

Bridgend West - School Organisation Proposals - Frequently Asked Questions

1. Why are we proposing to build the English-medium school on the Marlas site and the Welsh- medium school on the current Corneli Primary School and Ysgol Y Ferch o'r Sgêr (YFOS) site?

Principally because it is a 'neutral' site. It gives a fresh start for both English-medium schools, so that one school is not seen as taking over another. Past experience has shown that where this has not happened there have been long-term issues in terms of staff cohesion. This strategy of a neutral site has been accepted and welcomed in the main by all affected schools.

In addition, Gleeds (Welsh Government technical advisers) have determined the proposed site locations and the phasing plan, as it works in terms of construction, site segregation and finance. Bus pick-up and drop-off can be maintained for the Welsh school for the duration of the construction of the new school, if developed in this way.

2. What are the plans for the clinic, which is adjacent to the YFOS site?

The clinic remains in situ under the proposal.

3. Are the proposed sites large enough?

Yes. Site 'test-fit' analysis undertaken by Welsh Government appointed project managers has demonstrated that the sites are large enough to accommodate the proposed new 21st century schools. Building Bulletin (Briefing Framework for Primary School Projects) recommended areas for new primary schools (including all types of space in primary schools (eg teaching areas, circulation space, sports pitches, games courts, soft play areas, hard play areas and habitat space)) were compared to the land available on the sites to ensure that they are of sufficient size.

4. What will happen to the Afon Y Felin Primary School site under the proposal?

In order for the proposed scheme to progress, the Afon Y Felin Primary School site would be 'land-swapped' with the Valleys to Coast-owned Plas Morlais site (the proposed site for the new 21st century English-medium school).

5. I was wondering about entrances and traffic? Would there be more than one entrance? When will plans be available?

The scheme is a revenue funded Mutual Investment Model (MIM) scheme and as such, detailed design plans will not be worked up by WEPCo (ie the joint venture company established between a Private Sector Delivery Partner and a subsidiary of the Development Bank of Wales) until after the Stage 1 MIM submission has been made to Welsh Government. Should Cabinet

determine to progress the proposal subsequent to consultation conclusion, it is anticipated that the Stage 1 submission would take place in June 2021.

Consequently, school detailed designs do not exist at this stage. The only plans that currently exist are red-line boundary and phasing plans used by Welsh Government's project managers to 'test-fit' the Building Bulletin recommended areas for schools against the land available on the sites.

Entrances and drop-off points would be determined at detailed design stage, and would be informed by a full Transport Assessment (Transport Assessments consider the impact of the development on all transport modes, set out proposals to minimise the impact of the development on the transport network and promote measures to encourage sustainable and environmentally friendly transport).

6. Why don't you just spend the money to modernise the schools we have?

The existing schools have significant backlog maintenance issues and are nearing the end of their design life. There is £1.5m existing backlog maintenance at the schools and each of the schools are currently condition category C+ (poor: exhibiting major defects and/ or not operating as intended). The condition of the existing buildings is only going to deteriorate over time and constantly investing such significant sums in order to maintain them will not provide pupils with 21st century learning environments.

7. What guarantees can main-scale teaching staff at the English-medium schools being joined be given regarding transfer of job responsibilities and signing of new contracts of employment? Similarly, what Learning Support Officer structures do you envisage being practical and appropriate?

Ultimately, a new school governing body would make all staffing decisions for the proposed new English-medium school. Should Cabinet determine to progress the proposal at the end of the consultation process (June 2021) the authority would begin the process of setting up a shadow governing body in respect of the proposed new school. While staffing is ultimately a governing body decision, the authority would not wish to see changes as it is felt that maintaining 'familiar faces' would be of benefit to the pupils. A 'match-and-slot' exercise would be used to appoint from the existing staff pool to the new school positions (with applications invited from the existing staff pool for any entirely new or novel posts).

8. Would classes be bigger in the proposed new schools?

No. The proposed new schools would have a greater number of classes ie two forms per year group, but the individual classrooms and classes would not be bigger capacity (there would just be more of them).