

### Summary of the responses received and appraisal of views expressed

#### Responses received regarding The Court Special School proposal

1. The points of view received as part of the consultation are set out in *italics* below and have been grouped according to the points raised where appropriate.
2. The Council's response to each point can be seen underneath, under the heading "Appraisal of views expressed."
3. Formal responses were received from:
  - Estyn
  - The Court Special School Governing Body
  - The Court Special School Headteacher
  - The Court Special School Staff
  - Fairwater Primary School Governing Body
  - Pen y Bryn Primary School Governing Body

#### Estyn

4. *It is Estyn's view that this proposal is likely to at least maintain the standard of education provision in the area. However, there are ways in which this proposal could be strengthened.*
5. The response from Estyn included the following points: (a copy of the full response can be seen at Appendix 6)
  - *The Council has provided a clear rationale for the proposal. It has provided a table that sets out the current primary age specialist provision available for children with emotional health and wellbeing needs and the projected future demand for school places for these pupils. The table shows a current deficit in the number of places available in relation to the number of places needed. The projections show an increase in these numbers over the next few years. The proposed increase in capacity would help to reduce this deficit in numbers. In addition, the condition of the buildings at the Court special school is very poor, with 'unsuitable' learning environments, which seriously inhibit the school's capacity to deliver the curriculum. Under this proposal, the buildings currently occupied by the Court special school would be vacated. The Council has suitably demonstrated that there is sufficient space and capacity at the Fairwater primary school site to accommodate pupils and new purpose-built accommodation. The council asserts that the*

*current St Mellons, Church in Wales primary school site in Llanrumney will be vacant in Autumn 2022 and will transfer to ownership of the council at this time. This site is located adjacent to Pen y Bryn primary school and the Council intends to work closely with both Pen y Bryn primary school and the Court Special School to ensure that the requirements of the building bulletin guidance for schools are met. We feel that this could be further strengthened with the addition of information about any adjustments which would need to take place to these buildings to ensure that they meet the individual needs of the pupils at the Court school. For example, specific considerations around acoustics or lighting and adequate separation from the primary school on the proposed sites.*

- The council has provided some detail as to how the proposal would be funded. However, it lacks any significant information that details whether any savings will be made as a result of the proposal. For example, through a reduction in numbers of pupils being placed out of county. The council has provided sufficiently detailed descriptions of the proposals and the projected timetable for statutory procedures. However, there is no indication of timescales for implementation of the proposal, and any proposed interim arrangements, which might be necessary for their implementation. Furthermore, the school currently funds a psychotherapist, we believe that it would be beneficial to explain how continuity of this provision will be secured when the school has higher pupil numbers and is split over different sites.*
- The Council has suitably outlined the benefits and potential disadvantages of the proposed changes. The benefits include increasing the number of special school places to contribute towards meeting projected demand and the establishment of a new school building. The potential disadvantages include the difficulties faced by some ALN pupils due to the changes and the potential for increased traffic congestion. We feel that this proposal could be strengthened with the addition of more detail illustrating how these changes will be managed to reduce the impact on learners currently at the school. For example, a description of the timescale of changes and whether they would take place simultaneously or consecutively. In addition to this, a plan which demonstrates if any current pupils would be subject to more than one school move. These potential changes could have a significant impact on the wellbeing and educational outcomes for this cohort and should be managed appropriately to reduce their negative impact. The council has outlined mitigation measures to address some potential disadvantages. These appear to be fair and reasonable. In addition, the council has identified some risks associated with the proposed changes and appear to be managing these appropriately.*
- The council references a feasibility study that explored possible alternative options and says that a few alternative sites were considered but were dismissed because of issues around access, site constraints, traffic and*

*flood management. However, no further detail has been provided regarding this feasibility study.*

- The council has suitably considered learner travel arrangements as a result of this proposal. It states that it is committed to ensuring that every school in Cardiff has an 'active travel plan' which identifies actions by the school to support and encourage active travel where appropriate and identifies improvements needed on-site and off-site to facilitate active journeys.*
- The council iterates that there are no planned changes to the council's policies on admission arrangements and learner travel arrangements.*
- The consultation paper makes no reference to the impact of this proposal on Welsh medium provision within the local authority or how this the proposal would support the targets in the local authority's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP). It talks generally about Welsh medium education in Cardiff and references some Welsh medium schools. It is unclear therefore how this proposal will impact on Welsh speaking pupils with ALN.*

#### ***Educational aspects of the proposal***

- The council has suitably considered the impact of the proposal on standards, teaching and learning experiences, care support and guidance and leadership and management. It has concluded that the proposal is not expected to have any negative impact on standards of education or teaching and learning experiences. In addition, it intends to work with the leadership of both schools to help improve and sustain support, care and guidance and ensure that changes are planned carefully so that leadership and governance are not disrupted. We feel that this proposal could be strengthened by: highlighting how leaders plan to secure the staffing levels needed for such a large increase in capacity, showing how these staff will be appropriately trained to work with a complex cohort of young people, showing how leadership capacity is not negatively impacted by these changes.*
- The council has included a summary of the last Estyn inspection report for the Court special school and Fairwater primary school. Estyn judged that The Court special school's performance and prospects for improvement were both good. Also, all inspection areas in Fairwater primary school's inspection report were judged to be good. The council has suitably considered the impact of the proposal on vulnerable groups of pupils including those who have ALN, those who receive free school meals and those who have English as an additional language. It has stated that those who have ALN would be supported to enable them to adapt to the changes proposed and that there is no information available to suggest that the proposals would have a negative effect on the other vulnerable groups of pupils.*

- *The council states that an initial equality impact assessment has been carried out and that it concluded that the proposed changes would not negatively affect a particular group in society. However, no details of this assessment have been provided. The council states that a community impact assessment has been undertaken for these proposals and provides a link to this assessment. However, there is no such document at this link. Also, no comment is made as to the findings from this community impact assessment. The council says that it does not anticipate any negative effect of the proposal on any local school. In fact, it believes that the proposal provides an opportunity for staff at Fairwater primary school and Pen y Bryn primary school to work more closely with specialist services in Cardiff and that this could enhance the schools' inclusive teaching and benefit all pupils in the school. This seems to be a reasonable and fair assertion.*
- *The council has not provided any specific details relating to potential disruption to pupils as a result of this proposal, however it talks more generally about ensuring that the curriculum continues to be delivered and that high education and safety standards are maintained.*

