

Appendix 2

Notes of a meeting held with school council and year 6 pupils of Dolau Primary School Thursday 18th October 2018 at 2:00pm Meeting to discuss the Council's proposals to establish Primary education provision for the Llanilud housing development

Present

Julie Hadley, School Organisation Manager
Nicola Goodman, Senior 21st Century Schools Officer
Sophie Nicholls, 21st Century Schools Graduate Officer
72 pupils present (14 from school council and year 6 classes from English and Welsh medium streams).

Julie Hadley (JH) set out the proposals and asked pupils if they knew what the proposal was about. The meeting was open for pupils to pose questions.

Question

We know there will be a new building and they are discussing it tonight.

JH explained the consultation process. If the decision is passed by Cabinet then the building will be designed and built.

Question

Will any buildings be removed from the site?

JH

No

Question

What will happen to this building?

JH

There are no plans to alter this building. We are trying to build the school big enough to cope with all of the new houses, and it will be a separate building on site.

Question

Will the old building be forgotten?

JH

No, the Council and Governors will look after and protect it. It will still be part of the school.

Question

How long will it take to build?

JH

It will probably take a year.

Question

Will they have dinners here or there?

JH

They will be able to have dinners in the new building.

Question

When will you start building?

JH

Hopefully, next summer.

Question

What will happen to the animals in the woods?

JH

We will make sure the animals have a home and we will protect and enhance their habitats with the school council.

Question

Will we have new wifi boxes for our new mega school?

JH

We will improve the IT to deliver the new curriculum.

Question

How will we pay for the new teachers?

JH

The budget for the staff depends on the number of pupils in the school and the Council provide the funding to the governors to pay for your teachers.

Question

How much will it cost to build?

JH

It will probably cost more than £5m.

Question

Will there be a path connecting the school building?

JH

Yes there will be a path connecting the buildings.

Question

Will we get a new PE hall?

JH

There will be a hall included in the new building.

Question

Will the fire alarms be linked between the buildings?

JH

The fire systems will be in place for all the buildings.

Question

How many classes will be taught in the new building?

JH

I'm not sure. That would be up to Mr Evans to decide.

Question

What are the pink buildings on the map?

JH

Those are groups of houses. These are not the official plans for the school yet. These are just to show you what might be able to happen if this is passed by Cabinet.

Question

Where will we all go break time?

JH

There will be a larger play area between both buildings. There may be a new grass pitch and maybe a MUGA.

Question

Will the new building be for foundation phase or juniors?

JH

The building will be suitable for both.

Question

There will be more traffic.

JH

Yes, we will ask for a large drop off facility for the school and make sure it is safe for you to walk and cycle to school.

Question

What will happen to the nature area?

JH

Some of it may have to be moved elsewhere to make way for a path that connects both buildings. We wouldn't get rid of it all as we know how important the green space is to the school.

Question

Would this turn into a comp?

JH

No. Over a few years there will be more pupils filling this school, and the spare places will be filled. Eventually both buildings will be full of primary aged pupils.

Question

Will there be a new head for that school?

JH

No. It will be Mr Evans as head for both buildings under the one school of Dolau Primary.

Question

Will year 6 be able to visit?

JH

Of course, it will be your new school building.

Question

Will there be storage for outside play equipment.

JH

Yes we will make sure there is storage.

Question

Will they teach different subjects there?

JH

No, it will still be part of Dolau like your classes are now.

Question

How will the buses get there?

JH

That will depend on how the housing estate is designed. There will be a bus drop off area on the school site though.

Question

Will the English and Welsh be separate in the buildings?

JH

That is up to Mr Evans and the Governors to decide.

Question

How will the local comprehensive schools cope with the increased capacity of Dolau?

JH

The Welsh stream will be fine as there is plenty of room in Ysgol Llanhari. We will need to look at the English stream and see what the best solution is to ensure there is enough space for everyone.

Question

Will you change the school logo or mascot?

JH

No, that will not be affected by this. That is for the school to decide at any point.

Question

Will there be a new pool?

JH

No. We don't put pools in our schools anymore because they are expensive for the schools to run.

Question

What about disabled children that move in?

JH

The new building will be suitable for anyone with additional learning needs.

Question

How many children will there be in the school?

JH

There will be 540 new school places.

Question 3

Where will we have the summer and Halloween fates?

JH

That is up to the school to decide.

Question 3

Will the school be a more modern design?

JH

The new block we are currently sat in is very modern and we build new 21st Century modern school buildings.

Question

Will pupils have to pay more for school trips?

JH

No

Question

How many builders will there be?

JH

Hopefully lots of them.

Question

Llanharan will turn big. Will there be extra police and fire stations?

JH

That will be up to those services to decide.

