



FULL COUNCIL

Date Written	15 March 2017
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Service Area	Schools
Exempt/Non Exempt	Non Exempt
Committee Date	22 nd March 2017

To: Mayor, Ladies and Gentlemen

21st Century Schools Programme – Proposed New Build for Ysgol Y Graig Primary School

1.0 SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to agree the proposals referred to in the report and seek permission to go out to public consultation.
- 1.2 On the 28th October, 2011, a report to Council recommended that Members agree the former Vaynor and Penderyn High School site as the preferred site for the relocation of Ysgol Y Graig Primary School, to be used with the existing playing fields at Godre'r Coed.
- 1.3 Funding became available for the design development of Ysgol Y Graig Primary School in 2016/17. At the Outline Business Case Stage, a council can update a Strategic Case in the light of any changes or new information.
- 1.4 To support the development of the OBC, in October 2016, the Council prepared a further Site Options Appraisal for the new school. In addition, the Council sought expert advice on the public engagement and consultation process, as it has been 5 years since the proposal was discussed.
- 1.5 The Council agreed that there should be a non-statutory listening and engagement process in order to ensure that the community had information about all of the possible solutions before any decision is made about which sites to put forward for public consultation. It also gave the community the opportunity to suggest alternatives.

1.6 The outcomes of the listening and engagement stage were reviewed at the Co-production stage so that Council officers and stakeholders could consider jointly what proposals to recommend taking forward into the consultation process.

1.7 As part of pre-consultation this report provides a summary of the process and feedback from the listening and engagement and co-production sessions on the proposed new build for Ysgol Y Graig Primary School

2.0 RECOMMENDATION(S) that

2.1 The following sites be approved for progression to public consultation commencing on 8th May, 2017 for a 12 week period:-

Former Vaynor & Penderyn School site
Godre'r Coed Playing Fields

3.0 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

3.1 The existing school building is in poor physical condition, which would need a lot of investment to repair and improve.

3.2 The Council is proposing to build a new primary school, which will be of a suitable size and sustainable construction to enable the school community to thrive and develop, to serve the needs of pupils in the community, now and in the future.

3.3 The Welsh Government 21st Century Schools and Education Programme is a £1.4billion investment over the five year period ending 2018/19. Local authorities were asked to submit bids for the refurbishment and rebuild of schools. The programme is 50% funded by Welsh Government using a mixture of capital and revenue funding, with the other 50% from the local authority.

3.4 There are three stages:

- Strategic Outline Case (SOC);
- Outline Business Case (OBC); and
- Full Business Case (FBC).

Public consultation in 2011

3.5 Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council (MTCBC) approved its Strategic Outline Programme for the 21st Century Schools Programme on 8th December 2010. This long-term plan identified the key priorities for improving schools over the period 2012 – 2024 and was later approved by Welsh Government.

3.6 In 2011, MTCBC hired 'Austin-Smith:Lord' architects to produce a feasibility study for a new primary school and to undertake a public consultation with the community to identify the preferred site.

- 3.7 The report looked at a range of proposals and considered two sites in more detail:
- Site of former Vaynor and Penderyn High School.
 - Godre'r Coed Playing Field (Former Vaynor and Penderyn High School playing fields).
- 3.8 Consultation was held with the community over the proposals, with the focus on the two sites referred to above. The aim of the public consultation was to understand the views of all interested parties and to help the decision as to where the new school should be built.
- 3.9 Details of the advantages and disadvantages of both sites were displayed at the public consultation event held on the 23rd March 2011, which was well attended. Attendees were asked to fill in questionnaires and 254 were completed. The majority response was that the school should be sited on the former Vaynor and Penderyn High School site.
- 3.10 On the 28th October, 2011, a report to Council recommended that Members agree the former Vaynor and Penderyn High School site as the preferred site for the re-location of Ysgol Y Graig Primary School, to be used with the existing playing fields at Godre'r Coed.

What has changed?