### **Appraisal of views expressed**

6. The Council acknowledges the conclusions of Estyn on the overall merits of the proposals. The Council will work closely with the Governing Bodies of The Court Special School, Fairwater Primary School and Pen y Bryn Primary School to consider the design, site layout, access and buildings arrangements as the proposals are developed. Whilst initial development appraisal has been undertaken, detailed matters such as acoustics and lighting would be considered as part of this process.
7. Whilst there are a number of existing specialist settings across Cardiff, there are not enough places available. The number of children who would benefit from a place is projected to increase over coming years. As there are not enough special school places in Cardiff, the Council has also funded some places at special schools in other Council areas or in independent schools. The total spend on these places was £6.3m in 2020/21. Of this, approximately £2.5m has funded specialist places for those learners with Emotional Health & Wellbeing Needs. The budget for 2021/22 for these types of places is currently set at £7.3m.
8. The expansion of additional learning needs provision within Cardiff will allow for children to be educated closer to home and to maintain links with their local communities. The proposals consulted on represent a significant capital and revenue investment which will be partly funded by a reduction in out of county costs.

9. The Court Special School currently funds a psychotherapist; if the proposals go ahead the Council would support the Governing Body to review the staffing models across the two sites to ensure that appropriate support for pupils is maintained. The Council continues to work with schools to identify appropriate transition arrangements for pupils with additional learning needs. These arrangements are dependent on individual need and are progressed as required. This support includes the provision/timing of funding, support with the recruitment and training of staff, the identification of needs and ongoing reviews.
10. The proposed progression of the new accommodation for The Court Special School would be phased with work on the Fairwater site being brought forward ahead of the St Mellons site with the current school site remaining operational. Pupils would not be subject to more than one school move.
11. The Council has considerable experience in the successful delivery of building projects as a result of progressing a large and growing school organisation programme. Any building works carried out would be managed effectively in consultation with the schools to ensure that the full curriculum continues to be delivered and that high education standards and safety standards are maintained.
12. The Council provides a range of support to specialist support to schools including specialist staff, CPD support for staff development, ALNCO forums, cluster ALNCO meetings, termly additional learning needs updates for Headteachers and regular updates for governing bodies. The proposed changes would be planned carefully so that the school's leadership and governance are not disrupted, which could have a negative impact on educational standards.

### **The Court Special School Governing Body**

13. The response from The Court Special School Governing Body included the following points: (a copy of the full response can be seen at Appendix 6)
  - *The Court School Governing Body strongly agree with the proposal to increase the capacity of the school and considered this to constitute the best method of taking ahead the education of the children concerned.*
  - *Given the condition of the Court School site in Llanishen, we also strongly agreed with the transfer to new build accommodation on the two sites in Fairwater and Llanrumney.*
  - *We felt it important to state at this stage that the principle of a maximum number six pupils per class should be adopted in the formulation and construction of the school buildings with all classes fully and properly resourced.*

- *We would hope that the experience of management and staff at The Court School would be utilized in both the physical planning of the two school sites, i.e., space standards, outside areas and in the ethos and management of the schools. We would also hope that the experience and abilities of the Governing Body will be fully utilized as well.*

### **Appraisal of views expressed**

14. The Council welcomes the support of The Court Special School Governing Body.
15. The Council supports the principle of a maximum number of six pupils per class in planning for the new school facilities.
16. The Council continues to work closely with the Governing Body, management and staff of The Court Special School including planning for the new school build, staff recruitment and development and supporting the development of the school ethos and management.

### **The Court School – Headteacher**

17. The response from The Court Special School Headteacher included the following points: (a copy of the full response can be seen at Appendix 6)
  - *The proposals regarding the Court School are incredibly positive. There is clearly a pressing demand for additional Court School places and at present we are unable to meet this demand due to the significant accommodation issues. The idea of increasing our capacity to 72 is aspirational and it makes sense to operate this on the basis of two sites across the city. This way, pupils are likely to have stronger links with their communities and may be able to consider active travel solutions or spend less time in taxis.*
  - *I am also very supportive of the principle of co-location. Being situated within close proximity to mainstream schools will give us opportunities to develop close working relationships with colleagues with whom we can share expertise and facilities. We are also really excited about the idea of developing strong links with local communities.*
  - *This is an exciting opportunity for us to develop into a centre of excellence and support schools throughout the city in relation to mental health and trauma informed pedagogical approaches. We are very conscious however that class sizes need careful consideration and also strongly believe that both sites should be new and purpose built.*
  - *The views of; pupils, staff, parents/carers, Governing Body and visiting professionals need to be carefully considered as they have a huge amount of experience and knowledge to impart. In addition, we would like officers to plan and implement alongside stakeholders.*

- *Staffing structures need careful consideration at this early stage and there needs to be a significant period of 'overlap' where new staff have the opportunity to refine their skills alongside more experienced colleagues. In addition, all staff need to have opportunities to grow and develop within the school and need access to good quality, sector specific and evidence-based professional development. The wellbeing of staff also needs to be prioritised, e.g. excellent staff 'rest and restore' spaces and access to showers, as our sector can be incredibly demanding both emotionally and physically. Therefore, we need to be in a position where we can attract high quality new staff and retain our skilled and talented workforce.*
- *We work with fabulous and incredibly complex/vulnerable children and work relentlessly to maximise their potential. From my perspective we need our unique and very special provision to grow and develop and I look forward to working with LA staff/project managers to make this ambition a reality.*

### **Appraisal of views expressed**

18. The Council welcomes the support of The Court Special School Headteacher.
19. Issues related to class size at The Court Special School are addressed at paragraph 15.
20. Issues related to school engagement as part of the build process are addressed at paragraph 16.
21. HR People Services will work with the Governing Body and Headteacher to address the HR implications arising from the expansion of the school and the resulting need for additional staffing.
22. Additionally, support will be provided around the sharing of best practice, staff continuing professional development, transition and reintegration and curriculum development.

