

Appendix 2

Notes of a meeting held with the School Council of Hirwaun Primary School

Thursday 11th October 2018 at 2:30pm

Meeting to discuss the Council's proposals to construct a new school building for Hirwaun Primary School and the proposed change of language medium status of Penderyn Community Primary School

Present

Esther Thomas (ET), Temporary Service Director for Access & Inclusion Services

Nicola Goodman (NG), Senior 21st Century Schools Officer

Lisa Howell (LH), Senior 21st Century Schools Officer

10 members of the School Council of Hirwaun Primary School

1 member of school staff

Introductions from Council officers.

ET explained that the Council was proposing to build a new, bigger school at Hirwaun which would replace the current school. The children taught in English at Penderyn would be taught in the new school so that Penderyn primary School would become Welsh only.

The new school would be brand new and would be bigger than the existing school. It would be able to hold 390 pupils, plus nursery age children.

ET explained that the Council believed that there were many good things that a new school could bring, such as:-

- A brand new, modern building;
- New outdoor play and games areas;
- New ICT;
- A bigger school for more pupils to enjoy and more opportunities to make more friends;
- The opportunity for all children to come to the school and access all parts of the school, including those with extra needs (for example if they use a wheelchair);
- More opportunities and nicer facilities for after-school clubs.

ET also explained that there may be some things which concern some children, for example, the children living in Penderyn may have further to travel to school if they come to Hirwaun Primary School, however, there will be school buses provided for them.

Also, some children may prefer being in a smaller school with less pupils.

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

ET explained that the purpose of the meeting with the pupils today was for the Council to hear and record what the pupils think about the proposals, as their views are very important to the Council.

To facilitate the discussion ET asked the pupils some questions:-

Question 1

Do you think the proposal is a good idea?

Responses

- Overall consensus - yes.

Why do you think that it is a good idea?

Responses

- If new people start at the school, they will prefer to be in a new school.
- People can learn more and won't want to move from a new school.
- Better resources for better learning.
- Better outdoor space.
- Less stones and concrete in the yard.
- There would be more security, so little children are safe.
- Higher gates and fences to keep safe and to keep balls in.
- Electric doors would be liked in a new school.
- Less glare from the windows on screens.
- Better ICT in a new school.
- Bigger TVs would be good.
- Would like an outdoor classroom.

Question 2

Do you like the idea of a new school building?

Responses

- Overall consensus - yes.
- Like the new Aberdare Community School.

Question 3

What do you like about your existing school?

Responses

- Small so not very loud.
- How nice the teachers are.

- Still a good school, even though it is small.
- Not as many people because it is small.
- Classrooms are a nice size, bit would prefer there to be more desks so that you can sit in different places to do different things / have more choice.
- The displays.

Question 4

Is there anything that you don't like about your existing school?

Responses

- Stones on yard.
- Toilets are not nice.
- The school is cold / there are not many radiators.
- The dinner hall being used for PE and assemblies.
- Too grassy / boggy.
- Old tables and chairs.
- Ground outside is too hard / stony.

Question 5

Is there anything that concerns or worries you about the proposals?

Responses

- Worried that there will be less equipment.
- Worried that some pupils might not like a bigger school.
- What the teachers will be like.
- Sad that they will be missing being a new school (Years 4 / 5 / 6), but happy that their brothers / sisters will get to have a new school.
-

Question 6

Would you look forward to welcoming new friends and how would you make them feel welcome?

Responses

- Show them around the school.
- Ask them to join in games on the yard.
- Introduce them to teachers.
- Show respect to them.
- Be kind to them.
- Make them feel comfortable.

