

## **Héronsbridge School – School Organisation Proposal**

### **Frequently asked questions**

#### **How will the children be supported in the transition to the new school?**

From the outset, learners would be involved in the decision-making processes around the new build. The school council is already engaged in the consultation.

The Headteacher of Heronsbridge School and school staff talk about the new build in assemblies. A whole-school 'Design the new Heronsbridge' art competition is planned and site visits would be arranged for learners during the construction phase.

As with previous school construction schemes, it is anticipated that the successful design and build contractor would engage with the learners throughout the design and build periods.

Once the construction is completed, Heronsbridge School will arrange transition tours of the school, group by group.

#### **What will the new school offer?**

The existing school has a range of specialised facilities. However, there are significant issues with regard to the number and size of teaching and non-teaching spaces. Storage and circulation space is also problematic and given the needs of the learners (many of whom require walking aids or wheelchairs), this can cause issues in managing safe movement around the school. Personal hygiene and toilet facilities are also challenging. All of these issues would be addressed through the provision of a new school which would be designed specifically to meet the needs of learners.

#### **Will you be bringing an element of Ysgol Bryn Castell into the new school, as one parent has two children, one in each school?**

The new school will only be for those learners with complex needs who would be identified as requiring a place at Heronsbridge School (that is, learners with autistic spectrum disorder, severe learning difficulties, or profound and multiple learning difficulties).

#### **What would be the future plans for the existing Heronsbridge School site if the new school is built?**

No decision has been made as yet. The future use of the existing site would be subject to an options appraisal and a future Cabinet decision, subject to the successful outcome of the statutory process to relocate Heronsbridge School.

### **Why are we building a new school?**

The council has brought forward the proposal to build a replacement Heronsbridge School in order to:

- increase the number of places for pupils with complex additional learning needs (ALN);
- reduce the number of learners sent out of county (this practice is both expensive and imposes often significant travel times on pupils); and
- provide suitable and sufficient accommodation which meets the needs of our most vulnerable learners.

### **Will the school be built in a way that is environmentally friendly, using all modern techniques and materials to lower the school's carbon footprint?**

Where Welsh Government grant is used for new build schools, the British Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM) 'excellent' rating must be achieved and the school would be required to achieve an A rated Energy Performance Certification. A minimum standard of at least 15% of the total value of the materials used should derive from recycled and reused content in the materials selected. This ensures that sustainability is at the heart of both the design and construction.

Also, in line with the long-term commitment towards carbon reduction and achieving Net Zero Carbon buildings, as of January 2022 all projects are required to demonstrate carbon reduction techniques and technologies and achieve Net Zero Carbon in operation and meet the relevant target for embodied carbon.

**This £25m investment is an opportunity for local construction firms to be part of the investment. How much of the build and construction materials used will be sourced locally to reduce the carbon footprint and offered to local firms? Will there be an element of all contractors having to pay the living wage and take on so many apprenticeships / training opportunities when the school is being built?**

A 'design and build' contractor will be procured via the South East and Mid Wales Collaborative Construction Framework (that is, SEWSCAP). The successful

contractor will seek partners in the local community and in doing so, help boost the local economy. One of the ways in which local companies are sourced is through organised 'meet the buyer' events which aim to encourage local businesses to put themselves forward for consideration. The contractor will seek to source steel which is manufactured in the UK and will be encouraged to think local first.

In line with Welsh Government's aim of developing a vibrant Welsh economy capable of delivering strong and sustainable economic growth and tackling poverty, it is important that this project capitalises on the Community Benefits opportunities available. The following improvements in social, economic and environmental outcomes can be obtained through public procurement:

- supply chain opportunities for social enterprises and local business;
- contributing to education through engagement with local schools, colleges and universities;
- contributing to community initiatives that help tackle poverty and leave a lasting legacy; and
- priorities such as supporting people into work.