### **The Court Special School Staff**

23. A response from the staff at The Court Special School included the following points: (a copy of the full response can be seen at Appendix 6)

#### **Positive**

- *Class sizes – please stick to 6 per class*
- *An opportunity to build a better future for some of the most vulnerable and forgotten about children*
- *New infrastructure*
- *Building 'fit for purpose' therapeutic spaces*
- *Purpose built building*

- *New build/ new ideas / new vision*
- *Environment fit for the learners (deserve better than what is here at the moment)*

### **Concerns**

- *Boundaries between the schools*
- *Staff recruitment – ideal to have an overlap where new staff can learn from current staff*
- *We feel like we'll be given what we're given and our voices aren't really going to be listened to*
- *Kids in their local communities' school vandalised, kids running home*
- *What staff are going to what site? Staff need to be able to plan for things such as traffic, childcare etc.*
- *With the boundaries, will the other school be ok to deal with what they might hear?*
- *How do we maintain 'one school' feel across two sites?*
- *We have good links with the village, able to practise 'life skills' Will this continue?*

### **Opportunities**

- *Staff development*
- *Becoming a centre of excellence*
- *Facilities on-site that could really benefit our pupils – outdoor gym for example*
- *TA progression*
- *Chance to work with other agencies in a positive way*
- *Opportunities for the learners to benefit from 'proper' facilities and services*
- *Staff to develop/learn new skills*
- *Staff team to grow*
- *Training opportunities*

### **Appraisal of views expressed**

24. The Council welcomes the support of the staff at The Court Special School.
25. Issues related to school engagement as part of the build process are addressed at paragraph 16.
26. Issues related to staff opportunities are addressed at paragraphs 16 and 22.

### **Fairwater Primary School Governing Body**

27. A response from Fairwater Primary School Governing Body included the following points: (a copy of the full response can be seen at Appendix 6)



- *The Governing Body fully understand and support the need to increase the capacity of The Court Special School, along with the need to relocate the school to a more suitable premises. We have met as a Governing Body to discuss the impact the proposals on our school. Our collective response is that at this time we are not in a position to support the proposals directly involving our school pending clarification of the following issues:*

### **Driveway/Access**

- *Access to the site is already an issue and we have concerns that utilising only the current entrance will not offer a satisfactory solution. Would it be possible to utilise access from V21 (Bwlch Road) to make a one way in, one way out entrance/exit or separate entrance for each school?*
- *There are concerns around segregation and safeguarding. How will parents and children access the two schools independently to ensure safeguarding and ensure there are no behavioural issues to protect our children.*
- *Wellwright Road is already very busy, increased traffic from Taxi's/Buses and parents parking would add to this. The residents are already complaining to the School and Council regarding the current issues.*
- *There was a mention of 10-15 extra taxis/minibuses per day, we currently have 4-5 per day and they (mainly) come before and after pupils start and end their day to minimise disruption. How would this be managed with the new school?*
- *Will you be creating a better entrance for construction traffic and the school to segregate the two prior to works starting?*
- *If construction traffic moves through that entrance will it be outside of core school hours (e.g. drop off and pick up)?*

### **Perimeter Fence**

- *Would the fence be erected before construction works to ensure the security of the site and protection of our children from workers/contractors?*
- *If there needs to be a gap between the new fence and the existing properties, what safeguarding put in place to stop residents communicating/talking to the children through the fence?*
- *As above, how would we stop rubbish and grass etc. accumulating, is the school responsible for this or the general council landscapers?*
- *Once the fence is erected, would this define the school boundary in terms of responsibility for maintaining the grounds?*

### **Buildings**

- *We would like clarification of the proposed building location on site so that we can understand how much space we would have left (e.g. would we retain the sports field) and to ensure enough separation so that the children do not come into contact with each other.*
- *Many repairs and improvements have been put off at Fairwater due to the possible expansion, will the schools current state be re-evaluated and works completed where possible now that the expansion is off the table?*

### **School Organisation**

- *We support the schools being separated in terms of having individual heads and Governing Bodies. We would like more information on how the schools could work together to benefit each other although have concerns about the impact on our staff (e.g. staff migrating to the other school, jobs etc.)*
- *Can we speak to another other school that shares a site with a special school currently, this may help us understand how they can work together effectively?*
- *We would like more clarity on what is meant by 'bringing the Court School into mainstream' - will our school need to support/be responsible for these children?*
- *Can you help us understand the range of issues that children at Court school have?*
- *What impact will it have on our current wellbeing unit children, who don't currently mix with mainstream?*
- *What impact will it have on our current mainstream children?*
- *We recognise that collaborating on ALN practices and expertise etc. between schools would be of benefit.*

### **Nursery Provision**

- *We have been looking at providing a Nursery provision at Fairwater for a number of years. This again was put on hold due to possible expansion plans.*
- *We believe that a Nursery provision will boost numbers into reception (parents are currently driven to other school with nurseries)*
- *This will give us an early indication of ALN issues (better to intervene early)*
- *We can build communication with parents and start a community prior to joining reception*
- *Currently there is no benefit to the residents of Wellwright road in the proposals you have provided, by adding the benefit of a nursery we believe this will make the proposals more palatable to them*
- *We have a demountable building that is very close to the end of its life, we were due to spend £11,000 on repairs to the building out of our own money. This would provide an opportunity for the Council to help us achieve a Nursery provision whilst we can contribute to a replacement demountable building for both the Nursery and our developing Community Hub.*
- *We look forward to working with you to explore the various options that we believe can benefit both the Court School and Fairwater Primary School.*

### **Appraisal of views expressed**

28. The Council acknowledges the concerns expressed by Fairwater Primary School Governing Body.
29. The school has a generous site of approximately 4.8Ha and has been identified as of sufficient size to be shared with a new-build special school. Although Fairwater Primary School makes full use of its site and buildings, the size and configuration of the site would support the development of a new special school. Fairwater Primary School would still retain a site which exceeds the site size requirements of a large community primary school.

30. The development of the proposal would be progressed in partnership with the Headteachers and Governing Bodies and would consider fully the concerns raised and appropriate ways in which these could be mitigated including phased implementation, accommodation requirements, site layout options, access and egress arrangements, traffic management, transition planning and Outreach support.
31. The Council would work closely with each school to consider the design, layout, access and buildings arrangements as the proposals are developed. Whilst initial development appraisal has been undertaken, these detailed matters would be considered at a later stage with the design/layout of any new build allowing for suitable distance and security with the integrity of both mainstream and special school provision maintained.
32. The majority of The Court pupils would be eligible for Learner Transport in shared taxis or by minibus. The site access would be designed for efficient access by this small number of vehicles.
33. An appropriately sized drop-off and pick-up area would be incorporated in a safe, secured area within the site.
34. The existing Wellbeing class at Fairwater Primary School continues to be an important part of citywide emotional health and wellbeing support for primary aged pupils and this is intended to continue.
35. The co-location of specialist and mainstream provision provides the opportunity to build partnerships and develop collaborative working practices which would benefit both schools.
36. The establishment of nursery provision at Fairwater Primary School is out outside of the scope of the proposal consulted on and would be considered separately.

