

**NEWPORT CITY COUNCIL
EDUCATION SERVICE**

Formal Consultation on the proposal to establish a Welsh-medium secondary school

3rd March 2015 17:00hrs

Notes of meeting	
<p>Type of meeting: All stakeholders</p> <p>Date: 3rd March 2015</p> <p>Time: 5pm</p> <p>Venue: Lower Block Gymnasium, Duffryn High School</p>	<p>Officers Present:</p> <p>Monmouthshire County Council: Poppy Harris (PH) Matthew Jones (MJ)</p> <p>Newport City Council: James Harris (JH) Chief Education Officer Amanda B Davies (ABD) Deborah Weston (DW) Richard Sexty (RS)</p> <p>Jon Wilson (HT) Duffryn High School Owain ap Dafydd (OaD) HT YG Cwm Rhywni Rhian Dafydd (RD) Dep HT YG Gwynllyw</p>
<p>JH welcomed everyone to the meeting and invited the Panel to introduce themselves.</p> <p>He expressed his thanks to Jon Wilson, Headteacher of Duffryn High School for hosting this event and described how the meeting was in the Gymnasium of the Lower Block of Duffryn High School. This building doubled in size by a new build scheme is the proposed location for the new Welsh-medium secondary school.</p> <p>JH set out the purpose of the meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Newport City Council is proposing to set up a new Welsh-medium secondary school in Newport. • This proposal is being taken forward in collaboration with Monmouthshire County Council and is intended to increase provision across the region. As a regional proposal it is supported by Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Monmouthshire and Torfaen local authorities. • There is a requirement to carry out statutory consultation on such matters. <p>JH advised the attendees that they would hear the elements of the statutory consultation process</p> <p>Then he would talk through some of the components of the proposal</p> <p>After which he would invite those present to ask any questions or make any comments.</p>	

JH drew attention to having a simultaneous translator – Osian from Nico-Cymru.

JH also emphasised how we are also taking minutes which will be translated into Welsh, the minutes will be published on the web site.

JH advised the attendees that all stakeholders should have received:

- a notification of the consultation with an electronic link
- or an actual hard copy of the Consultation document,
- we have also started rolling out the Children & Young People Everyday Summary Version – that document is key to consulting with pupils
- and we will be talking to the School Council in each affected school discussing the proposal

JH then invited ABD to set out the elements of the statutory consultation process.

ABD stated how first of all there is a formal consultation stage which we have arranged will last for 45 days during which comments either supporting or against the proposal can be lodged with Newport City Council.

- ABD advised the attendees that consultees may feel they wish to object to the proposal, any objection lodged during the formal consultation stage will actually be treated as an adverse comment.
- **ABD emphasised the consultation period for this proposal is 45 days from March 1st to April 14th 2015.**
- This will be followed by the development of a consultation report to the Cabinet Member for Education & Young People setting out all comments received and seeking the decision to move to the next stage.
- **If consultees require a copy of that consultation report then please ensure they send us their email address or postal address as indicated on the consultation response pro-forma within the consultation document.**

The next stage then is the statutory notice stage which lasts for one month, a legal notice much like those advertising planning applications is posted within the community, it is printed and laminated and posted on all affected school gates, in local amenities, it is advertised in the South Wales Argus and published on the Council web site. During the statutory notice period of one month the public can express their views in the form of supporting or objecting to the proposal.

After the statutory notice period comes to an end a report will be taken to the Cabinet Member:

- If there are no objections the Cabinet Member can take the decision to establish the school
- If there are legal objections the Cabinet Member will refer that decision to a Local Determination Panel organised by Newport City Council.

JH thanked ABD and then set out the proposal.

He gave the reason for the proposal, it is important that we make sure there is an equal opportunity for all children to go to a Welsh-medium secondary school if they want to, because:

- We don't have one in Newport or in Monmouthshire

- There will not be any room at Ysgol Gyfun Gwynllyw from September 2016 (this is the school that pupils from Welsh-medium primary schools mentioned below would have been attending in Year 7)

You may ask where the new school will be located?

All our partners across Gwent carried out a location scoping exercise and this location was deemed to be the preferred option.

Duffryn High School in Newport has a very large site, which can be split into two, so that two entirely separate schools can operate as neighbours, but function independently.

Let me set out the impact on Duffryn High School?

There are copies of the concept sketch around the room and within your packs, we are sat in the gymnasium of the proposed school.

There will be a set of school railings through the site indicating which area is for Duffryn High School and which area is for the new Welsh-medium secondary school.

This building that we are sat in now is currently delivering education to Duffryn High pupils – all of the facilities within this Lower Block are being re-provided within a new build extension on the other side of the site.

This will ensure that there is no detrimental impact upon Duffryn High School pupils or the way in which education is delivered.

I would now like to advise attendees how local authorities set up a new school.

A Temporary Governing Body is appointed to set up the school, making all arrangements to open the doors in time for the first day of term in September 2016.