Welsh Government's Project Bank Accounts (PBA) policy recognises the important role of sub-contractors in the delivery of school projects and the importance of fair and prompt payment to supply chain partners. PBAs support Welsh Government's Community Benefits policy and specifically promote ethical business practices that make Wales a good place to live, work and do business.

### **Where is the school going to be and the route to and from the school?**

The proposed school would be located on the Island Farm site in Bridgend and would be accessed via Bridgend Science Park.

### **What will be the impact on Island farm and the traffic on the A48?**

The local authority has commissioned a traffic assessment (TA) to consider the impact of the proposal on the local highway network.

The A48/B4265 Ewenny Road signalised roundabout has been referred to, as this junction is the most onerous with the biggest impact experienced as a result of the relocation of the school from the north to the south of the roundabout.

In order to mitigate the impact of the relocation of the proposed school, the TA has recommended that a junction improvement is carried out at the Ewenny roundabout. In this case the TA has shown the introduction of an additional lane on the northern

approach to the roundabout (that is, on Ewenny Road) for left turn movements only. This high-level design can be incorporated within adopted highway extents.

The TA concludes that with this mitigation measure in-place, it may be determined that the proposed junction improvement mitigates the impact of the proposed development on the operation of the Ewenny roundabout to an acceptable standard.

**Could the school be built on its current site, or on the college, which we know is moving, or even refurbished?**

It is considered that the impact and decant operations in terms of developing the school on the existing site would be detrimental to the learners' education and wellbeing.

Bridgend College has in recent years decided to relocate from the Cowbridge Road campus. The timing of the relocation does not align to this proposal and the in-principal funding approval secured for the new school.

**Héronsbridge School has tremendous facilities outside the main building, the football pitch (which is used by the community) and a log cabin. Will this be moving or rebuilt in the new school?**

As specified by Welsh Government, the facilities provided will, in the main, be determined by Building Bulletin 104 (that is, the area guidelines). The school will have pitch provision, which will in all probability, be an all-weather surface. However, the local authority recognises that the school currently benefits from other facilities (for example, the eco-cabin) and the aim is to work closely with the school to consider ways in which this type of specialist facility could be provided at the new site.

**What will be the process going forward and when do you anticipate the school will open?**

The proposed school is subject to a formal consultation process under the School Organisation Code. This process commenced on 4 April and will close on 18 May 2022. The outcome of the process will be reported to Cabinet and a decision will be taken whether to proceed with a public notice.

Subject to Cabinet approval, the public notice will be issued in July and the outcome reported to Cabinet in September. Should Cabinet determine to proceed with the new school, the design and construction of the school will be tendered. The proposed school would require planning consent and Welsh Government approval of the Full Business Case. The school would be ready for occupation at the beginning of the autumn term 2025.

### **Were other sites considered?**

Other sites were considered within the county borough. However, due to its location and size, the Island Farm site in Bridgend was deemed to be the most suitable for the proposed school.

### **What will be the impact on the children while the new school is being built?**

There will be minimal impact on learners and their education during the construction period as the school will be built on a separate site, which means that the existing school can continue to operate without interference.

Once the building has been handed over to the local authority, there will be a need to decant resources to the new school. However, experience shows that disruption can be kept to a minimum by working closely with the headteacher, governors and staff by planning the programme around the needs of the school.

### **Will the new school have an impact on the prisoner of war camp?**

The proposed new school will have no impact on the Hut 9, former Prisoner of War Camp at Island Farm.

### **Will the pupils parents, carers or guardians be consulted on the new build, or design?**

Stakeholder engagement sessions would be held in respect of the design, and these will include meetings with learners and parent/carers. These sessions will be led by the design and build contractor once appointed.

### **What will happen to Y Bont and Weston House?**

Weston House is owned by Bridgend College and is located on college land. Therefore, the provision is not directly affected by the proposal to relocate Heronsbridge School.

The building which is occupied by Y Bont sits on land which is owned by Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) and leased to Bridgend College. There is an underlease in place with Y Bont, the College is therefore Y Bont's landlord. To-date, BCBC and Bridgend College has made no future decision in respect of the building.