### **Pen y Bryn Primary School Governing Body**

37. A response from Pen y Bryn Primary School included the following points: (a copy of the full response can be seen at Appendix 6)
  - *Whilst the Governing Body of Pen y Bryn Primary School are in general terms supportive of the proposals there are the following concerns which the Governing Body would like to highlight.*
  - *The Head teacher and Chair of Governors have been approached to discuss the redesignation of a slice of land on the Pen y Bryn site to accommodate the Court School proposal. The slice of land adjacent to the early years area of the school has been developed over recent years and*

*now includes a forest school area, orchard and planters. The Governing Body would like to seek reassurance that the school would be compensated and those features replaced elsewhere on the school site.*

- The removal of this slice of land also prohibits planned projects which was to install playground equipment on an area of land, and it also cuts through the school's football pitch. Again the Governing Body would like to seek reassurance that the school will be appropriately compensated to ensure the development is not to the detriment to the children of Pen Y Bryn.*
- Given the close proximity between the early years area of Pen Y Bryn and the boundary of the proposed Court School, the Governing Body would like to seek clarity on the design of the Court School to ensure the layout allows for suitable distance and security between the two schools' playing areas.*
- The Governing Body would also be keen to understand the traffic management implications of the site given it fronts onto a narrow road which is often fully parked along one side.*
- The Governing Body would also like to seek reassurance as to how the safety of children in Pen Y Bryn will be ensured during the construction phase of the site.*

### **Appraisal of views expressed**

38. The Council welcomes the support of Pen y Bryn Primary School. The proposed transfer of The Court Special School to the vacated St Mellons CiW Primary School site adjacent to Pen y Bryn Primary School has been discussed with the school. The Council will continue to work closely with the school to agree a revised boundary and ensure that the relocation of existing facilities meets the requirements of Pen y Bryn Primary School.
39. Whilst initial development appraisal has been undertaken, these detailed matters would be considered at a later stage with the design/layout of any new build allowing for suitable distance and security with the integrity of both Pen y Bryn Primary School and The Court Special School maintained.
40. There are good public transport links via Llanrumney & Countisbury Avenue and also from Newport Road which are within short walking distance for staff access. There is good walking route accessibility for local pupils and staff.
41. Cycleway 2 is planned along this section of Newport Road. A short-medium term future phase will replace the existing cycle lanes provision on this busy main road.
42. There are current parking issues outside the adjacent Pen Y Bryn Primary along Dunster Road. While the Transport team is monitoring the situation and reviewing the need for additional measures and parking controls outside all

schools, the need for any additional measures outside the proposed site would be considered as part of that process.

43. The Council has significant experience in the successful delivery of building projects as a result of progressing a large and growing school organisation programme.
44. Any building work carried out would be managed effectively in consultation with the schools included in these proposals to ensure that the curriculum continues to be delivered and that high education standards and safety standards are maintained, with minimal disruption to pupils and staff.

### **Engagement with The Court Special School pupils**

45. *The pupils liked the idea of a new school buildings/facilities; the school currently had broken heating and the windows could not be opened. They would like better facilities with more suitable rooms/spaces to do things. They provided a range of ideas for what they would like to be provided including improved sports facilities (internal and external), quiet areas, outside space and equipment, an outdoor classroom, craft and music rooms.*
46. *They also wanted practices such as earning tokens throughout the week to spend on Fridays to be maintained.*

### **Fairwater Primary School Pupil representation**

47. *The children were happy with the idea of having another school on their site overall.*
48. *The points raised included related to any loss of playground space, whether there would be opportunities to play with the children from the other school, the age range of the new school, access arrangements and the location of the new school on the site.*
49. *Notes of the meetings can be seen at Appendix 4.*

### **Appraisal of views expressed**

50. The Council welcomes the support for the proposed expansion of The Court Special School.
51. The development of the proposal would be progressed in partnership with the Headteacher and Governing Body and would consider fully the concerns raised and appropriate ways in which these could be mitigated including, phased

implementation, accommodation requirements, site layout options, traffic management, transition planning and Outreach support.

## **Other responses received**

### **Potential for increased traffic around the Fairwater Primary School site**

52. Responses from local residents included general concerns about increased traffic.
53. *The location is in a residential area that does not have the road access infrastructure to cope with the extra vehicular traffic that the proposal would cause. There are significant parking and road safety issues associated with Fairwater Primary School already. A second school on the same site would exacerbate these issues.*

## **Appraisal of views expressed**

54. The location of a special school with 36 places would have a relatively low number of journeys to the site, compared to other schools.
55. Few parents would commute to the school site as a high proportion of learners would travel by free home to school transport in shared vehicles, which would collect and drop off learners within the school site.
56. For parents who travel to the shared site, there are very good public transport links with several bus services a short walk from the school. Waun-gron Park rail station is approximately 0.75 miles (1.2km) from the school.
57. There is good walking route access to the school and good existing and proposed cycling links. Short term improvements are due through the Ely Mill development with links via Cycleway 5 to the city centre. The Ely Trail runs along Bwlch Road immediately to the south of the site and continues to Cardiff Bay of varying standards: traffic-free/ on-road. Signed routes link through Canton to the city centre with medium term improvements due for on-road light segregation cycle tracks.
58. A recent Transport Assessment for this site identified acceptable traffic impact due to a comparable (but larger) development.
59. Further various facilities for walking and cycling, including upgrading of the Bwlch Road crossing are proposed in the Fairwater area for another school project with provision due by late 2023. These would also improve walking and cycling access to/from Ely south of railway line and river Ely and north east through Fairwater, Llandaff and the wider network.

