

The City of Cardiff Council

Consultation Report

School Organisation Proposal: The provision of Welsh-medium and English-medium primary school places in and around Llandaff North

Reason for this Report

1. The Council recently consulted on proposals regarding the provision of Welsh-medium and English-medium primary school places in and around Llandaff North.
2. In accordance with the requirements of the Welsh Government School Organisation Code the Council must publish a consultation report :
 - summarising each of the issues raised by consultees;
 - responding to these by means of clarification, amendment to the proposal or rejection of the concerns, with supporting reasons; and
 - setting out Estyn's view (as provided in its consultation response) of the overall merits of the proposal.

Proposal and consultation

3. At its meeting on 26 January 2015 the Cabinet authorised officers to hold a public consultation on proposals to:
 - consolidate Gabalfa Primary School at 1FE at the shared site at Colwill Road, CF14 2PQ from September 2017.
 - permanently establish Ysgol Glan Ceubal at 1FE from September 2016 with 24FTE nursery places to be established from January 2016.
4. Three potential delivery options were identified:
 - Option 1 – Traditional build extensions and adaptations of the existing school buildings to enable both schools to operate at 1FE
 - Option 2 – New 1FE 'standardised build' school with nursery for Ysgol Glan Ceubal, new standalone nursery and Reception class unit at Gabalfa Primary, retention and refurbishment of existing Gabalfa Primary School accommodation and demolition of current Ysgol Glan Ceubal building.
 - Option 3 – New 2FE standardised build to be shared by Gabalfa Primary School and Ysgol Glan Ceubal.
5. The consultation ran from 12 February to 25 March 2015.

6. Parents and others in the local community, together with staff and Governors of the affected schools were invited to respond to the consultation.
7. The consultation process involved:
 - Distribution of a Consultation Document outlining background, rationale and implications. This document has been distributed to parents, local childcare providers, Headteachers and Chairs of Governors of nearby schools, Members and other stakeholders; (Details of those consulted can be seen at Appendix 1).
 - Meetings with Staff and Governors of the schools affected and a public meeting at which the proposal was explained and questions answered; (Notes from these meetings can be seen at Appendix 2)
 - Two public drop in sessions where officers were available to answer questions;
 - Workshop sessions with pupils at the school affected to provide an opportunity for pupils to ask questions, learn more about the proposal and give their views. (Details of the pupils meetings can be seen at Appendix 3).
 - A consultation response slip for return by post or e-mail, attached to the consultation document;
 - An online response form at www.cardiff.gov.uk/21st Century Schools
8. The views expressed at Council organised meetings and on paper or electronically through the appropriate channels, have been recorded.
9. In total 135 responses were received (89 online responses and 46 paper/e-mail responses).
10. Formal written responses were received from Estyn, The Headteacher of Gabalfa Primary, Gabalfa Primary School Governing Body, Gabalfa Primary School class teachers and teaching assistants. (Formal responses can be seen at Appendix 4).
11. The points raised in the consultation are set out in italics below and have been grouped according to the issues raised where appropriate.

Responses received during the consultation period

12. In total 135 responses were received (89 online responses and 46 paper/e-mail responses).
13. The majority view expressed during the consultation at meetings and in written correspondence was one of support for the proposals. However there were concerns raised around the proposed consolidation of Gabalfa at 1FE, potential disruption to pupils/staff at Gabalfa Primary if nursery provision is established at Ysgol Glan Ceubal from January 2016 and the facilities available to both schools under Option 3.

