



Islwyn West Secondary School

Progress Report | 12th September 2014



Document Issue Sheet

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1. Executive Summary

- Three options tabled by Building Consultancy
- Proposals reviewed and option agreed upon in relation to layout and 'buildability'
- Current scheme does not match existing budget
- Current programme indicates completion December 2016
- Chosen solution to be developed in accordance with Building Bulletin 103
- Independent curriculum analysis to be carried out following challenge from school in relation to class room provision
- Use of Rhiw y Dafydd playing field to be factored in to sports provision

2. Work to Date

AECOM were appointed by Caerphilly County Borough Council to provide both Project and Cost Management services in relation to the development of the Islwyn West Secondary School to be located on plateau 3 at Oakdale.

The current requirements outlined by the Council are for the provision of a building for 900 pupils plus a 50 place ALN with a proposed budget of £18m. The scheme also needs to incorporate a bulge in the pupil numbers for 3 years from occupation. Discussions are ongoing in relation to the most effective way to incorporate this into the design including the use of the central 'corridor' space in the building. This will be further explored during the consultation phase.

Following AECOM's appointment, we have started working with the Building Consultancy team to review the designs to date and have started to develop cost plans relating to the three schemes which were under development by the Consultancy scheme.

The three schemes under consideration included:

- | | |
|--|--------------------|
| • Option 1 Design based on the Educational Funding Agency model | 8623m ² |
| • Option 2 Stretched model incorporating covered street area | 9300m ² |
| • Option 3 Rationalised design developed by Building Consultancy | 8742m ² |

3. Building Options Appraisal

Building designs were informed by Building Bulletin 103 (BB 103 Area guidelines for mainstream schools) which set out the spatial requirements for school design based on pupil numbers. This is a standard approach and one which we would expect to see utilised in the design process.

Discussions concerning specification of materials agreed that all three of the designs would utilise similar components based on the following:

- Standard foundation solutions (although the Site Investigation survey report is awaited)
- Steel frame
- Reinforced concrete floor planks

- Brick work at lower level
- Rendered panels at first and second floor
- Aluminium windows
- Standing seam roof in preference to a membrane roof due to durability
- Natural ventilation

The components are typical of those used for cost-efficiencies in a number of schools that AECOM has delivered throughout Wales and are considered robust and economic whilst maintaining a good level of aesthetic.

From our initial discussions, whilst all three options fitted the existing site in terms of the building footprint, the feeling was that option 2 would be significantly outside the proposed budget due to the configuration and floor areas and it was agreed with Building Consultancy that we would not proceed with developing this design.

Following subsequent meetings with Building Consultancy it was agreed to proceed with option 3 as the preferred design as it is considered the most efficient design whilst providing modern flexible accommodation, particularly in the central break out areas.

Consideration needs to be given by the Authority to several items raised by the schools during initial consultation. These items are considered over and above the school design guidelines recommended in the Building Bulletins and are not currently included with in the overall cost plan. These include additional classrooms based on the school's curriculum analysis plus a request for a larger sports hall, sized to match that currently enjoyed by Pontllanfraith School.

In relation to the additional class room provision, the schools have submitted their own curriculum analysis which indicates that they require an additional 6 class rooms over and above the recommendations of the Building Bulletin. The Council's Education team are in the process of commissioning an independent review of this. AECOM has delivered a large number of primary and secondary schools locally and across the UK, and feedback has been that those designs, built in accordance with the Building Bulletin guidance, have not restricted the curriculum but we await the outcome of the independent curriculum analysis.

A request has been made for the sports hall to be enlarged to allow indoor netball to be played. This is over and above the guidance set out in the Building Bulletin. A decision on whether to agree to this request will need to be made and for the additional costs (circa £100k) to be accepted.

Discussions are also ongoing over the new pitch provision. Pontllanfraith School currently benefits from the proximity of the leisure centre and its 3G pitch and grass playing fields provision, whereas Oakdale School has to utilise playing fields at Rhiw Sir Dafydd for the delivery of its curriculum. The proposed new Oakdale site will not accommodate all the required external sports areas and there will be a requirement for the new school to continue to utilise the pitches at Rhiw Sir Dafydd. The current changing rooms located within Rhiw Sir Dafydd Primary are suitable for use by the new school although there may be a requirement to provide some additional storage for the primary school in the region of 50m².

4. Project Cost Plan

Initial costs were developed against option 1 as that design was slightly more progressed when AECOM were appointed, and the cost report indicated an outturn cost of £21.5m. This figure was arrived at based on rates obtained from a number of schools delivered recently in South Wales as well as including assumptions for costs such as ICT provision, fixtures fittings and equipment based on costs incurred on the other projects, as well as client contingencies. At this stage we would recommend against amending these forecast costs to try to make the budget 'fit' as the costs have been checked against the final outturn cost benchmarks of other recent local schools.

The preference for option 3 has centred on the efficiency of its design and that the whole team considered the option to be a simpler building to construct, having a more straightforward footprint, wall to floor ratio and roof design. Currently the costs for option 3 are envisaged to be similar to option 1, in the region of £21.5m although a simpler building can be delivered more efficiently as time and cost is saved in the detailing of the design and in the construction processes. Pricing the ease of 'buildability' of Option 3 is not straightforward on a conceptual design but will be picked up in more detail during the next stage of costing as the design develops.