Group discussions were undertaken and the pupils and they were given post-it notes and asked to write their views. The written responses received are listed below:

- Vinyl floor

- Stained windows
- Better glass
- Sturdy walls
- Better security x6
- More resources x7
- New equipment – pens, pencils, laptops, ipads
- Better toys x2
- Your own folder
- Drawing equipment
- Better music player
- Library and computers x4
- More parking x3
- Upgraded bigger dining hall x5
- Room for performances
- Sports hall
- Netball court x4
- Football yard x2
- Sporting courts
- Outdoor sports area
- More sports and outdoor activities
- Football x2
- More obstacles
- Baseball
- Different events and competitions
- Dinner money on finger
- Friday special for dinner
- More food choice x6
- Snacks and drinks for school classes if they are snackish or thirsty instead of going out of class for a drink
- Electric doors x2
- Climbing frame x6
- Sand pit x2
- Swings
- Garden area and green house
- More grass
- Bigger yard x5
- More outside storage x3
- Better white board
- More/better shelters x4
- Rainbow carpet for nursery
- Colourful classrooms x6
- Colourful toilet cubicles x3 – green for boys and pink for girls
- Bigger classes x3
- Outdoor classroom x3
- Automatic lights and stage lights x2
- Vote for new school uniform for year 6
- Screens on rails so it can go up and down

- Better TV
- Loud speaker and bell for announcements x2
- First aid/doctors room x2
- Rooms for people who need more support x2
- Assembly room
- Elsa Room – for worries you can go chat to someone
- Art room x3
- Fruit room
- Staff room
- Relaxing room
- School Council room
- Attendance room
- 2 floors to the building x4
- More events – pet day
- Signs for rooms
- Welcome sigs x2
- Shed for bikes and scooters x4
- Better pegs/cloakrooms x5
- ICT Room x5
- More water fountains
- Softer seats
- Separate desks
- Better tables x4
- Better furniture x3
- Draws on tables
- More trays for extra work
- Better chairs x2
- Benches
- Leaving wall – you sign it when you leave
- Softer play area for the younger ones x2
- 3 play times
- More displays
- More decoration
- Sleep time for nursery
- Heating
- A fort in the reading corner for nursery and reception
- Support staff and children buddies
- Star of the year

The pupils were thanked for their time and input.

The meeting closed at 3:10pm

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

Thursday 11th October 2018 at 4pm

Meeting to discuss the Council's proposals to construct a new school building for Hirwaun Primary School and the proposed change of language medium status of Penderyn Community Primary School

Present

Esther Thomas (ET), Temporary Service Director for Access & Inclusion Services

Nicola Goodman (NG), Senior 21st Century Schools Officer

Lisa Howell (LH), Senior 21st Century Schools Officer

Paul Hughes (PH), Human Resources Officer

24 members of school staff and the governing body

Introductions from Council officers.

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

Should the proposals be implemented, it is proposed that:-

- From 1st September 2019, no new pupils wishing to be educated through the medium of English will be admitted to Penderyn Community Primary School;
- From 1st September 2020, the catchment change to extend the catchment area of Penderyn Community Primary School to include the communities of Trenant and Penywaun will take effect; and
- On 1st September 2021, pupils attending the English medium stream of Penderyn Community Primary School would (subject to parental preference), transfer to the new Hirwaun Primary School building.

ET explained how this proposal was part of the 21st Century Schools and Education Programme and addressed many of the Council's objectives in relation to this, including -

- Addressing growth in demand for Welsh medium education;
- Expansion of schools in areas of increased demand for educational services;
- Addressing the condition of educational assets;

- Making assets available for community use.

ET referred to the detailed information contained within the consultation document which had been circulated and the consultation response pro-forma contained therein (further copies of both were available at the meeting) and referred to page 5 of the consultation document which outlines how people can make comments.

ET 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. ET 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.

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 was then opened for questions.

Comment

Delighted at the prospect that there is to be a new school. The current school is draughty and full of asbestos. Hirwaun has to have a new school. The current school is in desperate need of replacement. Pleased that it would go ahead even if Penderyn remained as dual language.

Response

ET commented that there was also strong evidence for making Penderyn School Welsh only, as there were diminishing numbers of pupils requesting English medium education at Penderyn School.

Comment

There are also a lot of new housing developments in the Hirwaun area which are applying for planning permission.

