

Sara Tucker

From: Steven Phillips
Sent: 25 July 2019 15:15
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: GODREGRAIG/TEGWCH
Attachments: Tegwch - Godrergrraig.pdf

All,

The Leader, Andrew and I met with Tegwch (a Godre'r Graig Residents Group) this lunchtime.

It was worth doing; but I won't repeat all the points from the meeting as most of it was covered during our discussion in the Council Chamber yesterday, particularly in relation to the relocation proposals for the school. The Leader also pointed the residents to our web page. The meeting itself was amicable enough and the group was not critical of the decision that the Council has taken. Although keen to continue the dialogue with us, interestingly they did not seem to want to work through [REDACTED] who were also present!

The main issue that came up was in relation to the attached "draft press release handout" and the fact that the residents are keen to redress initial negative media reporting as they see it and the impact on the wider community (house prices etc.). Whilst I can understand the concerns at one level, we pointed out the following:

- We had no control over the media and how they reported matters – and, of course, bad news sells newspapers;
- We were not in the business of reinterpreting the draft ESP report. It is what it is;
- The draft report was essentially about the risk to the school/school playground - not the homes and other buildings in the wider community; and
- Great care was needed not to make statements which could be misinterpreted (or even branded misleading) later on if the subsequent ESP reports drew different conclusions or risk assessments. In other words, at this point, we do not know what we do not know.

Personally, I do not think we can endorse the bullet points in the attached document for the reasons set out above (particularly the final one). It was agreed, however, that there would be a dialogue with the group to see what could be said by way of public assurance - contact details for the group are being sent to the Leader's office. That might include the fact that the school has been relocated, not closed – a point we stressed. Grateful if the media team could pick up on this as the Leader has offered them another meeting in mid-September when we have more to say.

The group were also very keen to have public meetings with Council officers present. We declined; but I think it is almost inevitable that there will be some sort of public meeting (along the lines of those held in Ystalyfera) once ESP has reported further.

Steven Phillips

Chief Executive/Prif Weithredwr
Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council
Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Castell-nedd Port Talbot

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Press Release handout

We feel there is much a Council press release could say that would enable a clear and accurate picture of the situation in Godrergraig to emerge. Namely:

1. the differences between the situations in Aberfan/Panteg and Godre'r Graig should be explained. They are:
 - The situation in Godre'r Graig concerns spoil tips from a **stone quarry not a coalmine or loose topsoil** which behave differently.
 - The stone quarry and its **spoil at issue in Godrergraig is tiny** by comparison to Aberfan or Pantteg.
 - The spoil material has 'relatively high permeability and an interlocking nature which suggests that the **material is stable**' (p31 ESP draft report)
 - It would require a combined 'severe weather event' and a blockage in a stream for even the 'theoretical possibility' of slippage to come about all of which depends upon 'a qualitative measure of likelihood' of 10 to the minus 3 i.e. **once in a thousand years** (page 34 of ESP draft report). Even under these circumstances, should they arise, the **likelihood of slippage is still vanishingly small**
 - **The qualitative risk categorisation of 'medium' needs interpretation for the Press and general public.** In general conversation the use of the word 'medium' would indicate 'fairly common'. However in this context i.e. in the Qualitative Risk Analysis (table 7 page 35) it indicates that there is a likelihood of the circumstances occurring which might cause slippage to be once in 1,000 years. This is still 'Medium' in the jargon of the consultant.
2. The media issue needs to be addressed **immediately** in order to de-escalate tensions quickly.
3. Our Residents group would wish to **contribute to / consult on** the wording of a press release before release in order to ensure that it would give residents the reassurance they require and not lose this precious opportunity to set the record straight.
4. The release would need to be as **high profile** as possible if the aim of righting the wrong caused to the residents of Godrergraig is to be achieved.
5. **Personal endorsement by the Leader** of this release would go a long way to restoring the trust of residents in the Council and allaying fears.

We feel that such an approach to the media would clearly demonstrate that our Council was discharging its duty of care towards us.

Sara Tucker

From: Steven Phillips
Sent: 25 July 2019 15:44
To:
Cc:

Subject: RE: GODREGRAIG/TEGWCH

I don't disagree; but they don't dissent on the school itself.
What we need is some new lines on the wider community impact which provide as much reassurance as we can; but don't end up predicting the long term consequences of an unpredictable situation.