60. The proposed location at the Fairwater Primary School site would give potential for a separate second access from the existing primary school access.
61. The development proposals may require a revised Transport Assessment which will confirm measures to be included as part of the application to maximise travel by sustainable modes and identify any further provision relating specifically to a proposal for The Court.
62. The consultation sought views at the formative stage on school organisation proposals to expand and transfer The Court Special School.
63. Whilst initial development appraisal has been undertaken, detailed matters such as where any new school build would be located would be considered at a later stage. Any design taken forward would be developed in partnership with the school and the appointed contractor would be subject to statutory planning processes which allow for all interested parties to comment on and inform what is delivered.

#### **Dissatisfaction with the Band B 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Programme expansion of Fairwater Primary School not being progressed**

- *Approximately three years ago, the LEA advised that Fairwater Primary was to be developed and expanded to a 2 class per year facility, with nursery provision. In 2020, the LEA "pulled the rug" on the expansion plan citing falling local birth rates as grounds. It was only approximately 6 months ago that the LEA revealed its true intention for the Fairwater Primary site. As a Governor, I feel sandbagged, bitter and betrayed by the LEA's handling of this issue.*
- *There are other sites, in Cardiff West, that the LEA could use for ALN Provision. For example, LEA land at Fitzalan and Michaelston High Schools could be utilised. There are also various greenfield opportunities at school playing fields in Cardiff West. I can only hope that the LEA reconsiders its position on this matter.*

#### **Appraisal of views expressed**

64. The Council acknowledges the concerns raised.
65. In accordance with the required timescales for the submission of Band B 21st Century Programme funding bids by Local Authorities, the Council submitted its list of prioritised schemes to Welsh Government in 2017. This included a proposal to expand Fairwater Primary School.
66. The Council's 2017 bid outlined sufficiency issues in some parts of the city owing to low levels of surplus places in some schools, planned housing developments including the Ely Mill development in Canton, and birth rates

remaining at high levels following a peak in 2011/ 2012. Data available to the Council in 2017, sourced from the NHS in 2016, informed the Council's Band B priority schemes.

67. In September 2016, 4,339 children entered Reception year. There was a 5% surplus of places at reception and a 6.4% surplus in the other year groups of the mainstream primary sector (ages 4-11).
68. However, since 2017, birth rates have reduced significantly. Intakes to primary schools city-wide fell to 3,824 in 2021 and are projected to fall further in the next three years. Intakes to Fairwater Primary School also fell to 17 pupils in Autumn 2021.
69. Projections taking account of data supplied by the NHS indicates that intakes to schools will fall further in coming years and that there is no need to increase the number of primary school places in many parts of the city.
70. The Council has identified the Fairwater Primary School site as suitable for redevelopment taking account of its size of c 4.8Ha. The Building Bulletin guidelines for primary schools indicate that the site would be sufficient to accommodate the proposed special school in addition retaining a generous site for a 2 form entry primary school previously proposed.



## **Responses received regarding the proposal for Greenhill School**

71. The points of view received as part of the consultation are set out in *italics* below and have been grouped according to the points raised where appropriate.
72. The Council's response to each point can be seen underneath, under the heading "Appraisal of views expressed."
73. Formal responses were received from:
  - Local Members – Cllr Jayne Cowan, Cllr Adrian Robson, Cllr Oliver Owen (Rhiwbina Ward)
  - Estyn
  - The Greenhill School Governing Body
  - The Greenhill School Senior Leadership Team

## **Local Member responses**

74. Councillors submitted a joint response. The response included the following points: (a copy of the full response can be seen at Appendix 6)
  - *We are opposed to the proposals for Greenhill Special School. The school continues to receive Green Status with Good Improvements and that is in no small part to the exceptional teaching at the site, and the positioning of the school and Sixth Form. Rhiwbina is a wonderful community and one which supports the school.*
  - *We cautiously welcome the additional number of pupils and look forward to receiving the risk assessment relating to the Ty Glas proposals, including which other school/businesses etc. will join the school on the site.*
  - *We are vehemently opposed to the school being totally removed from Rhiwbina. It works well here. It could be rebuilt here. We are also vehemently opposed to part of the school being moved to the Garden Centre on a roundabout/junction which is exceptionally busy and not suitable. The pupils from the school have considerable additional needs and if they left the site, would be in unfamiliar surroundings with obvious dangers.*
  - *We sincerely hope that the Cabinet will not support this move as it will be highly detrimental to the pupils.*

## **Estyn**

75. A response from Estyn included the following points: (a copy of the full response can be seen at Appendix 7)

- *This proposal sits alongside others that seek to achieve a more equitable provision to better meet the current and future additional learning needs of pupils, across the City and is broadly welcomed. The proposal would result in a 150% increase in the number of pupils on roll. It is not clear which year groups are likely to be most affected by the increase, whether or how this increase will be managed over time, or the resultant impact on pupil transition or staffing including leadership. Estyn considers that the proposal is likely to, at least, maintain the standard of education provision in the area.*
- *The proposer has provided a clear rationale for extending the capacity of Greenhill School. It articulates clearly how the local authority is unable to meet the demands for school places for pupils with emotional and wellbeing needs. However, the proposal does not provide clear rationale for developing the school on two separate sites, albeit 4 miles apart. The consultation document states that Greenhill is currently, and will in the future continue to be, a mixed sex school and that there are 'no planned changes' to the admissions policy. The consultation document notes that the pupils currently on roll are boys. Estyn's inspection of the school in 2013 noted that all the pupils on roll were boys. The consultation does not provide a clear enough account of both existing and future provision for girls and whether the needs of girls with emotional health and wellbeing needs are being met appropriately.*
- *The proposer states that pupils admitted to Greenhill have a statement of special education needs. To comply with the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal [Wales] Act the proposer needs to consider the admission of pupils with individual development plans also. The proposal includes information on how the local authority categorises their school buildings and how the current Greenhill site is not fit for redevelopment as it is rated C for condition (Poor with major defects) and D (Very poor) for suitability, with 'unsuitable' learning environments, which seriously inhibit the school's capacity to deliver the curriculum.*
- *The proposal provides sufficient evidence on the projected timescales and how this is subject to planning permissions of the two sites and the relevant funding being secured. However, less clear is what arrangements will be in place to meet expected demand if the proposal does not progress. The proposal explains well how The Dutch Garden Centre site could be developed. The Council's Cabinet have given permission to acquire the land, the area is designated as Green Wedge meaning that the status of the area can be reviewed in line with the Local Development Plan. The local authority has already undertaken feasibility work and relevant feasibility assessments. The findings of these indicate that the design of the school and its landscaping would need to be taken into consideration to be consistent with its location. The Council's Cabinet has also agreed the acquisition of the Ty Glas site formally occupied by HMRC.*
- *The proposal sets out well how this provision could appropriately support the provision at The Dutch Garden Centre site as well as possible*

