



## **EDUCATION FOR LIFE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 8TH NOVEMBER 2016**

**SUBJECT: ISLWYN HIGH SCHOOL – SITE VISIT**

**REPORT BY: CHIEF EDUCATION OFFICER**

---

### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.1 To update Members on the site visit which occurred on 16th September, 2016

### **2. LINKS TO STRATEGY**

2.1 The report considers the use of resources within Education to ensure the Council's key strategies are best achieved.

2.2 The report links directly to the Education for Life, sustainability, regeneration and equality strategies.

2.3 The report contributes to the following Well-being Goals within the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2016. In particular A prosperous Wales (which aims to have a low carbon society) and A Wales of cohesive communities (in the context of improving quality of life with attractive, viable, safe and well connected communities).

### **3. THE REPORT**

3.1 Scrutiny Committee, at its meeting on 5th July, 2016, considered an update report on 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools. In relation to the Islwyn High School, Mr. T. Williams, Headteacher, gave a brief presentation on progress.

3.2 Mr. Williams referenced the Committee's previously expressed concerns in relation to:

- safety issues surrounding car parking and traffic management;
- the size of the site and recreation and physical education (PE) space; and
- lack of classroom space.

3.3 In order to get a better understanding of the site, it was moved and seconded that a site visit be arranged with the Cabinet Members for Highways and Education, Local Ward Members, Chair of Governors, Members of the Scrutiny Committee and appropriate officers and that a report of the visit be brought back to this Committee. By show of hands this was unanimously agreed.

RESOLVED that a site visit to the Islwyn High School be arranged and a report on the visit be placed on the forward work programme for consideration by the Education for Life Scrutiny Committee. The site meeting subsequently took place on Friday, 16th September.

## **Car Parking & Traffic Management Issues**

- 3.4 Concerns had been raised in relation to congestion, particularly around drop off and pick up times and associated safety issues.
- 3.5 A proposal had also been made to close off Waterloo Road to through traffic. This would require the processing of a Traffic Regulation Order that would take in the order of six months to complete. As a statutory process it would be subject to a formal consultation (both the general public and statutory consultees), and any comments and/ or objections would need to be considered. Therefore, no guarantee can be given that a closure order would be approved. There may also be a need for a planning application if appropriate.
- 3.6 It was emphasised that the new school had been built having regard to Wales Parking Standards and to comply with all Planning and Highways conditions.
- 3.7 It was acknowledged that congestion problems were inherent in most schools nationally on a daily basis. One of the planning permission conditions requires the completion of a School Travel Plan (STP) to be submitted to the Council for approval within six months of the date of occupation of the school. The purpose of the STP is to encourage more sustainable journeys to be made other than the private car, but also to monitor and manage traffic and pedestrian movements at the school. The Council will work with the school to develop and implement the STP.
- 3.8 A request was also made to provide traffic calming measures on Waterloo Road.
- 3.9 The Cabinet Member for Highways, Transportation and Engineering gave an assurance that the arrangements would be monitored and regularly received following the full opening of the school in June, 2017. This should be via the STP process.

## **Size of Site and PE space**

- 3.10 Members had been apprised of the site size relative to building bulletin guidance in 2013 when the matter was deliberated by the Task and Finish group.
- 3.11 The design brief expressly requested flexible spaces in view of the pupil bulge in the shorter term.
- 3.12 The Headteacher has provided a detailed analysis of the fortnightly timetable. In relation to single 50 minute lessons, the maximum number of PE lessons at any one time would be 8 groups on 2 occasions per fortnight (once a week) potentially with up to 30 pupils per group, i.e. maximum of 240 pupils. There would potentially be 7 groups on 5 occasions per fortnight and 6 groups on 10 occasions per fortnight as well.
- 3.13 Given the facilities available, the maximum 8 groups could be managed as follows :-

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| 3G pitch (up to 70 pupils)             | 2 classes |
| Sports Hall (up to 60 pupils)          | 2 classes |
| Multi-use Games Area (up to 60 pupils) | 2 classes |
| Activity Suite (up to 30 pupils)       | 1 class   |
| Hall (up to 30 pupils)                 | 1 class   |

In addition, the fitness suite is also available (up to 15 pupils) plus any theory lessons can take place in classrooms.