Given the tight timescale of the project and following discussion at a review meeting on the 1st September 2014, it was agreed that Building Consultancy would progress the development of Option 3.

5. Procurement of the Works Contractor

We understand that the Council has previously approved the procurement of a design and build contractor through a two stage tendering approach, and an appointment based on the NEC3 Engineering and Construction Contract. AECOM concurs with both of recommendations and confirm that this is in line with the majority of South Wales school projects delivered in the last five years.

We understand that a key driver of the project is to deliver cost certainty at the point of appointing the contractor to undertake the building works. In order to deliver this, there are two options available under the ECC contract for a project of this nature, Option A Lump Sum Price Based on an Activity Schedule, and Option C Target Cost. The first stage tender documents will need to state the form of contract the contractor is intended to be appointed under.

At the point of appointing the contractor it is currently unclear how much design risk will remain the responsibility of either the contractor or Council. For this reason, we would recommend that the tenders are sought on the basis of an Option C Target Cost contract but with the statement that the Council reserves the right to switch to an Option A before the conclusion of the second stage tender if later discussion concludes agreement that an Option A contract would provide better value for money. This will be discussed with the prospective tendering contractors at the next information meeting.

The appointment of the contractor will now be progressed, using the SEWSCAP (South East Wales Schools and Public Buildings Contractor) framework. AECOM's recommendation is to seek first stage tenders based on Contractor's preliminary costs, i.e. site set up, site staff costs, associated plant and materials, their NEC Fee (overheads and profit margin), and their design costs to take the project forward from the point of hand over from Building Consultancy through to completion of the project.

The initial appointment will be limited to design and pricing development services and under a Professional Services Contract. The purpose of which will be to allow the Contractor and his design team to develop the design and pricing in consultation with the Council's representatives to a decent level of cost certainty to enable firm pricing to be agreed. Following the negotiation and agreement between AECOM and the contractor of an acceptable price, the basis and recommendation for a Works contract will be reported on by AECOM, for acceptance by the Council. If a satisfactory price cannot be agreed with the contractor, the contractor's appointment will continue no further and there will be no further cost liability to the Council, other than the potential issue of having to seek an alternative contractor, although this is low risk.

Building Consultancy has met with all the contractors to review the designs and the feedback from this meeting was positive. Following discussions with CCBC Procurement it has been agreed that a further meeting will be held with contractors prior to issuing tender documents to ensure the level of interest is maintained in the project, and the contractors are forewarned so that adequate resources are allocated to the tender period.

Following the appointment of the design and build contractor, the second stage will further consider opportunities to reduce costs within the project. However, there is a minimum space requirement for a functional school and the project team agrees that the current design is currently at the lower end of the recommended space provision for the school elements. The area designed for the ALN reflects the area identified in consultations to date.

6. Programme

Currently the programme shows completion in December 2016, which is later than the required date of September 2016. In order for the school to open on the new site in September 2016 the construction and fit-out would need to finish in mid August 2016 at the latest and given where we are at present this is now very unlikely to be achievable. The construction period for a development of this size and nature is in the region of 18-20 months.

A copy of the current programme is included within the main body of the report.

7. Risk

The draft site investigation report has recently been submitted to the Council's Engineering section and has highlighted a number of issues that need to be resolved, specifically:

- Treatment of Japanese knot weed on site
- Requirement for retaining walls
- Requirement for deep foundations

- Potential for ventilation to deal with gas from the ground fill
- A large amount of surface water attenuation on the site

With the exception of the deep foundations and ventilation matter, the initial cost plan makes some allowance for these issues and the project team is now undertaking reviews to establish the full extent and any implications on the project cost of the draft report recommendations.

It is recommended that a project risk work shop is organised to include all key stake holders to identify the significant strategic risks to the project and develop a strategy for the resolution of the risks.

7. Consultation

Consultation with the schools will be essential to refine the approved design submitted to Cabinet for approval. This will be led by Education with support from AECOM and will include Governors, staff, pupils, parents and relevant local councillors and members. It is recommended that as soon as is possible a single point of consultation is appointed for the two schools and is given the authority to review design proposals and inform the design process. This individual will work with the design team to determine critical issues such as the ICT strategy, subject pedagogy, dining strategies, staff resource etc.

Previous experience has shown that this avoids late changes in the design due to new personnel becoming involved. Whilst it is understood that this is not a straight forward process it is a central component to the successful delivery of the school project and ensures ownership of the building from day one.

8. Recommendation

Based on all the available information to date, it is AECOM's recommendation that the Authority proceed with option 3 as developed by Building Consultancy and that they ensure the development of this design along with the associated engineering solutions, including structural, civil, mechanical and electrical systems meets the current programme dates. This will ensure that a robust package is developed to enable the successful contractor can take the design forward to develop a final design and cost certainty.

The Authority need to understand the existing project risks, particularly in relation to the current cost plan and the programme, both of which exceed the Authorities initial estimates. Approval is required to proceed with the first stage tender and the appointment of the successful contractor utilising a Professional Services Contract. This will limit the Authorities exposure as the contractor will only be contracted to develop the design and agree a cost for the works.

AECOM recommend the use of NEC Option C (Target cost) with an option to switch to Option A (Lump sum with activity schedule) if later discussion concludes agreement that an Option A contract would provide better value for money.

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