There will be a new Headteacher and a small number of staff to take care of about 90 pupils. As the school grows with increasing numbers of pupils, so will the number of staff.

It will not fill up completely for about 7 years.

JH now opened the floor to the attendees, he would act as Chair and if questions were to be lodged then please raise your hands.

Q	How much money is Torfaen County Borough Council putting into this proposal?
ABD	There is no financial contribution from Torfaen. The need has been determined to be in the South of Gwent; in Newport and Monmouthshire, financed by Newport and Monmouthshire. This is a regional solution agreed and supported by all five authorities. Torfaen and Caerphilly are already funding their own schools.

Q	What form will the support from the other councils take?
ABD	They are hosting the consultation through their websites, distributing papers and providing both Officer and Director of Education support.
Q	So if all the councils support the proposal, this is a fait accompli then; a foregone conclusion?
JH	It makes sense for the 5 authorities to work together to supply Welsh-medium education in the region as it is challenging. It is not a fait accompli; it is a joint proposal.
Q	Is this (Duffryn High School) the only proposed site? There must be other options?
JH	Yes, this is the only proposed site.
Q	The University is closing the Caerleon Campus, what about that site?
JH	What the University chooses to do with that site is the gift of the University. It is not an option for us to consider.
ABD	Other options were developed and considered by officers over four years, with assets and estate across Gwent being reviewed for suitability. The long list of options was detailed in the 21CS Regional Strategic Outline Case and The long list of options were tested and reduced to a shortlist of three options. The three options were further tested to give us our preferred option. The recommendation that Duffryn High School site is the preferred option and the principles of working towards the delivery of this preferred option has been accepted by Welsh Government to date. They approved the Outline Business Case further qualifying this preferred option and have now requested a Full Business Case to that effect.
Q	Will I still be able to send my child to YG Gwynllyw?
JH	Yes. Parents will still be able to apply for a place at the school, but securing a place is not guaranteed.
Q	What about expanding YG Gwynllyw?
JH	The YGG site is now confined, following previous expansion. Growing that school further is not supported by Torfaen County Borough Council.
Comment	I am delighted that my son will have the opportunity to carry on his (Welsh-medium) education in Newport. It has taken a long time but this is very positive.
Comment	When considering sites for establishing YG Bro Teyrnnon, we were told that mixing languages on a site was a bad idea. That is what will happen here and I am concerned about stigma and the negative effects that will have on the children.
ABD	The sites will be independent, with separate entrances and facilities; the school pupils will not be mixing on a daily basis, however, integration within all our schools is encouraged.
Q	What reassurances can you give?
JW	There are 30 languages spoken in this school (Duffryn High) and we embrace and celebrate diversity. We don't anticipate any stigma and any bullying will not be tolerated. School leaders will work together to ensure this.
Q	My son gets bullied for attending a Welsh-medium school. It will happen here.
JH	There are examples of sites with English and Welsh-medium schools

	neighbouring each other and working well...
Q	There is a stigma when a Welsh-medium school takes over an English school
JH	St. Illtyd's and YG Bro Edern in Cardiff.
Comment	Do you mean St. Teilo's and Bro Edern? They aren't on the same site.
Q	Will the development of the school be phased or will it all be ready to go?
ABD	This building is ready to deliver education, further expansion will be required to deliver education to the full 900 cohort. We are currently sitting in a fully functioning block of a high school. The council has an asset management strategy (for maintenance and planned improvement) so future years maintenance and improvement works will be carried out here as it is in other school settings.
Q	This is a 'C' category building – where does that sit on the scale?
ABD	The scale is A-D, with 'A' being best condition. There are no condition D schools in Newport following a history of investment in our schools.
JH	The capital available is very limited, what Newport City Council and Monmouthshire County Council are trying to do is establish a Welsh-medium secondary school and use the funding to make this happen, while refurbishing some of the buildings, and also using the opportunity to upgrade some of Duffryn High. We are trying to maximise the use of limited money. We will be unable to refurbish all of the buildings on the site.
Q	Will the buildings be improved?
JH	There will be some new build and some refurbishment.
Comment	I am very excited by the proposal but I do fear that there is so much work to do. I want to know the children are learning in a safe environment.
JH	We acknowledge the point. We are unable to provide details at present as we just aren't that far into the design process.
Q	Why is this the most desirable site? What does it offer children that other sites do not?
ABD	The main benefits to this location are transport links, sufficiency of space on the site and the locality where demand for Welsh-medium secondary education exists.
Q	Will the schools be totally separate in 2016?
ABD	They will be separate, exclusive, schools.
JH	The schools sites will be separated by a fence from day 1 and the children will not be able to traverse the site.
Q	What about shared facilities?
ABD	No, they will be separate, exclusive schools. The Sports Hall and swimming pool are within the Duffryn High school site.
Q	There are a number of questions that you are unable to fully answer at the moment. When will the answers be available?
JH	We will provide answers but it is difficult when developing a current site into a new school. For example, the issues regarding the governing body; we won't be able to answer those during the consultation period. As we progress through the design process, other elements will become clearer.
Q	You say the impact on Duffryn High will be minimal. How so?
JH	The new build on the Duffryn High site for circa 400 is a significant benefit,