Comment

Delighted with the proposals. The children at Hirwaun School deserve a much better building.

Response

ET complimented the staff on making the best of the current learning environment and commented that the size of the site meant that there was the space to do exciting things here. Works would be managed to ensure a safe build on the existing live site. The technical team are looking at proposals at present. ET emphasised that no decision has been pre-empted, but certain works are necessary to establish the feasibility and indicative cost of the proposals. Management of space within the existing site will be undertaken in consultation with school staff should the proposals proceed.

Comment

The school is lucky to have lots of space.

Response

LH explained the indoor and outdoor spaces that were provided at the recently constructed Cwmaman Primary School.

Comment

The school was keen to have breakout spaces in any new building.

Response

ET offered the opportunity for staff / governors to view the recently constructed new schools so that they could see what was possible.

Comment

Future proofing and providing flexible spaces was a requirement in light of the Donaldson report / recommendations.

Response

Concepts are shared with school staff at the earliest opportunity and views / inputs sought from all stakeholders.

Question

Would there be any impact on staff?

Response

PH explained that depending upon pupil numbers going forward, there was likely to be an increase in staff numbers at Hirwaun Primary School. The school were just getting a new building. The governing body at Hirwaun School would be encouraged to offer the opportunity for the English medium stream staff of Penderyn Community Primary School to join the team of staff at Hirwaun Primary School.

ET thanked all for their attendance and inputs.

The meeting closed at 4:30pm

**Notes of a meeting held with the School Council of Penderyn
Community Primary School**

Thursday 11th October 2018 at 2:30pm

**Meeting to discuss the Council's proposals to construct a new school
building for Hirwaun Primary School and the proposed change of
language medium status of Penderyn Community Primary School**

Present:

Gaynor Davies (GD), Director of Education
Andrea Richards (AR), Head of 21st Century Schools
Non Morgan (NM), School Organisation and Governance Team Leader
9 members of the School Council of Penderyn Community Primary School
1 member of school staff

GD made introductions and provided meeting outline to the 9 pupils present (plus teacher).

GD explained that the Council was proposing to build a new, bigger school at Hirwaun which would replace the current school. The children taught in English at Penderyn would be taught in the new school so that Penderyn primary School would become Welsh only.

The reasons for a Welsh Medium Primary in Penderyn were outlined:

- i. Pupils would be totally immersed in Welsh medium
- ii. More after-school activities delivered in Welsh
- iii. Whole year groups to be formed (no longer a need for mixed age groups)
- iv. School transport provided for pupils to attend Hirwaun English Medium school from the Penderyn area.

Questions and answers

Will there be English in the new school?

GD confirmed there would be English lessons.

Are we a good school?

GD advised that Estyn have said it is.

How do the community benefit from this change?

GD advised that Penderyn will remain as a community school but pupil numbers are smaller in English than Welsh.

Why do you want to move us?

GD shared the Welsh Government plans for to increase Welsh speakers in the future therefore the Council have to make sure schools are big enough.

English pupils also need state of the art schools and the new school in Hirwaun will be like this.

Is it more likely that pupils would learn Welsh better being around other Welsh learners?

GD agreed but added language immersion does help.

Would the Welsh Unit be going to English Comprehensive?

That is down to parental choice.

Why turn it into a Welsh School?

GD explained pupil numbers and class structures – so pupils of same age would be in classrooms together.

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

GD suggested that any good ideas to be written on the large sheets of paper provided, or post it notes.

GD added - if there are any worries or concerns these should also be written on the large sheets of paper provided, or post it notes.

The School Council showed the officers 'Save our School' posters they had designed.

The School Council gave a presentation – 'Negative things about Penderyn Primary School turning Welsh'.