Question

How big will the new housing area be?

JH

You can look at the map on the board to see some ideas about designs and how many houses.

Question

Why won't it be a comp?

JH

There is room elsewhere for children to go to secondary school. We need to make sure there is enough space for primary age pupils.

Question

How many new houses will there be?

JH

1800

Question

Will we share yards?

JH

Yes. There will be a much bigger external space for you to share.

Question

Will it be locked so people can't come into school?

JH

Yes the whole site will be secure and your safeguarding is essential to the council.

Question

What if there are too many pupils there?

JH

The site will be bigger and there will be enough space in the buildings and on the yard for all pupils to learn and play.

Question

How will the cars get there?

JH

There will be new roads built as part of the wider housing development.

Question

How long will design take?

JH

Hopefully they will start building next summer, but it takes about 6-8 months to design a school.

Question

Will there be enough buses and car parks?

JH

There will be a pick up/drop off area and safety is our main concern. You will be able to get on and off your buses safely.

Question

Will there be a bike park?

JH

There will likely be a bike shelter as we put them in most schools, and maybe a path to cycle on.

Question

Will there be a new field?

JH

Yes there will be a MUGA and a grass pitch for all pupils to use.

Question

Will there be two nurseries? There are already two for each class.

JH

Possibly, that is for Mr Evans to decide.

Question

How many trees will there be?

JH

I'm not sure how many but we won't get rid of them all and hopefully plant some new ones.

Question

Will there be a running track?

JH

Probably not.

Question

Is Persimmon building it?

JH

Yes, and the houses around it.

Question

What happens if there is an emergency in one building?

JH

The building will be evacuated and the emergency services will be called.

Question

Did you build this school?

JH

Yes the Council arranged for the building of this extension we are sat in.

JH

Thank you all for your questions and comments.

Notes of a meeting held with staff and governors of Dolau Primary School

Thursday 18th October 2018 at 3:45pm

Meeting to discuss the Council's proposals to establish Primary education provision for the Llanilud housing development

Present

Andrea Richards, Head of 21st Century Schools
Julie Hadley, School Organisation Manager
Nicola Goodman, Senior 21st Century Schools Officer
Sophie Nicholls, 21st Century Schools Graduate Officer
28 members of school staff and the governing body

Introductions from Council officers.

Andrea Richards (AR) welcomed everyone to the meeting and outlined the proposal, the reasons for the proposal, the purpose of the meeting, the consultation process and timescales relating to the consultation process and the proposals themselves should they be implemented.

AR referred to the detailed consultation documents which outline the precise reasons for this consultation process, and provide further information regarding the school, such as pupil numbers, building condition information etc. The consultation document also provides information regarding where written comments should be sent and includes a questionnaire should people wish to complete this.

AR explained that the questions / comments / responses would be recorded for inclusion in the consultation report which would be fed back to Cabinet in January 2019, as would the feedback from pupils. AR stressed that this was a period of consultation and should the proposals proceed to the next stage (statutory notice), objections would be received and recorded at that stage.

AR outlined the full consultation process as:-

- This initial consultation;
- A further report to elected members and production of a consultation report, which is also published;
- If elected members agree to proceed, a statutory notice is issued. This allows for a statutory 28 days period of consultation, during which any interested person may comment, or raise objections;
- Following the 28 day period, a further report will be presented to elected members, together with an objections report which again has to be published.
- The Council's Cabinet will then make the final determination of the proposal.

It is anticipated that, subject to the outcome of this consultation process and progress with the construction of the new homes, the new school building would be provided by September, 2021; the exact date is not known at this stage as it is subject to house construction schedules that are outside of the Council's control.

In the case of staff, it is expected that there will be no impact whatsoever on the existing staff employed at Dolau; as the school grows in size in subsequent years additional staff will be required, so the staffing structure of the school will require continuous review by the Headteacher and governing body.

AR explained that the purpose of the meeting was to seek views on the proposal being put forward.

The meeting was then opened for questions.

Comment

The consultation document states that consideration is being given regarding two separate schools. What if the Council decides to make it a 'super school'?

Response

The intention is to use Dolau Primary School as an exemplar primary school, as it is a very good school. Staff and governors can shape the school in the future. There are a large number of houses proposed to be built and there will be a need for even more school places should further projected homes materialise. A through school (3-16 years or 3-19 years) would need another consultation.

Comment

Concern expressed regarding the school having 1,000 pupils. Primary schools are about community / smaller schools where teachers know the pupils' names.

Response

The intention is, once the schools are established, to split them. This is subject to further consultation at the relevant time. At the moment, it is not known how many pupils will be generated by the new housing development and what language medium education they will require, therefore, the proposal is to open the new building under the umbrella of Dolau Primary School in the first instance.