Steven Phillips

Chief Executive/Prif Weithredwr
Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council
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Sent: 25 July 2019 15:37

To: Steven Phillips

Subject: RE: GODREGRAIG/TEGWCH

Dear all,

I also understand those concerns which is why we have referred to ...relocation, precautionary measure etc.
This issue will require proactive communications work well beyond the start of next term and I have started to draft a communications plan to support this. I will go through the plan with Peter Curnow tomorrow (after meeting the Deputy Head teacher to agree a regular process of updates to parents and staff. Here is the messages extract from the plan so far:

Messaging

The following key messages will drive our communications activity:

- The safety and wellbeing of pupils, staff and residents is the council's main priority
- The council is relocating pupils and staff to an alternative site as a precautionary measure
- Further detailed investigations are being undertaken
- The council has taken action due to concerns about initial findings in a report from specialist geotechnical advisers
- We are working hard to minimise potential disruption to the start of the autumn term
- The council is regularly providing stakeholders with the latest information/updates
- The council is contactable at any time for further information

Will pick up with the Leader/the group to support communications planning when he is ready.

Kind Regards

Strategic Marketing & Communications Adviser / Ymgynghorydd Marchnata a Chyfathrebu Strategol
Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council/ Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Castell-nedd Port Talbot

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Steven Phillips

Chief Executive/Prif Weithredwr
Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council
Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Castell-nedd Port Talbot
Phone/Ffon: [REDACTED]
Email/Ebost: [REDACTED]

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Sara Tucker

From: Steven Phillips
Sent: 28 August 2019 14:59
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: School failing to open
Attachments: RE: GODRE'GRAIG PRIMARY SCHOOL

Dear Claire,
I sent Steve Davies the attached email earlier. Please use it as you see fit.
Regards,

Steven Phillips

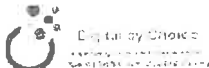
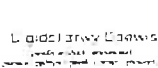
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Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council
Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Castell-nedd Port Talbot

[REDACTED]

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From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 28 August 2019 14:55
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]

Subject: FW: School failing to open

Good afternoon [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] forwarded your email to me to respond. A further meeting has taken place today regarding the relocation of Godre'rgraig Primary and you may wish to use the update from this to pass on to the Minister instead, as some of the information below has now changed. Our Chief Executive will be in touch regarding the updated information. Unfortunately we are currently unable to commit to providing a Breakfast Club from the start of term, however these arrangements will be reviewed on a regular basis.

Please let me know if you require any further information?

Regards

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
Programme Manager/Rheolwr Rhaglen
Strategic School Improvement Programme/Rhaglen Strategol Gwella Ysgolion
Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council/ Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Castell-nedd Port Talbot

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From: [REDACTED]

Sent: 27 August 2019 16:15

To: [REDACTED]

Subject: RE: School failing to open

Hi again [REDACTED]

I'd like to give the Minister a quick update on the situation and have drafted this from the information on your website, along with our communication:

Neath Port Talbot Council's plan to provide demountable classrooms for use by Godre'r Graig Primary School pupils in their own dedicated area at Cwmtawe Community School is on track to be completed by the first week of September. This may not be until Thursday 5 September, meaning that the school could miss its first day back following the summer break and planned INSET days for 3 and 4 September. Officials have confirmed with the Council that this is acceptable, given the exceptional circumstances.

Transport arrangements for Godre'r Graig Primary School pupils have now been made and the new routes, timetables and pick-up points will be provided to parents in letters from the Council this week. School meals will be provided for pupils via the Cwmtawe Community School's catering facilities. There will be no Breakfast Club for the Godre'r Graig pupils for the first few months due to logistics however they will receive a mid-morning snack.

At the Godre'r Graig School Taskforce meeting on 1 August 2019, it was stated that the costs of hiring the temporary classrooms for two years stood at circa £351,000 but there would be additional costs in connection with civil works for drainage, fencing, data, water supply and foundations, and for utilities with Western Power stating that their costs would be approximately £11,000. It was agreed that, as and when costs were encountered, an approach should be made to Welsh Government to see if there is financial assistance available.

Does this look fair to you?

The Minister's special adviser has asked about the provision of breakfast and if there is any way around this, and also how long this may be for.

Many thanks for your help,

[REDACTED]

Schools Effectiveness Division

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]

Sent: 20 August 2019 15:10

To: [REDACTED]

Subject: RE: School failing to open

Hi [REDACTED]

Many thanks for this – I am sure that the Director will keep you informed as to what will happen come September. Once again many thanks for your assistance in this matter.