The written responses received on the large sheets of paper and post-it notes are listed below:-

- Improve new closes
- New sports facilities
- Making new friends
- Lovely opportunities in Hirwaun
- More Welsh speakers in this school
- More Welsh speakers
- I think this is a good idea because the new school is next generation
- New children that have just started our school will not have a change to settle properly in Hirwaun Primary
- Only half of the community can use the new school
- Moving schools ☹
- Leaving our friends

- This is a bad idea because kids got siblings in the Welsh
- Children that have settled in Penderyn Primary School would not be settled so quickly in Hirwaun Primary School
- I think this is a bad idea because children like this school
- Young siblings not being able to experience Penderyn school like it is now
- People might not want to leave
- I think this is a bad idea because half of the community will work here and we need to go to a new school and we like this school
- Less people in the school
- Save our school – let the English stay x5

The pupils were thanked for their time and input.

**Notes of a meeting held with staff and governors of Penderyn
Community Primary School**

Thursday 11th October 2018 at 4pm

**Meeting to discuss the Council's proposals to construct a new school
building for Hirwaun Primary School and the proposed change of
language medium status of Penderyn Community Primary School**

Present:

Gaynor Davies (GD), Director of Education
Andrea Richards (AR), Head of 21st Century Schools
Non Morgan (NM), School Organisation and Governance Team Leader
Ellen Williams (EW), Human Resources Officer
29 members of school staff and the governing body

GD thanked the School Council for their contribution.

Introductions from Council officers.

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

Should the proposals be implemented, it is proposed that:-

- From 1st September 2019, no new pupils wishing to be educated through the medium of English will be admitted to Penderyn Community Primary School;
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GD explained how this proposal was part of the 21st Century Schools and Education Programme and addressed many of the Council's objectives in relation to this, including -

- Addressing growth in demand for Welsh medium education;
- Expansion of schools in areas of increased demand for educational services;
- Addressing the condition of educational assets;
- Making assets available for community use.

GD referred to the detailed information contained within the consultation document which had been circulated and the consultation response pro-forma contained therein (further copies of both were available at the meeting) and referred to page 5 of the consultation document which outlines how people can make comments.

GD 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. GD 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.

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

AR explained the different type of buildings and future proofing new builds for the 21st Century.

GD opened up the meeting for questions.

GD explained that officers cannot talk to individuals but can arrange for Human Resources to attend separately.

GD referred to page 18 of the consultation document and apologised that the first sentence was not worded correctly and was not meant to offend any staff. This was to explain a reduction in pupil numbers in English – Estyn recognised this.

Question

Query regarding the covenant – was it prescriptive Welsh and English?

Response

AR to check and the findings will be included in the Consultation Report.

Comment

A new build doesn't ensure a high standard of learning. Her son is in St. Johns – Welsh is stronger.

Response

GD noted the School Council also acknowledged this. GD further explained that data tells us that the need for Welsh is increasing and English is decreasing. Therefore, the Local Authority have to meet targets in the WESP (Welsh in Education Strategic Plan). Data also tells us pupils would be entitled to free transport.

Comment

Parents are not happy with pupils moving to a Red school.

Comment

GD advised that a Post Inspection Action Plan (PIAP) was in place – which means that the school is being given support to help with improvements. The Local Authority work closely with the Central South Consortium to improve standards.

Question

Staff asked is this not a Community School? Is the Local Authority isolating English parents? Penderyn is a healthy school with pupils walking, this won't continue if pupils moved to Hirwaun.

Response

GD explained that all factors needed to be looked at. Penderyn will remain a Community School but a Welsh school.

Comment

The Local Authority changed the catchment area and that's why numbers reduced.

Response

AR explained there is still parental choice.

Comment

Staff feel Welsh and English is being segregated – never been this way.

Response

GD explained that the English stream pupil numbers are very low – can have a negative social effect. Need to prepare pupils for Secondary school and life skills.

Pupil transition is easier in bigger groups.

Comment

Staff didn't agree.

Response

GD explained that you can't focus on a small number, but need to look at big picture. AR added that there is still parental choice.

Comment

Staff feel that the Local Authority are removing that choice.

Response

GD outlined that pupil numbers and demand tells the Local Authority that English numbers are diminishing, therefore we have to look at what is viable.