14. Of those who stated an option preference, two expressed a preference for Option 1, 10 expressed a preference for Option 2 and 114 expressed a preference for Option 3. One respondent expressed support for any of the options and a further three respondents expressed a preference for both Options 2 & 3.
15. Of those who responded, 79 expressed support for the establishment of a nursery at Ysgol Glan Ceubal from January 2016.
16. A response from Estyn was received which included the following points. (for the full response, please see Appendix 4):
 - *It is Estyn's opinion that the proposal is likely to maintain the current standards of education and provision in the area.*
 - *The proposal is unlikely to have a negative impact on any other schools in the area. The proposal is likely to have a positive impact on the availability of Welsh-medium education in the locality and to reduce overall surplus places in Welsh and English medium schools over time.*
 - *However, the proposer has not identified its preferred option at this stage. As such the proposal does not identify potential financial implications or benefits clearly enough. The proposal contains very little information about the potential impact of the reorganisation on the staffing arrangements at the schools involved. The proposal does not evaluate what impact the proposal may have on any providers of pre-school education in the locality other than schools.*
17. Formal written responses were also received from the Headteacher of Gabalfa Primary, Gabalfa Primary School Governing Body, Gabalfa Primary School class teachers and teaching assistants which included the following points (for the full responses please see Appendix 4):
 - *Support for the permanent establishment of Ysgol Glan Ceubal on its existing temporary site from September 2016, but **only** if it does not interfere or encroach on the provision of the Foundation Phase pupils and staff of Gabalfa Primary School, both within the school buildings and in the outdoor spaces, until such time as new arrangements are made for each school's permanent accommodation.*
 - *The proposal does not identify the number of pupils that are likely to require places at Gabalfa Primary School in September 2017. The consolidation of Gabalfa Primary School at 1FE could result in the need for additional accommodation being needed at the school if demand for places exceeded 1FE and the school would not want to see demountable accommodation be installed.*
 - *Do not support the proposal to establish nursery provision at Ysgol Glan Ceubal from January 2016 because of the potential disruption to staff and children at Gabalfa Primary and the costs involved. The most*

obvious solution would be for the Ysgol Glan Ceubal Nursery to be established when the permanent building has been completed in September 2017.

- Option 3 is equitable to both schools and would create an innovative means of delivering English-medium and Welsh-medium education, however it would be necessary to ensure that sufficient space was available to ensure Gabalfa Primary School is able to continue providing the number of high quality interventions for vulnerable pupils and to support the many 'newly arrived' families to the UK that the school receives.*
- Teaching spaces would need to be flexible and spacious to enable independent learning and more formal learning experiences. The needs of the Foundation Phase pupils must be met both inside and outside with both schools having access to safe, motivating and stimulating outdoor learning provision.*
- Any design would need to ensure separate accommodation was available for Gabalfa Primary School and Ysgol Glan Ceubal in order to allow for both schools to retain their individual identities.*

Appraisal of views expressed

18. As part of the consultation three options were put forward for consideration by stakeholders. An essential element of any option that may be progressed would be financial viability. Additional work around the comparative costs of new standardised buildings has been undertaken and detailed financial implications will arise from this.
19. As part of the consultation process meetings were held with staff at Gabalfa Primary School and Ysgol Glan Ceubal who expressed support for the proposal overall. The HR implications arising from these proposals would be assessed through a review of the schools' establishments and consideration of any increase/decrease in staff required. Any required changes to the staffing levels would be managed within agreed policies and procedures and full consultation would be required with staff and trade unions.
20. The Council is aware of the local desire to see maintained Welsh-medium nursery provision at Ysgol Glan Ceubal and in addition to the responses received during the consultation has previously received a petition in support of this.
21. The concerns regarding the use of the existing Gabalfa Nursery accommodation to house nursery provision for Ysgol Glan Ceubal are acknowledged and in the event of the nursery being established the Council will work with both schools to ensure appropriate provision is available without use of the Gabalfa nursery facility.
22. Whilst the addition of nursery places would mean there would potentially be a reduced number purchased in the private and voluntary childcare

sector, many of these providers also provide wrap around places and the opportunities for this could increase with a larger number of families accessing the maintained provision for part-time sessions.

23. As part of the consultation process, local childcare providers were sent a copy of the consultation document and invited to respond to the consultation. No responses regarding any potential impact were received. Two local cylch meithrin settings have recently closed and this has resulted in a significant reduction in the number of Welsh-medium early years places available.
24. The consultation document clearly sets out the expected number of pupils on roll at Gabalfa Primary School in 2017-18, whether the proposal proceeds or does not proceed, in accordance with the requirements of the WG School Organisation Code.
25. Gabalfa Primary School would initially be unable to accommodate all of its pupils within the proposed consolidated 1FE permanent accommodation. The school would require temporary arrangements to aid transition to a 1FE English-medium school.
26. In the event of any option being progressed, any design would be in line with Building Bulletin guidelines and officers would work closely with the schools to ensure that any new build would meet the needs of both schools.
27. Any design would also ensure that both schools were able to function as separate entities allowing them to retain their separate identities. Additionally the design would take account of community use of the facilities outside of school hours.
28. Additional points raised in the consultation are set out in *italics* below and have been grouped according to the issues raised where appropriate.

