

Newport City Council

School Reorganisation Proposal

Consultation Report

Proposal to expand Maes Ebbw School with effect from September 2018

**Formal Consultation Period:
11th September 2017 to 22nd October 2017**

Purpose

This report is published in line with the requirements of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and the School Organisation Code, July 2013.

This consultation report includes the following sections:

- The Proposal
- Stakeholder Engagement
- Everyday Summary Version – Children & Young People
- Learner Voice
- Consultation Responses
- Estyn

The Proposal

To expand the main Maes Ebbw School site and therefore provide additional pupil places by increasing the capacity of the school from 100 to 150 with effect from September 2018.

Stakeholder Engagement

An invitation to take part in the statutory consultation was issued to stakeholders overleaf, with either a link to the consultation pack on the Council's website and an electronic version of the pack sent by e-mail, or alternatively by hard copies of the consultation material being issued.

- Teachers, staff and the governing body of Maes Ebbw School;
- Parents, carers and guardians of pupils attending Maes Ebbw School;
- Pupils at Maes Ebbw School;
- Parents, carers and guardians of children attending Learning Resource Base classes across the City;
- The Headteachers and Governing Bodies of all other Newport schools;
- The Acting Headteacher and Governing Body of Ysgol Bryn Derw;
- All Newport City Council elected members;
- All Newport Community Councils;
- The Welsh Ministers;
- Assembly Members (AMs) and Members of Parliament (MPs) representing the area served by the schools subject to the proposals;
- Other Local Authorities across the South East Wales Consortium region, including relevant Transport departments;
- The South East Wales Education Achievement Service;
- The Church in Wales, Diocese of Monmouth;
- Roman Catholic Archdiocese;
- Estyn;
- Teaching and staff trade unions representing teachers and staff at Maes Ebbw School;
- The Police and Crime Commissioner for Gwent;
- The local Communities First partnership (or equivalent);
- SNAP Cymru;
- Serennu Children’s Centre and relevant health partners.

The following consultation events were arranged and were publicised via a letter to stakeholders. This information was also shared on the Council website and outlined throughout the consultation document.

Venue	Date and Time	Event type
Maes Ebbw School, Maesglas Road, Newport, NP20 3DG	Wednesday 20 th September 2017 9.30am to 11.30am	Drop-in event
Maes Ebbw School, Maesglas Road, Newport, NP20 3DG	Tuesday 26 th September 2017 4.00pm to 6.00pm	Drop-in event

These drop-in events were well attended by a variety of parents / carers, staff and governors, and supported by the Education Service Development Manager and the 21st Century Schools Manager who answered questions relating to both the reorganisation proposal and the build programme.

Everyday Summary Version – Children & Young People

An Everyday Summary Version of the main consultation document was also published and was targeted specifically at children and young people.

Learner Voice

The Assistant Head of Education (Inclusion) and the Education Service Development Manager visited Maes Ebbw School on 11th October 2017 and met with a group of four pupils from the tertiary phase, accompanied by the Headteacher, to discuss the proposal and allow an opportunity for them to share their views.

After initially outlining the proposal to create a seven classroom extension with sensory courtyard area and subsequently demolish the existing demountable building, the Headteacher suggested it might be useful to show the pupils the physical location of the proposed build. The pupils enjoyed this but were disappointed that the demountable classroom would likely be demolished. There were also concerns raised about the trees that currently stand in the proposed build area. The pupils were advised that if some trees needed to be cut down, new trees would be planted to replace them. The pupils were then asked to share their views on the following questions:

What do you think is good about the plan?

The pupils felt that building some smaller classrooms could create room for different facilities to be enjoyed and could also enable more children to come to the school.

Do you think the school needs more space?

The pupils commented that there seemed to be enough space for everyone at the moment. However they asked whether it would be possible to create additional space by building a second floor. The Headteacher then asked how pupils in wheelchairs would be able to access the upper floor. Various suggestions were put forward, including the installation of either a traveller or a lift.

What kind of new things would you like to see in the school?

- More toilets as sometimes there aren't enough if lots of people want to go at the same time;
- Better playground facilities for older pupils;
- Additional or larger calming rooms / spaces;
- Dedicated facilities for IT, Art, Music and Cooking – maybe even a kitchen or cafeteria;
- An indoor garden / courtyard;
- Better facilities for pupils using wheelchairs.

What sort of problems are there at the start and end of the day?

The pupils commented that the car park is very busy at the start and end of the school day and a dedicated bus / taxi bay might assist. There was also the suggestion of enlarging the entrance gate so that two vehicles were able to pass each other easily.