Comment

Staff feel English pupils don't come here due to catchment changes.

Response

AR emphasised that parental choice is always a factor.

Question

22 pupils in the village surely have the right to be educated in their village?

Response

GD pointed out that Hirwaun is located only 1.5 miles away.

Question

Fundamental message – denial of choice from the community. Pupils in Hirwaun chose to come to Penderyn for English education. What other options have been considered? Proposed that Penderyn catchment change to possibly increase in English Department. Quoted September figures.

Response

GD and AR can only use published figures.

Question

Cut off point in document, September 2019 for nursery admissions – Doesn't a 12 month notice period need to be implemented?

Response

This is a for a catchment change.

Comment

A two year period will exacerbate the pupil number issue.

Response

GD explained forecasting numbers may change but looking at long term plan.

Question

Projections – if the proposal goes ahead then numbers fall how difficult would it be to re-introduce English back/bilingual school.

Response

AR explained that a new statutory proposal would have to be undertaken. Also, WESP (Welsh in Education Strategic Plan) target – to review dual language schools was outlined.

Question

Why do so many pupils in Hirwaun chose education out of catchment?

Response

GD commented that building conditions and facilities in Hirwaun may be detrimental.

Question

If the 102 pupils in Hirwaun that chose education outside of catchment and the new 90 houses to be built all went to Hirwaun would there be capacity?

Response

AR replied that there would - this has all been taken into consideration.

Question

If you can put transport for pupils from Penderyn why can't you do it the other way around?

Response

AR explained that English medium pupils currently pay for transport to Penderyn. The Transport Policy is very fair in RCT. Parents from Hirwaun may be putting children into the Welsh Unit in Penderyn due to free transport – reinforced parental choice.

Question

Will capacity be met for English demand?

Response

GD explained that the Local Authority review surplus places on a regular basis.

AR explained the matrix used to calculate trends for new housing estates.

Question

Difficult when you take something away - very hard to put it back – still wants the Local Authority to explore English medium education being available at both schools. Response

GD commented that a judgement has to be made on the information / data available which shows that the English stream is not viable.

Question

Rhigos being left alone with very small numbers – why is that school not included in these proposals? Removing parental choice – detrimental to the community.

Response

GD explained that there will be a community school but a Welsh medium school – demand isn't there for English medium education.

Question

Why not Rhigos?

Response

GD outlined the need for the Local Authority to look at 21st Century schools and the WESP and put forward informed proposals – staff need to make comments on the consultation.

Comment

Catchment area changes – getting pupils numbers for English medium of 19/20 per year – feel that if the changes hadn't been made the school wouldn't be in this position now.

Question

Ring fencing – will staff be slotted into Hirwaun?

Response

EW advised that Human Resources (HR) are willing to visit and discuss on an individual basis. There is a need to see how many additional staff Hirwaun would need. HR would work with the staff at both schools. HR will speak to staff individually to see how we can meet their needs. Redeployment would also be an option.

AR added that EW and the HR team have an excellent track record and RCT want to keep excellent staff. Opportunities are available. There are really good staff here – that is not disputed.

Comment

Staff should be guaranteed jobs in the new Hirwaun School.

Response

AR stated that no promises can be made as staffing is based on pupil numbers.

Question

If offered another position and a member of staff didn't accept, could they have redundancy?

Response

EW advised that this was dependant on circumstances.

Question

Why are Hirwaun having a parents meeting but not Penderyn – would the Local Authority re-think?

Response

AR advised that this consultation affects Hirwaun in the majority.

Comment

There is no bus service in Penderyn – location affects parents that don't drive.

Question

YGG Aberdar – change of catchment do existing pupils transfer?

Response

No, they stay where they are – admissions criteria will apply when the changes are applied.

Question

There could be an issue if a parent has a pupil in Penderyn but can't admit a sibling into Penderyn in September 2019 – what happens?

Response

Parents need to write in as part of the consultation.

The staff and governors were thanked for their time and input.