*mainstream provision. The proposal explains adequately how any new building would comply with Welsh Government funding conditions, such as BREEAM certification. The design process however has yet to commence but it does describe how detailed designs would be agreed with the headteacher and governing body. The input of children and young people into developing plans would be integral to project implementation at all stages. There would also be opportunities for stakeholders to comment on detailed plans at the pre-planning and planning application stages, should the proposal be progressed.*

- The proposal considers suitable alternatives and outlines the possible benefits, disadvantages, and risks, appropriately. Nearly all pupils currently travel to Greenhill site by pupil transport provided by the local authority. It is proposed that this would still be the case for pupils who would attend the Dutch Garden Centre site. However, pupils attending the Ty Glas site would have a greater potential to use active travel connections, this being of a potential benefit to the pupils. The proposal does acknowledge the travel risks of the Dutch Garden Centre site and proposes a transport assessment takes place if the consultation is successful.*
- The proposal lays out well how the cost of the builds would be met and how further work will be undertaken to establish whether there would be further savings for those pupils who are placed out of county for their education due to the lack of specialised school spaces. The proposal appears to provide effective opportunities for stakeholders, organisations, and members of the public to respond. The process is clearly set out with timescales and how the consultation will be used.*
- The proposal outlines the intention to increase the number of post-16 places further. We welcome this development. It states that the majority of pupils from special schools are not able to sustain successful transitions to further education, training or employment. However, there are no specific references to the curriculum to be offered or any partnership approach to be adopted in meeting the needs of this group of learners. The proposal recognises that for this group of pupils that change, and disruption needs to be carefully managed and that plans would need to be implemented to support this. It is proposed that the current staff employed at Greenhill School would remain which would support this change. The proposal includes how the local authority would work with the school, its governing body and parents to ensure that the proposed changes would be carefully planned so that governance, leadership and pupil welfare and their education would not be disrupted.*
- The proposal outlines the possibility of Greenhill being used as an alternative to placing pupils in out of county provision. However, beyond the statement, no further information is provided. Neither is it clear what impact increasing the provision at Greenhill will have on other settings that currently make provision for secondary aged pupils with emotional health and wellbeing needs. In considering the impact of the proposal on the quality of outcomes, provision and leadership and management, the local authority*

*has listed the most recent Estyn inspection outcomes and the Welsh Government categorisation outcomes for Greenhill School.*

- The proposal recognises the need for 21st learning environments for its pupils that are appropriate and of a high standard to reflect the needs of the 'Curriculum for Wales' due to be implemented in Welsh Schools in 2022. The new curriculum should provide breadth, enable greater depth of learning, ensure better progression, provide scope for more imaginative and creative use of time and place and a much greater emphasis on skills. New and improved school facilities will help support this vision. Overall, there is very little detail on the proposed curriculum. Examples have been provided on how the Dutch barn site could provide vocational and work-related experiences such as horticulture and animal care. However, it is not clear how the curriculum will relate to local market information, the role of local providers such as further education and training organisations. Also unclear is whether pupils from either of the two proposed sites would benefit from the provision that each site could offer.*
- The proposal explains well how the current building limits these opportunities as well as limiting the number of pupils that can attend. The proposal states that the new buildings would be fully accessible and compliant with the Equality Act 2010. However, the consultation does not outline how the council will specifically cater for the needs of children and young people with emotional health and wellbeing needs in the design and build of the proposed sites. In addition to the facilities included [page 18] the design process should consider appropriately how the accommodation, on both sites, will meet the sensory needs of pupils. We note that a joint review of health and specialist provision in Cardiff special schools and the pupil referral unit will inform the design of specialist provision.*
- Greenhill School was last inspected by Estyn in March 2013. At this time the school's performance and prospects for improvement were both judged as 'Good'. An assessment provided by the Central South Consortium in autumn 2021 stated that many pupils make increasingly rapid progress across the whole curriculum and school pupil information clearly indicates that progress rates are successfully improving year on year. In the most recent Welsh Government school categorisation in January 2020, Greenhill School was categorised as Green. This means that Greenhill School is a highly effective school which is well run, has a strong leadership and is clear about its priorities for improvement. The proposal considers the provision for the Welsh language, appropriately. It references the implementation of the LA Welsh Language policy. It appears that there would be no negative impact on the Welsh language provision for these pupils. It does reference the lack of Welsh Language provision for pupils with additional learning needs, however this proposal does not address this shortfall.*

**The Greenhill School Senior Leadership Team**

76. A response from the Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher and Assistant Headteacher included the following points: (a copy of the full response can be seen at Appendix 6)

- *When we consider the sites, we would like to make the following comments. The two sites, one with a rural situation which is perfect for all aspects of forest schools' education and the other with an urban situation within the same post code of the current school, is perfect for travel training, visiting shops and providing services for the community.*
- *We do, however, have a few concerns which we would like to voice at this juncture. The Garden Centre site which is eight acres, is a perfect size and has great potential for the students of Greenhill but the proximity of the motor way raises concerns that we hope to overcome working together with the Local Authority as there are access issues. We would also hope that the local Authority would be able to redirect some of the bus routes as currently the bus route does not extend to the site. This would help to make the site more accessible to parents and some of the students who are able to travel independently.*
- *Travel between the two schools would also need careful consideration. If staff were required to teach in both venues, there are the issues of timings and traffic delays to consider which would impact the school day. I realise that this is largely a timetabling and management issue for the school but is something we should consider from the outset.*
- *On the whole however, the garden centre site with its rural aspect, overall size of eight acres, gang neutral postcode will provide a good site for a 21<sup>st</sup> century specialist provision for students with severe and complex social emotional and mental health issues.*
- *The CF14 venue is a good site for a specialist provision for SMEH students. However, we are aware that there will be a mainstream secondary school on the same site, and this may cause issues. The shared boundary needs careful thought and planning, as does the positioning of the school buildings.*
- *The proposed size of the site (of five acres) is considered to be a little tight but again with careful planning and thought will be workable. Perhaps the size of the site is something that could be discussed at a later date. Furthermore, we would also like to stress that it is not appropriate for Greenhill School to share facilities with a mainstream school and will be pleased to receive further reassurances that Greenhill Special School will not share any facilities with the mainstream school.*