## **Classroom Space**

- 3.14 The school was designed in accordance with current building bulletin guidance and the design brief acknowledged flexible spaces as referred to earlier. The original approval was for 900 places (plus 50 special resource base). Subsequent approval was given for an increase in the permanent build from 900 – 1000 pupils instead of the originally proposed temporary demountable classrooms.
- 3.15 In order to assess the spaces, a comparison was made with 2 other neighbouring schools of almost identical size (Newbridge and Blackwood).
- 3.16 Many of the facilities are comparable, but ancillary areas (which are not used for WG capacity purposes) total :-
- Newbridge                      692 M2
  - Blackwood                      1677 M2
  - Islwyn High                      2352 M2
- 3.17 The total floor areas (excluding SEN) associated with the 3 schools are as follows :-
- Newbridge                      5407 M2
  - Blackwood                      6136 M2
  - Islwyn High                      6633 M2
- 3.18 Islwyn High is the most spacious and has a range of areas which do not count towards the pupil capacity calculation, as follows :-
- Open learning spaces
  - Community Room
  - Sports Store
  - Activity Room
  - Laboratory preparation room
  - Art preparation room

## **Pupil Numbers**

- 3.19 Islwyn High has presently circa 1140 pupils plus 50 SRB which will reduce by circa 30 by September 2017 (current Year 11 will not transfer to the new school).
- 3.20 This number is anticipated to further reduce until the initial pupil bulge is eliminated and the ongoing capacity of 1000 pupils plus 50 SRB is maintained.

## **Conclusion**

- 3.21 It is acknowledged that there will be some challenges for the new school to manage during the initial period of the pupil bulge, but there are sufficient spaces to accommodate these additional pupils.

## **4. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 Equality impact assessments were produced as part of the statutory processes for the scheme in conjunction with submission of the business cases.

- 4.2 The LA has an obligation under section 88 and Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 to prepare an accessibility strategy. This is a strategy for increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the schools' curriculums; improving the physical environment of the schools for the purpose of increasing the extent to which disabled pupils are able to take advantage of education and benefits, facilities or services provided or offered by the schools and improving the delivery to disabled pupils of information which is readily accessible to pupils who are not disabled. The scheme has been developed in accordance with the strategy.

## **5. WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS**

- 5.1 In terms of the 5 ways of working in the context of long term strategy and vision, integration of community facilities and consultation and collaboration in the school design and development.
- 5.2 This report contributes to the Well-being Goals and in particular in the context of :
- Corporate planning; and
  - Asset management.
- 5.3 The school has been designed having regard to long term future proofing and to complement sustainability and regeneration strategies. The school has been supported by the Welsh Government as part of its long term 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Strategy.

## **6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 These will be developed if any changes are proposed to the scheme.
- 6.2 If additional funding is required, it may not be eligible for 21<sup>st</sup> century school match.

## **7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 There are none envisaged.

## **8. CONSULTATIONS**

- 8.1 The draft report was distributed as detailed below. All comments received have been reflected in the report.

## **9. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 9.1 Members are requested to note the update in respect of the issues raised at the site visit on 16th September.

## **10. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 10.1 To apprise Members of the 3 issues raised at the site visit.

## **11. STATUTORY POWER**

- 11.1 School Organisation Code 2013 (Welsh Government)  
School Standards & Organisation (Wales) Act 2013.

Author: Bleddyn Hopkins, Assistant Director, Our Schools Our Future  
E-mail: hopkib@caerphilly.gov.uk  
Consultees: Chris Burns, Interim Chief Executive  
Nicole Scammell, Acting Director of Corporate Services & S151 Officer  
Keri Cole, Chief Education Officer  
Councillor Derek Havard, Cabinet Member, Education & Lifelong Learning  
Councillor T. J. Williams, Cabinet Member for Highways, Transportation & Engineering  
Councillor Wynne David, Chair of Education Scrutiny Committee  
Councillor James Pritchard, Vice Chair of Education Scrutiny Committee  
Gail Williams, Acting Head of Legal Services & Monitoring Officer  
Lynne Donovan, Acting Head of People Management and Development  
Jane Southcombe, Financial Services Manager  
Mark Williams, Manager, Building Consultancy Services  
Clive Campbell, Transportation Engineering Manager  
Tim Williams, Headteacher  
Kathryn Peters, Corporate Policy Manager

Background Papers: Strategic Outline Programmes 2010 and 2011  
Business cases and associated correspondence  
Member Task & Finish Group papers 2013