

Proposal to relocate Ysgol Heol Goffa to a new site and increase its capacity from 75 to 120

Consultation Report



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1. Executive Summary

The Consultation Period

On the 21st September 2020 Carmarthenshire County Council published proposals to:

- Relocate Ysgol Heol Goffa to a new site and increase its capacity from 75 to 120.

The consultation period commenced on 21st September 2020 in line with the publication of the proposal and closed on 1st November 2020 with a total of 41 responses received (excluding the responses received from Estyn and the pupils' consultation) in response to the formal consultation.

Responses Received		
Online Survey	Email	Total
40	1	41

It must be noted that of the 41 observations received, all were received prior to the end of the consultation period.

Consultation Event

Due to the ongoing implications of the Coronavirus issue we were advised to postpone all events where there was interaction between staff, parents and the wider community and as a result a drop in session to discuss proposals was cancelled.

In the absence of a drop in session stakeholders were offered an opportunity to discuss proposals with an Education Officer via a virtual meeting. No stakeholders requested a virtual meeting to discuss proposals.

Responses Received

This proposal has been prepared due to Ysgol Heol Goffa being over-subscribed at present with 101 pupils on roll in January 2020, as a result the Local Authority are developing a scheme to provide the pupils of Ysgol Heol Goffa with a new condition A rated school building on a new site with facilities for the 21st Century.

Supportive

- Theme 1 – No reason
- Theme 2 – Support for proposal
- Theme 3 – Capacity
- Theme 4 – 21st Century School Design
- Theme 5 – Existing School Site

Concerns

- Theme 1 – No reason
- Theme 2 – 21st Century School Design
- Theme 3 – Existing School Site

Of the 41 respondents, they are categorised as follows:

- Parent (5)
- Staff Member (5)
- School Governor (6)
- Other (25)

Overall Summary

Supportive	93%	Not supportive	7%
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Workshops

Following the closure of the consultation period on the 1st November 2020 a workshop was held to analyse the observations received.

Next Steps

The Consultation Report will be presented to the Education & Children's Scrutiny Committee for comments and a recommendation and then ultimately to the Executive Board for determination on whether or not to proceed with the proposal and publish a statutory notice. Should the Executive Board decide to proceed to the next stage, a Statutory Notice will be published during the Spring Term 2021.

2. Summary of Observations received and Local Authority Responses

Point Number	Point Raised	Local Authority Response	Number of responses raising this point	% of responses raising this point
Supportive Comments Raised				
1.	No reason Some respondents did not provide a reason for their support.		22	54%
2.	Support for proposal Respondents supported the proposal to increase capacity to 120 places providing a new school build with 21 st Century facilities providing enhanced ALN opportunities with community facilities.	The Local Authority notes that due to an increase in demand for places a new school with 21 st Century facilities is needed. The support was noted.	12	29%
3.	Capacity Respondents questioned whether 120 places would be sufficient to meet future demand for places.	Specialist setting capacity across the Local Authority is being considered, as a result it is likely that increased capacity will be required in a number of settings according to projected need. It is not our intention to increase the Heol Goffa capacity any further as we feel that 120 places is sufficient and will provide a percentage of the SLD capacity required.	2	5%

4.	21st Century School Design Respondents noted the need for adequate drop off and pick up areas to be included in the scheme design. It was also noted that future expansion opportunities should be built into the scheme design.	School design are considered and developed by the design teams in consultation with the school and Governing Body representatives. Internal and external areas provided are being developed according to national guidelines Building Bulletin 104 for the design of special schools.	2	5%
5.	Existing School Site Respondents questioned the Authorities aspirations for the existing school site.	The Authority is undertaking of a full-scale review of the Modernising Education Programme over the coming months and this will include all of the county's schools including the current site of Ysgol Heol Goffa.	2	5%
Concerns Raised				
1.	No reason Some respondents did not provide a reason for their concerns.		1	2%
2.	21st Century School Design Concerns were raised regarding internal areas within the new school design.	School design are considered and developed by the design teams in consultation with the school and Governing Body representatives. Internal and external areas provided are being developed according to national guidelines	1	2%

		Building Bulletin 104 for the design of special schools.		
3.	Existing School Site Respondent questioned the need for building on a new site.	The existing school site is not sufficient to build and accommodate a 120 capacity special school with 21 st Century facilities. It would not offer value for money to operate 2 sites therefore a new preferred site has been identified next to the recently completed Ysgol Pen Rhos.	1	2%

3. Estyn's Observations regarding the Proposal

Estyn's response to the proposal to relocate Ysgol Heol Goffa to a new site and increase its capacity from 75 to 120.

