: Reception Allocations September intake (Offer day, 17 April 2023) Demographic data: PLASC (school census)
- Quality and Standards of schools
- Site organisation option 1
- Site organisation option 2
- Federation and collaboration
- Site organisation option 3
- Additional Learning Needs provision
- Educational benefits

- Financial impact of proposals – school budgets
- Other considerations
- What happens next?

Questions and Answers

MDF invited questions from those present.

The points raised are set out in *italics* below and have been grouped according to the points raised where appropriate.

The Officer's response can be seen underneath.

Size of school

- *What if Ysgol Mynydd Bychan finds itself in the same position as Allensbank i.e., occupying a larger building than required.*

Managing lower numbers in a large building has been challenging for Allensbank. There are two main contributors to a school budget, floor area and monies per pupil and risk if the school is not able to attract increased pupil numbers. The pattern of catchment demand has been in excess of supply; however, the school is not expected to grow to 60 across all ages in the first instance. The expectation is that there would be a level of promotion to stimulate growth whilst not impacting on other local Welsh-medium schools in line with the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan targets. The Welsh Government is promoting the benefit of bilingualism and the LA is also required to ensure visibility around language options; the school would also need to be visible to the local community.

Alternative options

- *Why was locating Welsh-medium on the shared Gladstone Primary School/St Monica's Church in Wales Primary School site not considered.*

A range of potential options were considered however it was determined that based on where families were accessing Ysgol Mynydd Bychan from Allensbank Primary School was the preferred site.

The option cannot be included in the current set of proposals and would require a further consultation setting out clear advantages.

Welsh-medium secondary provision

- *Have the Council considered the impact of a 2FE Ysgol Mynydd Bychan on the secondary school provision at Ysgol Glantaf, specifically will this alter the catchment area for Ysgol Glantaf to account for the increase in numbers?*

Demand for places is monitored on an ongoing basis; children may be within catchment and accessing primary provision elsewhere and would be considered within Ysgol Glantaf catchment. Pupil numbers will be kept under review and

potential for catchment area changes; can also look at how to increase the size of schools.

St Monica's Church in Wales Primary School

- *Whilst recognising that St Monica's as a Church in Wales school has slightly different governance arrangements and catchment across wider church parishes, what considerations have been given to the potential growth in demand in the area for a greater number of places for those parents who wish to educate within a faith school; St Monica's in year has relatively few places.*

The school would be moving to a larger building allow for nursery provision to be established under options 1 and 2. The Governing Body of the school control admissions and could look at increasing the admission number at Reception; could also consider admitting greater numbers in year subject to Infant Class Size regulations.

- *Under option 3, there could be demand for places at St Monica's which could not be met.*

The LA has to be able to offer English-medium and Welsh-medium places but doesn't have to offer a faith place. The school has over subscription criteria in place and could discuss any expansion with the Diocese. The transfer of the school to the current Ysgol Mynydd Bychan site is included in the consultation in option 1 and option 2.

There were no further questions. MDF advised of the ways in which responses could be made and the meeting closed.