- *The opportunity to expand the provision on two purpose-built sites is unquestionably a once in a lifetime opportunity. The new sites with bespoke facilities for vocational education, specialist resource rooms for the new Welsh curriculum, therapy and conference facilities, opportunities for forest schools' experiences and travel training will help to future proof education for this very vulnerable section of society. As senior staff we look forward to working with the build team to help design the new schools and the facilities of the campuses. We hope that we will see the school's vision materialised as we seek to provide a therapeutic approach to education.*

### **Greenhill Special School Pupil representation**

77. *The pupils supported an increase in the capacity of the school as this would allow for a greater number of young people to benefit from the opportunities provided by the school.*
78. *They liked the idea of a new school buildings/facilities and provided a range of ideas for what they would like to be provided including improved sports facilities (internal and external), cooking facilities, quiet areas, outside space that could be developed as a garden/small animal area, separate sixth form provision and a community/parent space.*
79. *They were however concerned about the location of the Dutch Garden Centre site close to the M4 motorway / junction and the potential risks around this.*
80. *The co-location of a mainstream secondary school site was also a concern and the potential difficulties associated with this.*
81. *At present all of the Greenhill School pupils are boys, many of whom have not been in a mixed school with girls. Some of the pupils attended primary schools with girls, but they felt it was different as the pupils become older, as there is the possibility of relationships between the pupils which could cause difficulties.*
82. Notes of the pupil meetings can be seen at Appendix 4.

### **Appraisal of views expressed**

83. The Council welcomes the expressions of support for the expansion of Greenhill School.
84. It is however acknowledged that a number of issues have been raised in relation to the proposed sites, concerns around safety, the need to maintain a supportive one school ethos and the provision of Welsh-medium additional learning needs provision.

85. It is therefore proposed that further feasibility work is undertaken around the appropriateness of the sites for the accommodation of emotional health and wellbeing provision for learners aged 11 – 19.
86. This will include consideration of:
- the proximity of the Dutch Garden Centre site to the M4/motorway junction and the management of risks associated with this e.g., site mitigations, pupil management and supervision.
  - public transport access to the Dutch Garden Centre site.
  - the area of land in m<sup>2</sup> available at the Ty Glas site for Greenhill school and site layout options.
87. The demolition of the vacant buildings on the Ty Glas site is to be progressed in 2022/23. This would allow for redevelopment of the site for education purposes at the earliest opportunity. This will also support the Council in managing the ongoing security and maintenance costs related to the vacant site.
88. The points raised during the consultation will be further appraised prior to bringing forward revised proposals for the provision of secondary English-medium and Welsh-medium education health and wellbeing special school places.

## **Responses received regarding Cardiff West Community High School and Eastern High School**

89. The points of view received as part of the consultation are set out in *italics* below and have been grouped according to the points raised where appropriate.
90. The Council's response to each point can be seen underneath, under the heading "Appraisal of views expressed."
91. Formal responses were received from:
- Estyn
  - Cardiff West Community High School Governing Body
  - Cardiff West Community High School Headteacher
  - Eastern High School Governing Body and Headteacher

### **Cardiff West Community High School Governing Body response**

92. A response from the Cardiff West Community High School Governing Body included the following points: (a copy of the full response can be seen at Appendix 6)
- *The governing body support the formalisation of the 20 additional ALN places at Cardiff West CHS for our students with emotional health and wellbeing needs. We discussed our concerns with you in detail at this meeting and agreed a site visit by Richard Portas after our imminent ESTYN visit would be the best way forward.*
  - *Whilst of course we are very fortunate with our new build and the facilities that offers, we do have concerns about balancing the needs of all our students and how we can protect our most vulnerable students whilst ensuring we're as inclusive as possible. We wish to give further thought to where these students are physically located on site for their own health, safety and wellbeing.*
  - *We would also want to consider break times and other aspects of the school day routine to ensure the best possible experience for all our students.*
  - *We understand that currently these places are taken by students within our own catchment area and would want to see this continue as far as possible. Should this extend throughout the city, we would have concerns around additional traffic on site and undermining our active travel plans. We have worked hard to embed the school in the local community and will continue with this important work. We also have to balance the needs of these students with other groups and growth plans.*



- *As this is a formalisation of the current situation, we don't have any concerns regarding appropriate staffing and associated costs.*

### **Cardiff West Community High School Headteacher**

93. A response from the Headteacher of Cardiff West Community High School included the following points: (a copy of the full response can be seen at Appendix 6).

- *I welcome the ideas in the consultation, and we have worked well with the LA to establish an effective SRC after a challenging start.*
- *My main concerns centre around space in the building. The SRC was never in the original build design and uses 3 rooms in the ALN area. The school has grown rapidly, and we are short of space. Inevitably, the original capacity and what we need now as needs have changed are a real sticking point.*
- *Given our context, the notion of rooms with 30 pupils in does not work in many cases. For example, our post 16 area houses our internal PRU – this takes up 4 rooms. Without this, we would not meet pupil needs.*
- *In addition, we would like to look at some financial resource to link a member of the LT to the base to ensure that we can continue to grow the SRC and work even more effectively with the LA. In addition, it would support the development of inclusion in the school.*

### **Eastern High School Headteacher**

94. A response from the Governing Body and Headteacher of Eastern High included the following points: (a copy of the full response can be seen at Appendix 6).

- *The Headteacher and Governors of Eastern High welcome the addition of a special needs resource base to the Campus as it meets a clear need for the community. However, the base cannot open until September 2023 and then only in suitable accommodation.*

### **Appraisal of views expressed**

95. The Council welcomes the expressions of support for establishment of emotional health and wellbeing specialist resource base provision at Cardiff West Community High School.

96. It is however acknowledged that there are a number of concerns raised particularly around increasing the capacity of any current provision or establishing a new specialist provision in Cardiff West Community High School,

accommodation requirements and the proposed implementation date at Eastern High and a potential increase in traffic.