	with removal also of some of the worst buildings. The work will be maximised during the school holiday period. Take Newport High as an example. That work was completed while the school was occupied and functioning.
Q	So there's no intention to reduce the headcount of Duffryn High School?
JH	No.
Q	Will you be able to deliver the full curriculum at the new school?
JH	Yes, we may find that other schools are able to support with specialist subjects
RD	It is possible – it has been done before
OaD	In YG Cwm Rhymni we opened a new unit and we had staff to deliver the core subjects and teachers came from other schools to assist with specialist subjects.
Q	I'm not concerned so much about the condition of the buildings as I am about the work that will be needed to build relationships and aid transition. All the teachers will be new?
JH	Yes, but we will try to allow sufficient lead-in time to facilitate this.
RD	The excitement that surrounds Welsh-medium learning really helps the pupils to bond. Governors and staff will be very dedicated – developing the 'family' feeling will be foremost in their minds. All of the primary head teachers have already agreed to begin this process with the year 5 pupils.
Q	What are the timescales for appointing the governing body and staff?
ABD	Subject to the consultation process, we would expect this to happen in June, with a head teacher in post by Easter next year.
Q	If I have an older child in YG Gwynllyw, can I still send the younger sibling to YG Gwynllyw?
RD	The usual Council admission arrangements will apply
Q	Will encouraging transition events be within the remit of the new head teacher?
JH	Yes. Secondary schools see this as being of primary importance and we expect existing good practice to be replicated in the new school.
Q	Will the new build on the Duffryn side be completed before this (Lower) Block is vacated?
JH	The answer is yes, it will
Q	Is the funding being split 50-50, or who gets priority?
JH	It's not a case of priority. WG are funding a Welsh-medium secondary school and the works necessary to develop that proposal.
Q	How much is being allocated to this site?
JH	Until we know what each element of the proposal will actually cost I am unable to confirm that. This is one project and one sum of money. We are trying to do the best we can for both schools.
Q	But surely you know what your average expected costs are?
JH	Yes, but there are a range of other considerations, such as asbestos removal and drainage that are as yet unknown. The proposal is to open a new Welsh-medium school, with re-provision for Duffryn High.
Q	The 400 currently educated in this building will get a new facility, but the children coming to the new school will be moving into a 'C' category school building?

Comment	It's not the quality of the building that counts; it's the quality of teaching that goes on inside the school. This school (Duffryn High) is outstanding.
JH	There will be some improvements on both sites; Duffryn High School children must have re-provision.
Q	What about the land (playing fields) across the road?
ABD	The land across the road is for timetabled curriculum sports and the final notification on the M4 relief road is yet to emerge.
JH	If that was an available option; we don't have sufficient funding to build a whole new school
Q	You say provision in 2016. Will the school be built and ready?
JW	Llanwern was built in 18 months and is twice this size.
ABD	We are on schedule for September 2016
Comment	Two thirds of Duffryn High will be in existing buildings – it's not a whole new school.
JH	That's right
ABD	And 50% of this school will be new.
Comment	Lots of people are here because they are so excited. I would like my daughter to have the same quality of Welsh-medium education here in Newport that my sons currently have at Ysgol Gyfun Gwynllyw, whilst being part of the local community and contributing towards the economy of Newport. I congratulate Newport City Council on reaching this historical point and we in Rhag and Menter Iaith Casnewydd will do whatever we can in support.
Q	This area is bad for traffic, the road structure is bad. Is WG doing anything to improve traffic flow?
JH	This will be looked at by the Newport City Council highways team, together with safe routes to school.
Q	Would you consider staggered start and finish times?
Q	Traffic at drop off and collect times – how will this be managed?
JH	The best I can do is to refer you to my previous answer.
ABD	The governing bodies of both schools will consider the implications of the local traffic when setting their school start and end of day times.
Q	What safety procedures will there be for use of the playing fields across the road? That land has dog fouling and other issues including flooding.
ABD	The sports pitches are currently in use. The area will be fenced off, it is not for general public use, other than community lettings arrangements by the schools, it is intended for timetabled sports provision. Consideration is being given to how the pupils cross the road at such times.
JW	I've been here 11 years. The school has never flooded and the playing fields are used most of the year.
Q	I welcome the prospect of a Welsh-medium secondary school in Newport. Is there enough money to refurbish and build new? Can we go back to WG and ask for more?
ABD	Unfortunately there is no more capital in the wider funding envelope. I can assure you that we have a programme that is on time and on budget to deliver the expected outcome of a school for circa 900 pupils.
JH	We do encourage you to comment in this consultation period. You can

	comment through the website or by e-mail. Answers to questions will be posted on the website. We hope this event has helped you to understand the proposal and the process.
	Meeting closed 18.45