- 3.11 Funding became available for the design development of Ysgol Y Graig Primary School in 2016/17. The Council began preparing the OBC for Ysgol Y Graig Primary School, which involves revisiting the case for change and the preferred way forward identified in the SOC; establishing the solution which gives the best value for money; outlining the deal and assessing affordability; and demonstrating that the proposed scheme is deliverable. At the OBC Stage, a council can update a Strategic Case in the light of any changes or new information.
- 3.12 To support the development of the OBC, in October 2016, the Council prepared a further Site Options Appraisal for the new school.
- 3.13 In addition, the Council sought expert advice on the public engagement and consultation process, as it has been 5 years since the proposal was discussed.
- 3.14 There are a number of potential solutions, including the six sites considered in 2011. Following advice the Council agreed that there should be a non-statutory listening and engagement process in order to ensure that the community had information about all of the possible solutions before any decision is made about which sites to put forward for public consultation. It also gave the community the opportunity to suggest alternatives.

4.0 LISTENING AND ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

- 4.1 We wanted to listen to the views of the community and as part of pre-consultation we held a listening and engagement exercise to talk to stakeholder groups i.e. local organisations, community groups, businesses, residents, school staff, governors, pupils and parents.

- 4.2 We wanted everyone to have a clear understanding of the potential solutions, to ensure that together we make the right decisions when developing this new learning facility for our young people.
- 4.3 We wanted to hear the views of the community on the possible sites for the new school. This was to see if there were any changes to the original sites in the consultation in 2011 and to identify any alternative sites the community wish to suggest.
- 4.4 The stakeholder groups referred to above were all invited to the listening and engagement sessions and posters were displayed in the community to promote and raise awareness of the event encouraging residents to get involved.
- 4.5 Social Media was used to ensure that we reached all those who may not have had sight of the information publicised in the community.
- 4.6 The listening and engagement sessions were very well attended and everyone who expressed an interest came along to one of the four sessions held.
- 4.7 The listening and engagement event was held in the Cefn Coed Community Centre.
- 4.8 We held two sessions on 1st March. 46 people booked in total (8 did not attend)
- 4.9 We held two sessions on 6th March. 55 booked in total (5 did not attend)
- 4.10 Prior to these sessions, all those that had expressed an interest received an Issues Paper, together with an analysis of all the potential solutions for discussion and debate at the listening and engagement exercise.
- 4.11 The Issues Paper sets out the possible sites for where the new Ysgol Y Graig Primary School could be built.
- 4.12 The Issues Paper is not a public consultation document and there will be another information pack when the public consultation takes place.

Exploring possible solutions

- 4.13 The listening and engagement exercise looked at 8 potential sites. 6 were identified in the original 2011 report (1 to 6 below). A further two sites were also identified (7 and 8) for consideration and it was acknowledged that there may be others. A site fact sheet of each proposal was included with this Issues Paper.

1. Vaynor and Penderyn High School
2. Godre'r Coed Playing Fields
3. Teddington Playing Fields
4. Current Ysgol-y-Graig Primary School
5. Black Patch Playing Fields
6. Ysgol-y-Graig Nursery Site
7. Pen y Dre High School Site
8. Cyfarthfa Park Site

4.14 For each site, the following key factors were considered:

1. Education

- a. Sufficient and appropriate outdoor space
- b. Ability to offer a range of facilities
- c. Factors that will improve education outcomes

2. Access, Parking and Travel

- a. Safe vehicle access
- b. Safe available pedestrian routes
- c. Sufficient off road parking for safe drop off and pick up

3. Technical

- a. Size of site
 - i. Accommodate building, outdoor play space, sufficient off road staff parking, delivery access.
 - ii. Access to site for construction traffic
- b. Site levels and ground conditions

4. Planning

- a. Complies with the Merthyr Tydfil Local Development Plan (LDP)

4.15 At the listening and engagement sessions, we asked those participating to discuss the possible sites and provide the reasons for their views. In addition we asked residents for alternative sites suggestions that could be considered further.

The additional sites suggested were:

- Dingle
- Teddington's Plus Additional Land
- Ysgol Y Graig Current Site Plus Charlie's Park
- Vaynor Quarry Field
- Lakeside

4.16 The additional sites were then investigated by officers for initial feasibility and an analysis prepared in order to inform the co-production session.