Before ending the discussion the pupils were asked if there was anything else they would like to know about the proposal, and the following questions were raised:

How much will the project cost?

An amount of approximately £3.5million has been allocated to the project (one of the pupils indicated that this was probably insufficient given the current costs associated with the construction industry).

When will the building work commence and what will happen whilst it is taking place?

It is hoped that the building work will start in January 2018. Whilst the work is ongoing, it will be really important for the older pupils to continue to buddy up with younger pupils. There will also be a traffic management plan for the site whilst the work is ongoing.

Consultation Responses

18 consultation responses were received during the consultation period, 15 of which (equivalent to 83%) supported the proposal. 2 respondents (11%) were against the proposal with the remaining 1 response failing to indicate a view one way or another.

Responses in support of the proposal

In addition to supporting the proposal, responses included the following points:

- The proposal will provide improved capacity and facilities to meet demand and provide more local provision;
- Consideration needs to be given to providing additional car parking capacity;
- The building work should also support improved facilities for pupils including a Touch Trust room, play areas, sufficient and appropriate bathroom facilities, additional quiet areas and independent living skills;
- Additional funding should be allocated to the project to enable facilities across the whole site to be upgraded so that the needs of all pupils can be met, including hoist facilities and appropriate spaces for wheelchair users and storage.

Further questions were also raised in relation to the potential effect on Additional Learning Needs funding across other Newport schools and any changes to the entry criteria for the school.

Responses against the proposal

One respondent felt that an increase of 50 pupils would negatively impact on the already overcrowded facilities at the school. The other respondent shared this view and added that the budget allocated was insufficient and therefore the project was uneconomical when compared with work undertaken in the Special School sector by neighbouring local authorities.

Other response

The final response did not indicate whether or not the proposal was supported but commented that the school would benefit from a re-bound room and improved facilities for pupils with visual impairments.

Local Authority Response

An amount of approximately £3.5million has been allocated to the project, made up of a contribution from Newport City Council match-funded by Welsh Government under Band A of the 21st Century Schools Programme.

This is the maximum funding available and therefore work has been undertaken to scope out the best way of using this limited amount of money whilst still providing much needed and improved facilities on this school site. This scoping exercise has been carried out in conjunction with the Senior Leadership Team of the school.

The project does include some additional parking facilities alongside a site traffic management plan which should go some way to improving the current situation. The plan is to provide a seven classroom extension, along with a sensory courtyard, and appropriate ancillary facilities including toilets, a hygiene room, two group rooms and storage areas. Once the project is complete, the build will be handed over to the governing body which will then be responsible for determining how the facilities across the whole site, including Maes Ebbw Bach, are best used to meet the needs of pupils across all year groups. The governing body is also responsible for ensuring that any building maintenance work required at the school is undertaken through use of the delegated budget.

Maes Ebbw is currently oversubscribed with in the region of 140 children and young people on roll at the main site. This building has capacity for 100 pupils. The proposal will therefore provide improved facilities for the children who are currently attending the school and also create a small number of additional pupil places. This may in turn release pressure on schools elsewhere across the City. The potential impact on Additional Learning Needs funding is negligible therefore. It is not proposed that there will be any changes to entry criteria for either this school or Ysgol Bryn Derw.

The Council is committed to making best use of the resources available to improve and extend the facilities at the school, and to support increased pupil outcomes across all key stages.

Estyn

The formal response from Estyn concluded that “the proposal is likely to at least maintain the current standards of specialist provision in the area.”

The response goes on to say that the proposal includes a clear rationale of the proposed expected benefits, appropriate information to support the advantages and disadvantages of the proposal, and appropriate reference to current performance and prospects for improvement.

However, it was Estyn’s view that the proposal does not demonstrate how the improved facilities would have a positive impact on the standards achieved at pupils across the Key Stages taught at the school.

In response to this, the Headteacher has stated that the current facilities at the school are poorly developed to sufficiently meet the range of needs across the pupil cohort. The building work will provide additional space for pupils with complex and high levels of sensory needs. This will ensure that pupils can be more effectively challenged to reach their individual potentials. The build project will also enable improved access to outdoor learning areas through the linked classroom and outdoor facilities.

The proposed use of tracking and hoist provisions throughout the new section of the building will also ensure that the care needs of individual pupils can be met more efficiently, effectively and swiftly, thereby enabling more focus on challenge within the curriculum during the school day.

In accordance with the School Organisation Code (2013) this report is published electronically on Newport City Council’s website at www.newport.gov.uk

To request a hard (paper) copy of this document please contact Newport City Council’s Education Service Development Manager on 01633 656656 or email school.reorg@newport.gov.uk