Comment

If the school is running okay, the Council may not want to split the school and spend money on a new / extra Headteacher.

Response

The school will be funded appropriately as numbers grow. The governing body will determine the staffing structure going forward. Dolau Primary School is currently a big school. There are other primary schools within Rhondda Cynon Taf which also have over 500 pupils. There is better financial management in larger schools, but the concerns expressed regarding larger schools are noted.

Comment

The current proposal (to open as an extension to Dolau Primary School) is understood as the numbers of pupils are clearly not known at present and separation in the future could be foreseen – it is good to have the choice.

Comment

One point of clarification was made in relation to the opening statements - the houses and investment in the area are coming because of the Council, not the M4.

Question

There is a 3G pitch at the new school in Pencoed. Could this be negotiated with the developers?

Response

This cannot be promised, but it could be discussed with the developers. Two pitches are being provided as part of the new build – the surfaces of these has not been determined at present.

Question

The reference made to the demographic of the school (i.e. Welsh or English medium) into the future being made by governors – will the Council or Welsh Government provide guidance on this?

Response

Ultimately it is the governors' decision, however, the governing body would be suitably supported by the Council. The current building will also continue to receive investment going forward.

Question

Will school staff be consulted regarding the new building?

Response

Persimmon (the housing developer) have already been provided with an accommodation schedule of required spaces in a school of this size. Once their proposals are received, the Council will review them and consult with the school. Planning permission is being requested imminently for the house construction. If the application is successful, the house construction is due to start in the new year. This is the first time that the Council has had a school provided by a developer. The Council will consult with school staff in due course, as they are the practitioners.

Comment

The new building provides an opportunity for new initiatives, for example, a radio station, specialist rooms to put the school on the map in terms of the new curriculum.

Response

The building needs to be future-proofed and innovative. There is a need to ensure that the building can deliver the new curriculum.

Question

Are there any plans for development of any of the Comprehensive schools in the area?

Response

The Council continually monitors the position and are also collaborating with Pencoed in Bridgend. There is space for secondary school age pupils requiring

Welsh medium education at Ysgol Llanhari; however, English medium capacity at secondary school age is an issue.

Comment

The majority of people moving into the new development may want English medium education.

Response

The Council continually monitors the situation and applies the management of school places. There is also the Welsh Government target of over one million Welsh speakers by 2050 which may impact. However, ultimately, parental choice determines the language choice for a child's education.

Comment

The buildings at Ysgol Llanhari need to be looked at to attract further Welsh medium pupils.

Response

The Council are passionate about investment and have invested over £200 million in school buildings over the last five years. We are aware of Ysgol Llanhari (secondary department) and we will continue to work with the school. The primary department has received substantial investment and is now of a 21st Century Schools standard.

Comment

Some parents may prefer bilingual / dual language and other parents may prefer all Welsh, but this cannot be predicted.

Comment

Nursery applications – may these be considered across the border?

Response

There is no cross-border provision for nursery education as nursery education is paid for by Rhondda Cynon Taf Council, not by the Welsh Government, hence, is only available to Rhondda Cynon Taf residents. This was part of the budget cuts implemented and it is not fair for residents from across the border to benefit from Rhondda Cynon Taf Council's budgets.

Bridgend Council are currently reviewing their nursery provision and there are similar border issues elsewhere in RCT.

Secondary school pupils attending schools across the border are funded by Welsh Government.

Question

299 houses will be built before the school building opens – where will these children go?

Response

There may be a need to provide temporary / mobile classroom accommodation for a short period and increase the school's admission number accordingly.

Question

One problem to take into account is parking issues. Aware that it is an issue in all schools, but could drop off points be included?

Response

The Council has authorised traffic impact assessments. These can then input into the discussions / negotiations with Persimmon.

Traffic will be reviewed on the proposed new and existing school sites and any recommendations following the Traffic Impact Assessment will be undertaken.

Question

Would the new building have a separate kitchen and ancillary spaces etc?

Response

This will be included.

Question

Would there be more provision for Special Educational Needs?

Response

All new school buildings are fully accessible and available to pupils with Additional Learning Needs.

Comment

With two school buildings, there needs to be a space for all staff to come together.

Response

There will be large enough spaces to accommodate staff meetings.

Comment

The Headteacher commented that the staff and governors of Dolau Primary School would ensure that this is the best school in the UK (not just RCT) and are really excited by the next phase.

AR thanked all for their attendance and inputs and encouraged all present to contact the Council with any further comments or concerns and emphasised that the Council aims to provide a fantastic new facility.

Two short video clips were played showing new schools recently constructed as part of the 21st Century Schools Programme at Cwmaman and Tonyrefail.

The meeting closed at 4:35pm