Welsh-medium nursery provision

29. *The lack of nursery provision at Ysgol Glan Ceubal is discriminating against those who choose Welsh-medium education.*
30. Children in Cardiff are entitled to a part-time nursery place from the start of the term following their third birthday and must attend for a minimum of five half days. Nursery places are not allocated on a catchment area basis. Wherever possible places are offered in a local community nursery school or nursery class within two miles of a child's place of residence. If places are unavailable in local community nursery schools or nursery classes, parents may apply for nursery education place funding with a recognised provider.
31. The Local Authority purchases places where demand exceeds local supply. Consistent with this, in and around the Llandaff North area Welsh-medium places are provided in local Welsh-medium schools including Ysgol Melin Gruffydd, Ysgol Mynydd Bychan and purchased in

approved non-maintained settings including private daycare and cylch methrin.

Offsite nursery provision would be difficult to manage.

32. The establishment of an offsite nursery was put forward as a potential option. However, given concerns raised by Ysgol Glan Ceubal around communications, safeguarding and the cost implications, this option has now been discounted.

Facilities available for both schools

33. *The proposal will only work if both schools have separate areas.*
34. In the event of any option being progressed, any design would ensure that both schools were able to function as separate entities allowing them to retain their separate identities. Additionally the design would take account of community use of the facilities outside of school hours.

Traffic

35. *The proposal will result in additional traffic congestion.*
36. In the event of any option being progressed, the Council would work with the Governing Bodies of both schools to develop a Travel Plan to minimise any potential disruption. Traffic and transport implications would be considered as part of the Transport Assessment that would be required in order to achieve planning consent for any building works.
37. Cardiff's Supplementary Planning Guidance (Access, Circulation and Parking Standards 2010) sets out that all new or expanded schools are required to develop a Travel Plan for submission with a planning application. A School Travel Plan is specifically designed to address the transport needs of pupils and staff and will vary according to the nature of the education being provided, any community facilities on site and the catchment area of a school.

A Travel Plan is a policy and action plan to:

- manage transport efficiently
- improve access by all means of travel for employees, visitors, parents and students
- encourage sustainable transport – walking, cycling, public transport and car sharing
- reduce car use.

38. Cardiff's transport network is under pressure and experiences congestion from commuters driving into the city and people making short local trips by car. Traffic associated with the school run adds to congestion. The City of Cardiff Council's policy is to encourage and promote the increased use of sustainable travel modes and to promote independent travel to school wherever possible.

39. Encouraging active travel to school is a very important means of increasing levels of physical activity in children and tackling the growing problem of childhood obesity. Reducing congestion at the school gate is key to ensuring the safety of pupils and to mitigating impacts on the local neighbourhood.

Engagement with children and young people

40. Officers met with pupils from Gabalfa Primary School and Ysgol Glan Ceubal to explain the proposal and seek their views.

Gabalfa Primary School Views

41. The pupils thought it would be fair for Ysgol Glan Ceubal to remain and that investment in both schools would be good.
42. They were concerned that the proposal could result in smaller classrooms, overcrowding, longer queues at dinner time, a smaller playground and disruption during the building work. They were also concerned about the impact of any sharing of facilities on their school.
43. Overall the pupils preferred Option 3.

Ysgol Glan Ceubal Views

44. The pupils thought that the proposal was fair to both school and look forward to better facilities.
45. They were concerned that the proposal could result in overcrowding, and wanted to see a larger playground, changing facilities for both boys and girls and separate facilities for both schools.
46. Full details of all pupil views are attached at Appendix 1.

Appraisal of views expressed

47. In the event of any option being progressed, any design would be in line with Building Bulletin guidelines and officers would work closely with the schools to ensure that any new build would meet the needs of both schools.
48. Any design would ensure that both schools were able to function as separate entities allowing them to retain their separate identities.
49. There is widespread support for the permanent establishment of Ysgol Glan Ceubal and Option 3 was preferred by the majority of those who responded to the consultation.
50. The City of Cardiff Council has increased experience in the successful delivery of building projects on the sites of occupied schools resulting from the progression of a growing school organisation programme. There would be building work carried out on the schools site which would

be managed effectively in consultation with the school management to ensure the full curriculum continues to be delivered and that high education standards and safety standards are maintained.

Summary

51. All views expressed by stakeholders during the consultation will be taken into account when recommendations to the Council's Cabinet regarding proposals for this area are considered later this year.

NICK BATCHELAR

Director

June 2015

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Details of those consulted
- Appendix 2 – Notes from consultation meetings
- Appendix 3 – Consultation meetings
- Appendix 4 – Formal written responses