97. Provision has been established for pupils enrolled at Cardiff West Community High School who require additional emotional health and wellbeing support. The proposal consulted on seeks to formalise this provision. The school will continue to be supported in providing for existing pupils and any additional pupils accessing the provision who are largely from the local area.
98. Accommodation requirements have been assessed and discussed with both schools. Further work is being undertaken to review existing accommodation and identify any additional requirements. Following discussions with the school, it has been agreed that the implementation date for the establishment of specialist resource base provision at Eastern High would be put back to September 2023 to allow for accommodation and staffing arrangements to be finalised.
99. Only a small number of additional vehicles would be anticipated for those pupils who are eligible for the Learner Transport which would be in shared taxis or by minibus.
100. At Cardiff West Community High School suitable improved and / or expanded facilities for drop-off and pick-up may be required within the site to accommodate the appropriate numbers of vehicles.
101. Additional parking restrictions along Penally Road around school start and finish times would reduce congestion and parking issues and improve safety for pupils.
102. At Eastern High the site would be assessed to ensure there is suitable facilities for drop-off and pick-up to accommodate the appropriate numbers of vehicles.
103. Measures to improve traffic issues outside the school may include additional parking restrictions or consideration of a School Street around school start and finish times to reduce congestion and parking issues and improve safety for pupils.

## Formal responses received during the consultation regarding Additional Learning Needs Provision

104. Formal responses regarding the overall provision for children and young adults with additional learning needs were received from:

- Ysgol Glan Morfa Headteacher and Governing Body
- Ysgol Melin Gruffydd Governing Body
- Ysgol Glan Ceubal Governing Body
- Ysgol Pencae Governing Body
- Ysgol Pwll Coch Governing Body
- Ysgol y Berllan Deg Governing Body
- Ysgol Gwaelod y Garth Governing Body
- Ysgol Nant Caerau Governing Body
- Ysgol Pen y Gores Governing Body
- Creigiau Primary School Governing Body
- Ysgol Mynydd Bychan Governing Body
- Ysgol Treganna Governing Body
- Ysgol Coed y Gof Governing Body
- Ysgol Plasmawr School and Governing Body
- Ysgol Glantaf Governing Body
- Cardiff Governors Association
- Merched y Wawr

105. Copies of the full response can be seen at Appendix 6.

106. *The responses from the Welsh-medium schools contained largely consistent content and outlined the following:*

- *acknowledge and welcome the proposals to increase capacity for the English-medium sector and fully support the provision for the most vulnerable pupils in our communities. However, there was a strong feeling that there is a lack of additional learning needs provision within the Welsh-medium sector and a disappointment that more changes were not proposed as part of this consultation.*
- *Furthermore, the view was expressed that this consultation contradicts the recent WESP consultation which noted the Council's ambition to open three specialist units in Welsh-medium schools in the Primary sector and a further three SRB in the Secondary sector.*
- *Concerns were outlined that by limiting the investment to one sector it encourages families to transfer ALN pupils to leave the Welsh-medium sector and move to English-medium schools where the investment and resources are currently viewed as being superior and better able to meet more complex or higher levels of need.*

- *Investment is needed within the Welsh-medium sector in order to ensure parity of provision and full inclusion within Welsh-medium schools.*
- *The documentation recognises a clear growing need within the English-medium sector but not in the Welsh-medium with concerns expressed as to whether the research been sufficient to accurately reflect need presenting in Welsh-medium schools.*
- *Concerns were also expressed that there is a lack of clear provision in terms of emotional health and well-being and behavior within the Welsh-medium sector for pupils at Stage 4-5 (who have needs beyond mainstream provision) along with a lack of space to establish nurture/wellbeing classes.*
- *There was consistent view across the majority of the responses submitted by the Welsh-medium schools that there is a definite need for a greater number of Welsh-medium ALN places and that this is rising. In order to respond to this effectively there was a call for strategic and holistic planning which puts the children and families at the heart of all that we do consistent with our collective commitment to the UNCRC and FGWBA with other corporate goals such as One Planet Cardiff, Cardiff 2030 and Child Friendly City status.*

### **Response to the view expressed**

107. The Council welcomes the expressions of support for the expansion of additional learning needs provision for children and young people city wide.
108. The level of special educational needs/ additional learning needs in the Welsh-medium sector has historically been lower than in the English medium sector. This has however been changing over the last 4-5 years, with schools reporting an increased incidence of additional learning needs, in all areas of need.
109. A review of additional learning needs in the Welsh-medium sector was undertaken with Welsh medium schools in 2016 to inform the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP). Schools reported a small but significant number of examples of pupils with additional learning needs leaving the Welsh-medium sector in order to access specialist resource bases or special schools.
110. There was also some anecdotal evidence to suggest that some families who would otherwise choose Welsh-medium education opt instead for English medium if their child has additional learning needs, through concern that their child may need to transfer to the specialist sector at a later date.
111. Through the WESP, Cardiff has invested in specialist provision in the sector, including some capacity to respond to growing demand and to generate more confidence in the availability of specialist provision in the sector.
112. A new primary base was established at Ysgol Gymraeg Pwll Coch, within the catchment area of Ysgol Gyfun Gymraeg Glantaf, where the secondary base is

established. The two bases cater for learners with severe learning difficulties, providing a specialist curriculum and supporting a range of secondary needs including physical and medical needs, speech and language difficulties and autism.

113. As the Welsh sector continues to grow it will be important to develop additional provision in anticipation of the need, to ensure Welsh-medium education is a genuine choice for learners with complex additional learning needs.
114. Following engagement sessions with members of Cardiff's Welsh Education Forum in summer 2021, the Council formally consulted on its draft Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) 2022-2032 between 15 October 2021 and 13 December 2021.
115. Links to the plan (including the full draft WESP, the easy read summary version and the Trajectory for Growth) and survey webpage were circulated to statutory stakeholders including Cardiff schools and Cardiff's Welsh Education Forum member organisations.
116. The draft WESP sets out the strategy for the development of Welsh-medium additional learning needs provision and proposals would be brought forward as part of the implementation of the Council's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan following agreement of the strategy by the Welsh Government and formal adoption by the Council later in 2022.
117. The ongoing development of additional learning needs provision including new and existing provision will be kept under review to ensure proposals are brought forward in a strategic and holistic way that takes into account the needs of all of our learners and reflects the additionality required to ensure parity in the Welsh-medium sector as new places are delivered throughout the proposed WESP.