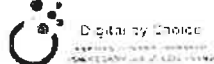
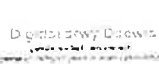
Kind regards

Principal Schools Governance Officer/Child Licencing Officer
Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council/ Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Castell-nedd Port Talbot

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From: [Redacted]

Sent: 20 August 2019 14:14

To: [Redacted]

Cc: [Redacted]

Subject: RE: School failing to open

Hi again [Redacted]

We are aware of the issue at the school.

In the Education (School Day and School Year) (Wales) Regulations 2003 (so amended), regulation 4 states that:

- (2) At least 380 sessions (190 days) must be held at a school during any school...
- (3) Where at any time a school is prevented from meeting for one or more sessions for which it was intended that it should meet, and it is not reasonably practicable for arrangements to be made for it to meet at an alternative time for those sessions, the school is to be treated for the purposes of paragraph (2) as if it had met as intended.

So, if it is possible, Wednesday 4th September's missed sessions (2) should be made up elsewhere in the 2019/20 year. If it is not possible or reasonable to do so, due to the exceptional circumstances the school finds itself in, there will be no recourse. If there are any options for using an alternative site, such as in a collaboration or partner school, these could be explored. The health and safety of pupils and teachers must be paramount.

I assume as part of your processes you have been keeping all concerned at both Godre'r Graig and Cwmtawe schools informed.

I would appreciate it if you could also keep us updated with the ongoing situation at the school and if you have any information on if/when the school is likely to be able to reopen.

Many thanks

Claire.

Schools Effectiveness Division

From: [Redacted]

Sent: 20 August 2019 13:38

To: [Redacted]

Cc: [REDACTED]

Subject: RE: School failing to open

Hi [REDACTED]

Thanks for your email – [REDACTED] has passed this onto me in the School Governance team. I just need to look a few things up for you and I'll reply again with a proper answer ASAP.

Kind regards

[REDACTED]

Schools Effectiveness Division

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]

Sent: 20 August 2019 12:58

To: [REDACTED]

Subject: FW: School failing to open

Importance: High

From: [REDACTED]

Sent: 20 August 2019 12:49

To: [REDACTED]

Subject: Re: School failing to open

Importance: High

Hi [REDACTED]

I am contacting you from Neath Port Talbot Education Dept. We may have a problem with regards one of our schools opening on time in the autumn term. The school had to close suddenly on 11th July, 2019, due to concerns for its safety. The pupils cannot be allowed back into this school due to continued safety issues. Therefore, portacabins are being placed in the grounds of another school to accommodate these pupils (they will remain pupils of the original school). However, it seems that these portacabins will not be ready until Thursday 5th September, 2019. The school had already arranged INSET days for Monday 2nd and Tuesday 3rd September but, obviously, there are now issues around Wednesday 4th September. I would be grateful if you could get back to me with regards an options we, as an authority, may have with regards this problem. I have tried searching on-line for a policy that could assist me with this matter but have failed to find anything.

If you are not the correct person to deal with this then could you forward this email to the correct person please (please let me know if this is the case in order that I might keep the Directory informed).

Many thanks, in anticipation, for your assistance in this matter.

Kind regards

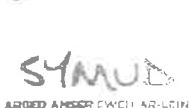
[REDACTED]

Principal Schools Governance Officer/Child Licencing Officer

Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council/ Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Castell-nedd Port Talbot

Tel/ Ffôn [REDACTED] Email/E-bost [REDACTED]

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Os hoffech ddefnyddio'r Gymraeg wrth ddellio â'r Cyngor os gwelwch yn dda cliciwch [yma](#)

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Sara Tucker

From: Steven Phillips
Sent: 28 August 2019 12:51
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: GODRE'GRAIG PRIMARY SCHOOL

Importance: High

Steve:

An update for you following the earlier exchanges below.

We have decided this morning to reopen the school on its temporary site in Pontardawe on Monday 9 September. This is being communicated to the school and parents today. We will also be using the Council website, social media etc. to publicise what is planned as parents may need to arrange childcare next week.

The last (of four) demountable classrooms was delivered yesterday and we are now going hell for leather on painting, utilities, IT, furniture and all the rest of it to get the school up and running asap. The home to school transport, catering etc. is also in place. The school staff and Council team will be working on site over the weekend of 6/7 September to get the set up right.

We did discuss the possibility of reopening on the 6th; but it was very tight and that weekend will help us if there are any last minute hitches. For the sake of one school day, it didn't seem worth the risk in all honesty.

Grateful if you could keep the Minister's office informed given the earlier interest - and her Special Advisors. One has been in touch with my team; but I didn't catch his/her name. Please forward this email as you see fit.