This report has been prepared by Her Majesty's Inspectors of Education and Training in Wales.

Under the terms of the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and its associated Code, proposers are required to send consultation documents to Estyn. However, Estyn is not a body which is required to act in accordance with the Code and the Act places no statutory requirements on Estyn in respect of school organisation matters. Therefore, as a body being consulted, Estyn will provide their opinion only on the overall merits of school organisation proposals.

Estyn has considered the educational aspects of the proposal and has produced the following response to the information provided by the proposer and other additional information such as data from Welsh Government and the views of the Regional Consortia, which deliver school improvement services to the schools within the proposal.

Introduction

The proposal is by Carmarthenshire County Council.

The proposal is to relocate Ysgol Heol Goffa to a new site and increase its capacity from 75 to 120

Summary / Conclusion

The proposer has clearly outlined the benefits of the proposal in addressing the issue of an increased demand for provision and by improving facilities for pupils in a new build school.

It is Estyn's opinion that the proposal is likely to at least maintain or improve the current standards of education and provision for pupils in the area.

Description and benefits

The proposer has provided a clear rationale for the proposal. It is to increase the capacity of the school to deal with a growing demand for places and to improve facilities and provision for pupils by providing a new building with 21st century facilities. The proposer has made suitable provision for people to respond to the proposal due to Coronavirus including the provision of virtual drop in sessions if requested. The proposer has appropriately considered the relative advantages and disadvantages of the proposal as well as the risks and provided suitable counter measures.

The data shows that the school is currently over-subscribed and that this has been the trend for the last four years. The catchment area for the school covers the whole of Carmarthenshire. The proposer has suitably shown that the proposal to increase the capacity would mitigate the risk of possibly having to send pupils out of catchment to receive the provision they require due to lack of capacity at the current site. The proposer has appropriately shown that it has considered other alternatives to this current proposal including maintaining the status quo and refurbishing the existing site. It has clearly explained that the restrictions on the current site would not enable the proposer to increase the capacity of the school.

The proposer has suitably considered the impact of the proposal on learner travel arrangement due to the new site being 3.8 miles away from the current site. The proposer states that 'transport will be provided in accordance with the requirements of a Statement of Special Educational Needs issued by the Authority or where a pupil/learner is the subject of the statutory assessment procedure where they have learning difficulties which the Local Authority considers makes transport 'necessary''.

The proposer has completed an appropriate community impact assessment that clearly demonstrates the benefits of the new school site to the community in the ward. These include shared access to a 3G pitch with Ysgol Pen Rhos and community use of the specialist facilities outside of school hours.

The proposer has completed a suitable fairness and equalities impact assessment that clearly considers the impact of the proposals on pupils demonstrating the protected characteristics. This assessment also considers the impact of the proposals on the Welsh language. It recognises that bilingual provision in the authority's special schools and units is limited and that it will work with these settings, including Ysgol Heol Goffa, to develop a bilingual provision. However, it does not provide any details on how it proposes to do this.

Educational aspects of the proposal

The proposer clearly explains that it is not appropriate to compare the standards that pupils achieve with national averages or to analyse trends over time because of the wide range of pupil's special educational needs. The proposer has provided appropriate data on the school's current performance such as comparing performance of groups of pupils and states that all school leavers gain one or more qualifications that are well matched to their individual needs and abilities. The proposer does not give an evaluation of pupil progress over time. The proposer provides a clear evaluation of how it views the school's provision and leadership and management to be highly effective. The proposer believes that the proposal will provide a high-quality learning environment for pupils that will maintain the current excellent standards and improve experiences for pupils. The

proposer has suitably demonstrated that it is minimising the disruption to learners by keeping them at the existing school site until the new school building is ready.