Feedback from the Listening and Engagement

4.17 Following the listening and engagement sessions, a report was prepared of all the key themes that had been identified by the community on each potential site. This report was then circulated to everyone who had attended one of the listening and engagement sessions.

5.0 CO-PRODUCTION

- 5.1 This followed the listening and engagement sessions.
- 5.2 The outcomes of the listening and engagement stage were reviewed so that Council officers and stakeholders could consider jointly what proposals to recommend taking forward into the consultation process.
- 5.3 In order to get a fair representation, two members (where possible) from each stakeholder group were selected at random to work with Council officers as part of the Co-production process.

Co-production Process

- 5.4 The Co-production took place on Tuesday 14th March 2017 at the Council Offices.
- 5.5 12 stakeholders and 10 Council officers made up the co-production group, together with Nic Duffin Director of the Consultation Institute.
- 5.6 The group looked at each potential site, as well as all the additional suggestions, against essential criteria referred to below:
 - Will the site meet the critical project end date (March 2020)?
 - Is the site readily available?
 - Can the project be delivered within the available funding?
- 5.7 Considering each site one by one based on this essential criteria, the officers of the Council gave a recommendation on the viability of each site.
- 5.8 Following this, the community feedback from the listening and engagement sessions was also considered and a debate then took place.
- 5.9 Weighing up all the evidence, the co-production group then made a decision whether a site was viable to be put forward in the Council report as a recommendation to go through to public consultation. This process was repeated in order to consider each site individually and a final recommendation reached.

Feedback outcomes conclusion

- 5.10 The final decision of the co-production group was that the following 10 sites were not seen as viable and would not be recommended to be put forward for public consultation.
 - Black Patch Playing Fields
 - Current Ysgol-y-Graig Primary School
 - Cyfarthfa Primary School Site
 - Teddington Playing Field
 - Ysgol-y-Graig Nursery Site
 - Dingle (Additional Suggested Site)
 - Teddington's plus additional Land (Additional Suggested Site)

- Ysgol Y Graig Current Site Plus Charlie's Park (Additional Suggested Site)
- Quarry (Additional Suggested Site)
- Lakeside (Additional Suggested Site)

5.11 The remaining sites met the essential criteria:

- Pen-Y-Dre High School
- Godre'r Coed Playing Fields
- Vaynor and Penderyn High School

5.12 It was decided that Pen Y Dre would not be taken forward due to the overwhelming feeling from the community of it being unsuitable as the location is outside the Vaynor Electoral Division.

5.13 A further debate then took place on the remaining sites and it was agreed by the Co-production Group that

- **Godre'r Coed Playing Fields**
- **Former Vaynor and Penderyn High School**

should be taken forward to the full public consultation.

Next Steps

5.14 It is proposed that a 12 week Public consultation will commence on 8th May 2017 in order to seek the views of the wider community.

6.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 It is likely that minimal funding of £1000 will be required in order to facilitate the public consultation. Available funding is contained within the 21st Century Schools budget.

7.0 SINGLE INTEGRATED PLAN AND SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT SUMMARY

7.1 The Single Integrated Plan & Sustainability Impact Assessment has been completed and the proposals impact positively on people in Merthyr Tydfil having the opportunity and aspiration to learn and develop their skills to maximise their potential. No negative impacts have been identified.

8.0 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

8.1 An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) form has been prepared for the purpose of this report. It has been found that a full assessment is not required at this time. The form can be accessed on the Council's website/intranet via the 'Equality Impact Assessment' link.

GARETH CHAPMAN
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

COUNCILLOR PHIL WILLIAMS
CABINET MEMBER FOR GOVERNANCE
AND CORPORATE SERVICES

BACKGROUND PAPERS		
Title of Document(s)	Document(s) Date	Document Location
Issues Paper and SWOT		Communications, Consultation and Engagement Team
Listening and Engagement Feedback		Communications, Consultation and Engagement Team
Additional sites SWOT		Communications, Consultation and Engagement Team
Does the report contain any issue that may impact the Council's Constitution?		No

Consultation has been undertaken with the Corporate Management Team in respect of each proposal(s) and recommendation(s) set out in this report.