Regards,

Steven Phillips

Chief Executive/Prif Weithredwr
Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council
Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Castell-nedd Port Talbot

[REDACTED]

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From: Steven Phillips
Sent: 31 July 2019 08:52
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: GODRE'GRAIG PRIMARY SCHOOL

Steve

Just to say thanks again.

It seems to have worked – we are now getting the response we need from WP and assurances that the necessary will be done to get the school up and running for the first week of term.

Regards,

Steven Phillips

Chief Executive/Prif Weithredwr
Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council
Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Castell-nedd Port Talbot



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From: [REDACTED] ([mailto:\[REDACTED\]](#)) **On Behalf Of** [REDACTED]
Sent: 26 July 2019 15:34
To: Steven Phillips [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: GODRE'GRAIG PRIMARY SCHOOL

Hi Steve

The Ministers office have spoken with the design and delivery lead for the region, who agrees this is a priority. He is going to do what he can to expedite matters. I have provided him with the key details, which will be forwarded to the relevant people for them to action on Monday morning.

Thanks



Director of Education / Cyfarwyddwr Addysg

Education and Public Service Group: Y Grwp Addysg A Gwasanaethau Cyhoeddus
Welsh Government Llywodraeth Cymru



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From: Steven Phillips [REDACTED]
Sent: 26 July 2019 13:26
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: GODRE'GRAIG PRIMARY SCHOOL

Thanks again

Sent with BlackBerry Work
(www.blackberry.com)

From: [REDACTED]
Date: Friday, 26 Jul 2019, 13:07
To: Steven Phillips [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: GODRE'GRAIG PRIMARY SCHOOL

Steve - to keep you in touch – the minister's office are in discussion on how the Minister for Environment, Energy, and Rural Affairs to request advice/intervention. Will update you before the end of the day.
Steve

[REDACTED]
Director of Education / Cyfarwyddwr Addysg
Education and Public Service Group: Y Grwp Addysg A Gwasanaethau Cyhoeddus
Welsh Government Llywodraeth Cymru
Tel/Ffon: [REDACTED]



**ADDYSG CYMRU
EDUCATION WALES**
cenhadaeth ein cenedl our national mission

From: Steven Phillips [REDACTED]
Sent: 26 July 2019 10:37
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: GODRE'GRAIG PRIMARY SCHOOL

Many thanks indeed.

Steven Phillips

Chief Executive/Prif Weithredwr
Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council
Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Castell-nedd Port Talbot

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From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 26 July 2019 10:33
To: Steven Phillips [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: GODRE'GRAIG PRIMARY SCHOOL

Steve – I will pick up with the Minister's office now. She is not around today but I will sort with the SPADs and get back to you.
Steve

[REDACTED]
Director of Education / Cyfarwyddwr Addysg
Education and Public Service Group: Y Grwp Addysg A Gwasanaethau Cyhoeddus
Welsh Government Llywodraeth Cymru
[REDACTED]



From: Steven Phillips [REDACTED]
Sent: 26 July 2019 10:20
To: Davies, Steve (EPS - Education Directorate) [REDACTED]
Subject: GODRE'GRAIG PRIMARY SCHOOL

Dear Steve,

We spoke a couple of weeks ago about the events that led us to temporarily close this school on the grounds of safety.

My Leader was very grateful for the supportive line taken by the Minister in her written statement to the Senedd and we are making good progress to relocate the school in time for the commencement of the autumn term. Essentially, we have identified a site at Cwmtawe Comprehensive School and have demountable classrooms and the other necessary facilities on order. The dialogue with the governors, staff, parents and the wider community is also going reasonably well and is continuing at pace.

However, we have one issue where I would be grateful for Welsh Government assistance. The temporary classrooms are obviously not much use without connections to the utilities - and we are rather struggling

with Western Power, who initially seemed to have plonked us in some sort of queue behind Mrs Jones and a connection to her new conservatory! Their starting point is that they would do the work up to 12 weeks after accepting an order; but that is not much good in the context of getting the children back into school in the first week of September. We are putting a lot of pressure on WP to expedite this process and we are expecting further contact from them on Monday. However, it would be extremely helpful if the Minister's special advisor (or even the Minister herself) could ring up the Chief Executive or Chair of WP and underline her expectation that we will be helped in a timely fashion. If this doesn't happen, there is a very real risk that we will not be able to get the school relocated and open for the beginning of term, which will obviously cause issues with parents and the community. Bluntly, if we get there I shall whip up negative PR that keeps WP's press office busy for a week. We do have a back-up option in the form of a temporary generator; but it is far from ideal and potentially adds to the cost.