The school has been categorised as green that indicates that the school is highly effective and knows what it is doing well and what it needs to improve.

The proposer has also appropriately considered the most recent Estyn inspection (2017) outcomes for Ysgol Heol Goffa where the school was judged as excellent for its current performance and excellent for its prospects for improvement. It demonstrates how the proposal will address shortcomings identified in the Estyn report around the learning environment. These include providing additional space and better provision for teaching post 16 pupils with life skills and vocational skills and by the inclusion of an on-site hydrotherapy pool.

3.1 Local Authority Response to Estyn's Observations

As can be seen from Estyn's observations they are of the opinion that the proposal is at least likely to maintain or improve the current standards of education. Their observations include supporting statements as noted below.

Statements of support for this proposal by Estyn

The proposer has clearly outlined the benefits of the proposal in addressing the issue of an increased demand for provision and by improving facilities for pupils in a new build school.

It is Estyn's opinion that the proposal is likely to at least maintain or improve the current standards of education and provision for pupils in the area.

The proposer has provided a clear rationale for the proposal. It is to increase the capacity of the school to deal with a growing demand for places and to improve facilities and provision for pupils by providing a new building with 21st century facilities. The proposer has made suitable provision for people to respond to the proposal due to Coronavirus including the provision of virtual drop in sessions if requested. The proposer has appropriately considered the relative advantages and disadvantages of the proposal as well as the risks and provided suitable counter measures.

The proposer has suitably shown that the proposal to increase the capacity would mitigate the risk of possibly having to send pupils out of catchment to receive the provision they require due to lack of capacity at the current site.

The proposer has appropriately shown that it has considered other alternatives to this current proposal including maintaining the status quo and refurbishing the existing site. It has clearly explained that the restrictions on the current site would not enable the proposer to increase the capacity of the school.

The proposer clearly explains that it is not appropriate to compare the standards that pupils achieve with national averages or to analyse trends over time because of the wide range of pupil's special educational needs. The proposer has provided appropriate data on the school's current performance such as comparing performance of groups of pupils and states that all school leavers gain one or more qualifications that are well matched to their individual needs and abilities.

4. Consultation with the Pupils

School: Ysgol Heol Goffa

Date: 13th October 2020

Consultation undertaken by: Karen Draper – Educational Support Adviser

Interviewed: Members of the school council (conducted on-line due to coronavirus)

What do the pupils think about having a new school with capacity for more pupils?

Pupils are happy, excited, but also a little nervous. Some children are a little worried because they don't like change and some of the secondary aged pupils are sad at not being able to attend the new school.

Pupils are excited about the ski slope, Enterprise, the studio, the hydro pool, and the basket-ball hoops. But they also feel happy because there will be space for everyone, including their teachers.

They are also hoping to have:

A mud kitchen, a stage to perform on, sandpit, lots of outdoor spaces, quiet areas with blankets, picnic areas, trees, a rabbit, an obstacle course, trampoline, dens, swings, a climbing wall and a DIY workstation.

How will a hydro pool in school help them?

It is very important because pupils need to stretch their bodies, they won't need to travel so far, so will be in the pool for longer and more often and it helps with people's legs.

Is there anything they are unsure about?

The pupils were concerned that there was only one staffroom but were happy when they knew staff also had an outdoor space.

When looking at the plans they felt the pool looked quite small but were happy when they knew this was just for their use.

There was a question around the use of the pool by all pupils. It was explained by the current HT that pupils who have physical plans would be in there first.

There was a question around the name of the new school-the current HT told the pupils that she had an idea, but it might be that LA officers would name it. The pupils were definite that they wanted to be part of the voting.

They also asked questions around transporting equipment down to the new school.

What would they like to say to the people who have helped this happen?

The pupils and staff want to say a huge thank you, but also a..." please hurry up."

All pupils were in agreement that the proposal should go through.

