

Sustainable Schools Challenge Update - November 2023

All three projects are now in the early stages of design (Project Briefing and Concept Design).

Pupil involvement has been an integral part of the briefing from the outset.

Campws Cymunedol Bontnewydd.

In **Gwynedd** we have seen this in practice first-hand with **Ysgol Bontnewydd** pupils involved from the very beginning of the process. The initial shortlisted projects were asked to present to a judging panel and Cyngor Gwynedd's presentation included video clips of the pupils presenting the project.



Figure 1 Architects presenting to pupils at Ysgol Bontnewydd

The same group of pupils have been involved in the procurement of the design team with architect practices having to present their bids to a 'traditional' procurement panel and separately to the pupil panel. The pupils' feedback was scored and fed into the procurement process as an integral part of the decision making.

Apparently, the architect practices were more nervous presenting to the children than to the professionals!

New School Serving Glyn-coch Community.

In **Rhondda Cynon Taf (RCT)** the project team has engaged with learners to develop the project brief and initial concept design. This included a whole school assembly presentation by the project architect at both school sites to give learners an overview of the project and introduce members of the design team. The project team has engaged with school council members, with representatives from all age groups at both sites.



Figure 2+3 Whole School Assembly Presentations at Cefn and Craig yr Hesg Primary Schools

A parent survey circulated online by RCT resulted in circa 50 responses. The survey listed potential services and asked which the parents would most likely use if they were provided in the school. Learners are also being involved in the procurement process. For example, a workshop has been held with the school councils to discuss potential questions to ask bidding contractors. Learners decided that their question should focus on how the contractors would involve them in the day-to-day activities on site whilst also keeping them safe whilst supporting their learning. This question will be asked during bidder interviews with the Headteacher assessing on behalf of the learners.

Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Rhosafan

At Neath Port Talbot, YGG Rhosafan engagement sessions entitled 'Voice of the School' have taken place with pupil representatives, to understand their wants, needs and aspirations. The engagement included sessions with learner representatives, the Headteacher and representatives of the governing body.

When asked what learners enjoyed about school, the overwhelming response was that they 'love' coming to school. When asked what learners thought were the most important things they needed from the new build school, several responses were provided, with the top ten ranked items listed below:

1. Park space/playground with swings, not just playthings for younger children.
2. Sports facilities, like football goals, hockey space, a climbing wall, and trampolines.
3. Some covered yard space, to be able to go outside when it is raining.
4. Performance space and equipment, to allow the school to run drama and dance sessions.
5. A vegetable patch, orchard, and greenhouse, to grow 'our own' vegetables 'and things like pumpkins, watermelons and apples/plums.'
6. A garden to grow flowers and complete projects 'like we have with bees and bug hotels.'
7. A school kitchen to be able to cook the 'things we grow'.
8. A living rain forest in the school.
9. A workshop to be able to build things.
10. A cycle track around the outside of the school yard.

Feedback from these engagement sessions will be critical in the design stage. Further learner engagement sessions will also take place when a contractor is appointed (January 2024) to ensure that pupil voice is integral to the design and build process.

A vlog was also produced to promote the project which highlights the pupils' involvement at this stage:



Figure 4 Design input from Pupils at YGG Rhosafan

<https://youtu.be/kCVspXeKjNs>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q2nYQNwalvg>

Collaboration Between Projects

Our first meeting of all three project local authorities took place at the beginning of October where collaboration, a forum for sharing ideas and communication plans were the main focus. A follow up meeting will be held during early December when we will be able to gather further information on pupil engagement. Welsh Government colleagues from Curriculum will also play an active part in each project, ensuring both a focus and level of consistency across.

We have invited Down to Earth to speak at this meeting to strengthen that collaboration and pupil involvement commitment. We are working with Down to Earth to establish the scope of its engagement with the three projects and how it can offer 'challenge' towards the design and construction teams proposals at every stage. A workshop is also planned in February to bring the design teams, as well as the project teams, together to further build on stakeholder engagement, collaboration and the provision of an educating project for pupils and their communities.

In our first meeting with the three local authorities a Challenge Logo was proposed, options discussed, and the logo below was developed.

