

From: (Redacted)

Date: 12 June 2022 at 21:45:16 BST

To: "Miles, Jeremy (Aelod o'r Senedd | Member of the Senedd)" <Jeremy.Miles@senedd.wales>

Cc: CS - Correspondence1 <CSCorres1@charitycommission.gov.uk>, parliamentaryenquiries@charitycommission.gov.uk, savemaindy cycletrack <smct.campaign@gmail.com>

Subject: Cathays High Expansion

Subject : FOI 15767 Copies of all information held regarding Cardiff Council's plans to fund redevelopment of Cathays High School under the Welsh Government's 21st Century Schools Programme.

Dear Mr. Miles,

We have recently had sight of the above freedom of information response released into the public domain on the 12th January 2022.

Documents attached to the response include copies of email communications between your department and the education directorate at Cardiff Council.

We would like to draw your attention to Email Trail 4 under Doc 1, specifically the email dated 29th July 2021.

'The Maindy cycling track needs to move to provide the space required to build the school in an area of the city where is it considerably build up it also negates the need to acquire land which is costly in the city.'

Moving of the cycling track will not provide the space requirements of a new build school of this size.

We have previously advised your department that the total land available to build the new school is only 46,000sqm.

Welsh Government guidelines state that a school of 1450 pupils requires a minimum of 100,000sqms.

The land available over the combined Cathays High and Maindy Park sites is only 46,000sqms.

Even allowing for constrained site area compromises, this is insufficient space to rebuild the school to accommodate the current intake, let alone expanding to 1,450 pupils.

Despite the majority of the Maindy Park site being unsuitable for building and insufficient in scale for a new school, Cardiff Council have shown beyond doubt in communication with your Department that they have been motivated in their pursuit of the land for two specific reasons:

- 1) The land is free from purchase costs. Unlike other 21st Century School builds in Cardiff, the council do not want to pay for suitable land for the Cathays High rebuild. We do not know why Cathays High has been singled out for this inferior treatment or why the council are unwilling to invest in obtaining land that is of sufficient scale and suitability in line with the other school rebuilds.
- 2) By taking over Maindy Park and demolishing the velodrome, Cardiff Council plan to redirect Education Department funds to their Economic Development Department. These millions of pounds will be spent at the Sports Village in Cardiff Bay on a smaller inadequate replacement velodrome track. These funds are required by the Economic Development dept

to “kick start” the Sports Village regeneration plan that has nothing to do with Education provision.

This is evidenced in the FOI email chain responses to your department:

‘The position is that it is the Education Department of Cardiff Council that will provide a contribution to the authority’s Economic Development department, who will deliver the scheme, this is reflected in the statement The proposed new velodrome can only be delivered if the Maindy track closes, as it absolutely relies on a funding contribution from the education capital programme.’

“ without the contribution from the Cardiff’s Education budget the scheme cannot be delivered due to limitations on the Economic Development Department’s capital budget’

Additionally, further evidence of what Cardiff Council are planning can be found in the minutes of their Cabinet meeting of the 14th October 2021, Agenda Item 3, in particular paras 242 – 245 :

‘As well as the capital expenditure commitments directly connected to the main scheme, there would also be expenditure incurred in relation to the replacement cycle track, current contributions are set at £2.4 million.’

‘Further to the capital costs highlighted above, there would also be significant revenue expenditure implications, both connected to the project delivery and on an ongoing basis, once the new facility is operational. ‘

‘Any additional operational costs would be met from within the delegated school budget,’

‘The planned community use of part of the current Cathays site would decrease the affordability of the overall programme and may result in additional delays or cancellation of other planned schemes.’

Cardiff Council have misled the community throughout the process.

They stated incorrectly during the school consultation that Maindy Park and velodrome was needed to build the new school.

They led people to believe that the school was being built on the velodrome site when they actually intend to construct artificial sports pitches there, to allow the space to be “double counted”.

Despite claiming that they have considered other site options, there is no evidence that they have put any effort into identifying a more suitable site for the new school that does not lead to the loss of community green space and facilities.

They have stated (without evidence) that they will have sufficient land for the school when the location they have chosen provides less than 50% of the minimum 21st Century School requirements.

Another important missing piece of information is how many millions of pounds it will cost to demolish the velodrome, remove the grass and level the land ready for construction of artificial sports pitches (which will also be funded by the Education Dept.).

The community were told that the school was being built on the Maindy Park site and not the existing school site to avoid disruption.

However, Council Leader Huw Thomas has recently revealed that Maindy Park will be used purely to provide “**playing fields**” for the new school, but he has failed to detail where the school is actually being built. His use of the expression “playing fields” appears to be deliberately misleading.

They intend to remove existing playing fields in the centre of the velodrome to be replaced with artificial sports pitches.

The statement to cabinet that ***`we also need the velodrome to be moved otherwise there is no space to build the school anywhere.'*** Is therefore totally incorrect and again misleading.

We request that you order a review on the proposed expansion of Cathays onto Maindy Park.

As this expansion and rebuild of the school is dependant predominantly on 21st Century Schools funding, by agreeing to the plans, the Welsh Government will become the “enabler” for this deeply flawed and unpopular project.

Our own conclusions are:

- a) This school rebuild expansion should not be approved in its current form.
- b) A new site needs to be identified that is both large enough and suitable for a 21st Century School build, in parity with the cluster school rebuilds of Fitzalan and Willows.
- c) Welsh Government funding should not be granted to a project that will enable large sums of money to be diverted from the council’s Education budget into their Economic Development budget, under the guise of the requirements of a school expansion.
- d) Welsh Government funding should not be granted for a project that will result in the loss of community green space and facilities, a heritage velodrome and potentially community day time access to Maindy Leisure Centre.

Therefore we implore you to intervene to stop this deeply unpopular and controversial development that has the potential to deeply embarrass the Welsh Government (as enablers) once the full facts and implications are more widely understood by all.

We are happy to discuss or provide further details and evidence on request.

Submitted for full consideration,

From: (Redacted)

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows