



## **EDUCATION FOR LIFE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – INFORMATION ITEM**

**SUBJECT: 21ST CENTURY SCHOOLS AND EDUCATION BAND B  
PROGRAMME - UPDATE**

**REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR FOR EDUCATION AND  
CORPORATE SERVICES**

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### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to update Members on the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools and Education Band A and Band B programmes.

### **2. SUMMARY**

- 2.1 The report provides an update to Members on the current position of the Band A (£56.5 million) and the Band B (£78 million) 21<sup>st</sup> Century School and Education Capital Programmes.
- 2.2 The current projected underspend within the Band A programme is circa £1.370m. This projected underspend has been allocated to a refurbishment project at Trinity Fields Special School.
- 2.3 The priority schemes identified for Phase 1 of the Band B programme are an expansion of provision at Trinity Fields School and relocation and expansion of Ysgol Gymraeg Cwm Gwyddon on the former Cwmcarn High site.
- 2.4 Both projects outlined in 2.3 above are in early developmental stage and officers will ensure that Members are updated on a regular basis in relation to all aspects of the proposal e.g. financial, business case, consultation process etc.
- 2.5 A Board has been established to undertake a review of Sixth Form/Single Sex/Surplus places provision.

### **3. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 Scrutiny Members are asked to note the information contained in the report.

#### **4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.1 To ensure Scrutiny Members are updated on the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools and Education Capital programme.

#### **5. THE REPORT**

##### **5.1 Band A**

5.1.1 The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools and Education Programme is regarded as a major, long term and strategic capital investment programme supporting large scale capital building projects across Wales with the aim of enhancing school buildings to meet 21<sup>st</sup> Century Educational and Community needs.

5.1.2 The Band A 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools and Education Programme (2014-2019) approved an allocation of £56.5 million for improvement/new build schemes at the schools identified below:

- Y Gwyndy (part of Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni)
- Islwyn High School
- Blackwood Comprehensive School refurbishment plus 3G pitch
- Idris Davies 3-18 School
- Newbridge School extension and Cwmcarn High demolition

5.1.3 Based on the outturn figures of the Band A completed projects above the underspend on the programme is now circa £1.370m.

5.1.4 The above underspend has been allocated to a refurbishment project at Trinity Fields School to enable work as shown below to be carried out, which will enrich the learning provision of its pupils:

- The installation of new hoist systems within classrooms.
- The adaption of toilet facilities to become more accessible to need.
- Upgrading of withdrawal rooms to create safe and welcoming environment to include the provision of natural lighting.
- Reconfiguration of courtyard area
- Improvement and relocation of pupil kitchen area.
- The creation of a home living environment to increase the Independent Living Skills of pupils.
- Creation of a new ball pit area.
- Hydrotherapy pool improvements and adaptations which will increase the lifespan and accessibility of the provision for all pupils and the wider Community.
- Increasing storage facilities to allow for the more complex needs of pupils i.e. increase in wheelchairs, medical equipment.
- Improvement to the outdoor learning area.
- Upgrade IT facilities.
- Improve ventilation within the school.
- The creation of independent living areas within classrooms.

5.1.5 Below is a detailed analysis of one of the areas of spend and the impact it will have:

**Relocation of commercial standard kitchen from current location to front of school (i.e. within current communication hub).**

The café is run on a business / young enterprise model. It has been successful in completing food hygiene certification at grade 5 since it has been open and is gaining a good reputation for its value and service within the local community in addition to being an outstanding teaching resource. It currently offers pupils within the 14-19 department the experience of managing and learning about: food hygiene, food preparation, catering and hospitality, business planning, money management, social skills and world of work environment. Currently pupils need to complete kitchen preparation work in an area away from the Café serving area and there is a limit to food preparation on offer as a result. All food preparation has to be moved through the school to the Café for purchase. The café is used by staff, parents and is also well supported by friends of the school. The café is based at the front of the school to enable community use and easy access to parents/ public without the need for them to come into the main body of the school.

The impact on completing the relocation of the kitchen is that an independent living skills area will be created in the vacated kitchen. This would include resources to allow older students to practice household / independent living skills. This will allow the school to teach lifelong skills which enable pupils to have greater choice after leaving school. By practicing skills in household / independent living skills there are more opportunities for pupils after leaving school. It will also increase potential for pupils to become autonomous adults within the community.

5.1.6 The Trinity Field Band A project is progressing well. Phase 1 is complete which includes the new courtyard classroom, the relocation and refurbishment of the café and kitchen and the ball pool area.

5.1.7 In order to minimise the impact on pupils whilst in situ the works have been programmed over an eighteen month period with an expected completion date of August 2020.

## 5.2 **Band B**

5.2.1 The key aims of the 21st Century Schools and Education Band B investment programme, outlined by WG, is to:

- Reduce the number of poor condition schools.
- Ensure that we have the right size schools in the right location, providing enough places to deliver Welsh and English medium education.
- Ensure the effective and efficient use of the educational estate for use by both Schools and the wider Community.

5.2.2 The first two schemes identified as priority for Phase 1 of the Band B programme are the expansion of Trinity Fields Special School and the relocation and expansion of Ysgol Gymraeg Cwm Gwyddon.

5.2.3 A project group has been established for the Trinity Fields Project that consists of officers from Education, Social Services, Building Consultancy, Health and representatives from Trinity Fields School.

- 5.2.4 The remit of the group is to ensure that the project meets the needs of vulnerable children and young adults within the school and wider community from not only an Educational but much broader perspective. This collaborative working model will ensure that the project specification is delivered in an efficient and effective manner thus avoiding duplication of facilities within Public Services.
- 5.2.5 Throughout both the Band A refurbishment and planning for the Band B project the School has developed exciting and innovative ways of engaging and incorporating the pupil voice to ensure the needs of its pupils are met.
- 5.2.6 This has included the use of retinal recognition, visual aids and encouraging creative engagement.
- 5.2.7 A detailed programme has been developed for the delivery of this project which includes the submission of a combined Outline Business Case and Strategic Business case to Welsh Government by the end of the Autumn term.
- 5.2.8 This is dependent on the project specification being agreed by the project group by mid November 2019.
- 5.2.9 The second project in Phase 1 is the relocation and expansion of Ysgol Gymraeg Cwm Gwyddon on the former Cwmcarn High site.
- 5.2.10 The Band B programme is a key aspect of the corporate Welsh Education Strategic Plan (WESP) in ensuring there are sufficient Welsh Medium school places to support the challenging target of 1 million Welsh speakers in Wales by 2050. The WESP regulations are currently out for consultation, if approved will require us to meet challenging targets for school places over the next 5 to 10 years.
- 5.2.11 It will continue to support a thriving Welsh Language provision within Caerphilly by ensuring the development of sufficient Welsh medium places in areas where they are coming under pressure, as identified in the Authorities 2017 - 2020 WESP, Caerphilly East and Bedwas/Tredomen/Machen.
- 5.2.12 Ysgol Gymraeg Cwm Gwyddon currently covers the catchment area of Caerphilly East area of the Borough. The School is at capacity with no opportunity to expand on the current site.  
This area has the Councils lowest progression rates from Welsh Medium childcare into Welsh medium schools.
- 5.2.13 In order to ensure the Council meets the challenging targets for increased Welsh Medium provision it is essential to create additional Welsh Medium places in this area of the Borough as a matter of urgency.
- 5.2.14 The demolition of Cwmcarn High School has now been successfully completed which allows for site investigation works to commence at the site in readiness for proposed Education usage. i.e. topography surveys.
- 5.2.15 A project group has been established for the YG Cwm Gwyddon project that consists of officers from Education, Early Years, Building Consultancy, and representatives from the School.

- 5.2.16 Work is currently being undertaken to ensure all relevant information and detailed specification of works will be available to support the submission of an Outline Business Case and Strategic Outline Case to Welsh Government by the end of the Autumn term. This will include pupil engagement as the pupil voice is an essential element throughout any 21<sup>st</sup> Century School project and after completion.
- 5.2.17 If Welsh Government approve the business cases for the above projects full consultation exercises will then be undertaken in line with the School Organisation Code 2018. It is currently anticipated this will commence in the Summer term 2020.
- 5.3 A Board has been established to undertake a review of Sixth Form/Single Sex/Surplus places provision consisting of Scrutiny Members, Unions, Governor Representatives, Colleges, Headteachers, EAS, Education officers and Cabinet member.
- 5.3.1 The board has met on three occasions and have agreed key priorities for the delivery of future sixth form provision e.g. Best outcomes for learners, a rich and varied curriculum, inclusivity, vocational/academic parity and retaining as many learners as possible in high quality post 16 Educational provision. The group is working towards recommendations for meeting these key priorities in both the long and short term.
- 5.4 The School Strategy Board including the Director of Education and Corporate Services, Chief Education Officer, Head of Education Planning and Strategy, Interim Head of Property Services, Cabinet Member for Education and 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Manager meets on a regular basis to monitor and evaluate the delivery of all projects.
- 5.5 All of the projects outlined above are in early developmental stage and officers will ensure that Members are updated on a regular basis in relation to all aspects of the proposal e.g. financial, business case, consultation process etc.

## 6. **ASSUMPTIONS**

- 6.1 No assumptions have been made in relation to this report as it merely updates on the progress of individual projects.

## 7. **LINKS TO RELEVANT COUNCIL POLICIES**

- 7.1 Caerphilly's Attainment Strategy: To raise standards and ensure our learners are healthy, confident, proud and ambitious and can access high quality educational opportunities, settings and experience.
- 7.2 Caerphilly's Wellbeing Objectives 2018 to 2023. This proposal will assist the Authority in meeting these objectives in particular the following:  
Well-being Objective 1 – Improve Education opportunities for all  
Well-being Objective 2 – Enabling Employment

## 8. **WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS**

- 8.1 The Well-Being of Future Generation (Wales) Act 2015 is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing of Wales. It requires public bodies to think more about the long-term, working with people and communities, looking to

prevent problems and take a more joined up approach. This will create a Wales that we all want to live in, now and in the future. The Act puts in place seven well-being goals:

- A prosperous Wales.
- A resilient Wales.
- A healthier Wales.
- A more equal Wales.
- A Wales of cohesive communities.
- A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh Language.
- A globally responsible Wales.

8.2 The Act sets out the sustainable development principle against which all public bodies in Wales should assess their decision-making. The aim of the legislation is to ensure the well-being of future generations through maximising the contribution public bodies make towards the well-being goals. In using the sustainable development principle it is incumbent that the authority considers the whole of the population it serves and considers the effect of its actions on future generations. The principle, also known as the five ways of working is assessed below:

- **Long Term** - Forecasting of pupil numbers has been utilised to identify the demand for school places to ensure sufficient Educational places in our schools. This information has been used to prioritise schools within the SOP.
- **Prevention** - Improving the quality of the Education estate generally will support pupils in their long term education and skills outcome in that they are more likely to succeed if their Educational experience is positive.
- **Integration** - The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Programme is subject to BREEAM and Community Benefits of individual proposals are assessed and monitored for their impact on the Welsh economy. The proposals are also part of a strategy to promote Welsh Language and Culture.
- **Collaboration** – The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Programme is collaboration between the Council and Welsh Government to improve the quality of the Education estate.
- **Involvement** – Through the consultation process the Council will ensure that there is full engagement with all relevant stakeholders, e.g. parents, pupils and the local community. Collaborative partnership working between 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools and the Early Years Division who work with the voluntary sector.

## 9. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

9.1 All relevant Equality Impact Assessments for individual projects will be undertaken prior to moving to consultation stage and will be made available to any persons who wish to receive copies. These proposals link with the WESP and the five year Welsh Language Strategy 2017-2022 and will therefore have a positive impact on Welsh Medium Education. The proposal in relation to Trinity Fields School will also have a positive impact on the children and young people with additional learning needs who are and will be attending the School.

## 10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 Council agreed on 21st February 2019 to allocate £5.475 million to the 21st Century Schools and Education programme match funding.

- 10.2 Phase 1 of the programme, Trinity Fields expansion and the relocation and expansion of YGG Cwm Gwyddon totals £17.4 million. The Authority's contribution to this sum is £5.1 million. This will result in an unallocated amount of £375K of the amount shown in 10.1 above.

## **11. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

- 11.1 This will be dependant on specific proposals and will be considered as part of the consultation process.

## **12. CONSULTATIONS**

- 12.1 The draft report was distributed as detailed below. All comments received have been reflected in this version of the report.

## **13. STATUTORY POWER**

- 13.1 School Organisation Code 2018 (Welsh Government)  
School Standards & Organisation (Wales) Act 2013

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### **Background Papers**

Cabinet Report – 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools and Education Band B proposals – 25/04/19  
Council Report – Budget Proposals for 2019/20 and the Medium Term Financial Plan  
2019/20 to 2023/2024 – 21/02/19