Anything WG can do would be of considerable assistance. If you need to discuss further, please ring me on [REDACTED]

Regards,

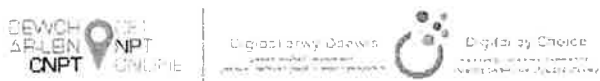
Steven Phillips

Chief Executive/Prif Weithredwr
Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council
Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Castell-nedd Port Talbot
Phone/Ffôn: [REDACTED]
Email/Ebost: [REDACTED]

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Sara Tucker

From: Steven Phillips
Sent: 28 August 2019 15:43
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Godre'r Graig Primary School

I think it is in our interests to facilitate their coverage (including an interview); but without turning it into a circus first thing when the kids arrive.

They will want to do the story on day one and we can't really stop them turning up if they decided to.

Steven Phillips

Chief Executive/Prif Weithredwr
Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council
Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Castell-nedd Port Talbot

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From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 28 August 2019 15:40
To: [REDACTED]

Subject: RE: Godre'r Graig Primary School

Hi,

I have spoken to the Chief (now copied in just in case I have missed anything he suggested. and it maybe an idea in the first instance to advise them of our note from today's meeting but possibly facilitate them attending the school mid morning on the first day back in conjunction with meeting with the Leader and/or Cabinet member where we can highlight the great work the Council has done in ensuring the children have somewhere to go for their education.

regards

Senior Executive Support Officer/Uwch-Swyddog Gweithredol
Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council/ Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Castell-nedd
Port Talbot Tel/ Ffôn: [REDACTED]

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From: [REDACTED]

Sent: 28 August 2019 15:32

To: [REDACTED]

Subject: FW: Godre'r Graig Primary School

Hi,

We've had this (below) from ITV Wales – I guess this is the last thing the parents/headteacher would want on the first day at the new location (even though the children are likely to be excited by the cameras). I would suggest we might send a note back indicating that parents were upset by media intrusion on the day the parents were told the school had to close and that it would not be in the interests of the children/parents to be so distracted on the day they have to get used to new surroundings etc. On the other hand there is going to be media interest in this enforced move (which has been arranged speedily and effectively) so maybe we could arrange for an hour or so of interviews when the children/parents are more used to their new location and we could have plenty of staff...comms, education etc on hand.

Robin

From: [REDACTED]

Sent: 28 August 2019 15:10

To: [REDACTED]

Subject: Godre'r Graig Primary School

Dear [REDACTED]

ITV Wales would very much like to cover the return to school of pupils from Godre'r Graig Primary School next week.

Would you be able to help us with this.

Are the children being sent to a different location altogether? Is the council / headteacher giving interviews? What is the actual date that the school is going back?

Thank you for all your help with this.

Look forward to working with you.
Claire

Content Editor - ITV Wales
3 Assembly Square
Britannia Quay
Cardiff Bay
CF10 4PL

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Sara Tucker

From: Leader
Sent: 20 April 2023 21:19
To: [REDACTED] - CEX;
Cc:
Subject: Re: Godre'r Graig

Hi Karen,

I wasn't aware of officers being asked about a Modular Construction myself, and I agree with you on this, we need political leadership going forward and look forward to the discussion next week with you, [REDACTED] and as you said, [REDACTED] more than welcome to join us if he can make it, thanks, Steve.

Sent from Outlook for iOS

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, April 20, 2023 9:11:38 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Godre'r Graig

I understand that officers are receiving enquiries about a potential modular construction being put onto the old Godre'r Graig site.

Could I respectfully ask that there is no further enquiry on this matter until we have had a proper discussion about next steps.

We need clear political leadership as to where we go next on this agenda. This must be led by the education directorate which is where the statutory responsibilities sit, not by the environment directorate.

I had intended having a discussion with the Leader and Deputy Leader next week in any event – perhaps you might want to join that meeting Simon?

[REDACTED]
Prif Weithredwr/Chief Executive

I am sending this email within my usual working hours. Please note I do not expect a response by return, but look forward to hearing from you within your designated working hours.

Rwy'n anfon yr e-bost hwn o fewn fy oriau gwaith arferol. Nodwch nad wyf yn disgwyl ymateb trwy ddychwelyd, ond edrychaf ymlaen at glywed gennych o fewn eich oriau gwaith dynodedig.

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