



CABINET – 22ND JULY 2020

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

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

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to update Members on the 21st Century Schools and Colleges Band B programme and seek Members approval to proceed to consultation in respect of the phase 1 projects which includes Trinity Fields Special School and Ysgol Gymraeg Cwm Gwyddon.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The report provides an update to Members on the current position of the Band B (£78 million) 21st Century School and Colleges Capital Programme.
- 2.2 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.
- 2.3 Both projects have recently received approval from the Welsh Government (WG) to proceed to Full Business Case stage subject to Cabinet approval to undertake a full consultation which is scheduled for Autumn Term 2020.
- 2.4 Both projects outlined in 2.2 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.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Members are asked to:
- a) Note the information contained in the report.
 - b) Give approval to proceed to consultation on both projects. The consultation will be undertaken in line with the Welsh Government School Organisation Code
 - c) Give approval for the additional contribution to each project as outlined in 5.2.6, 5.3.7, and section 10 below.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 To ensure Members are updated on the progress of the 21st Century Schools and Colleges Capital programme and seek Members approval to progress to formal consultation stage on both projects, in line with the School Organisation Code.

5. THE REPORT

5.1 Band B

- 5.1.1 The key aims of the 21st Century Schools and Colleges 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.

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

5.2 Phase 1 – Trinity Fields

- 5.2.1 Trinity Fields School and Resource Centre is the only special school serving the county borough of Caerphilly. Currently there are 178 pupils on the roll aged from 3 to 19 years. Nearly all pupils have a statement of special educational needs for severe learning difficulties, physical and medical difficulties, profound and multiple learning difficulties or autistic spectrum disorders. It is the Council's aim, wherever possible, to try and educate all pupils within the Borough. This prevents the need for out of county provision which is not only costly but can also have a significant impact on individual families. With the growing demand for pupils to be accommodated at the school, the current configuration does not allow for any expansion.
- 5.2.2 The Authority recognises that Trinity Fields School and Resource Centre has a pivotal role in the current and future development of Additional Learning Needs (ALN) provision across the Authority. This role has been set against a backdrop of on-going local and national developments in terms of extending and enhancing the current role and functions of special schools across Wales and beyond so that they offer a broader range of support and services on behalf of the Local Authority to other schools, specialist bases as well as to staff within the Council's Education Service.
- 5.2.3 With increasingly sophisticated medical interventions children are surviving longer and are coming into school at 3 with increasingly complex learning and medical needs. The school has collated data relating to the number of pre-school pupils with highly complex medical and learning needs that will need access to highly specialist provision when they are 3 years old.
- 5.2.4 The Local Authority works closely with multiagency professionals in the field as well as the school, Flying Start and Health Visitors. A fortnightly placement panel convenes to calculate the number of places that are required on site and utilising data from the Integrated Service for Children with Additional Needs (ISCAN) and reviewing the trend data since 2012, growth has been identified as an area requiring action. There is a similar picture across Wales in terms of increasing numbers of pupils accessing special schools.

5.2.5 As part of the 21st Century Schools and Colleges Programme Band B Phase 1 proposal for Trinity Fields School and Resource Centre, a detailed programme has been developed for the delivery of this project and a combined Outline Business Case and Strategic Business Case was submitted to Welsh Government at the end of the Autumn term 2019. As part of this submission, a full options appraisal was undertaken and the preferred option recommended for progression to consultation was to:

- Build a new extension onto the existing school offering high quality, modern educational facilities fit for the 21st Century to accommodate an additional 80 pupils on the adjacent playing field.
- A better use of resources and economy of scale by improving the existing estate of the school and its operational cost effectiveness.
- Minimises any geographical displacement of existing cohort who are identified as vulnerable learners.
- Provides continuity of provision on one site for Health, Social Services and Education.
- Increased and enhanced community use and income generation opportunities.

5.2.6 In addition to the original concept, the design of the new school will now incorporate facilities that will allow the opportunity for Social Services and Health to further develop and enhance their work with the pupils and families and also to the benefit of the wider community. As a result this has increased the project cost by an additional £2.588 million, the Council's contribution to which will be £647,000 (25%). It is proposed that the additional cost of £647,000 should be funded through Social Services Capital earmarked reserves.

5.2.7 The proposed location of the school is on a field that currently is used on a pay to use basis by Penallta Rugby Club. The Authority is currently working with the Club to mitigate the potential impact on the proposed change of use of this playing field.

5.3 Phase 1 - Ysgol Gymraeg Cwm Gwyddon

5.3.1 Ysgol Gymraeg Cwm Gwyddon currently covers the Welsh Medium 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.

5.3.2 The existing school has occupied its current site for 19 years. Located in the heart of a small village, the school is the 3rd occupier of the site which has seen multiple incarnations over the years to utilise the asset to its fullest extent. There are approximately 260 pupils on role, an additional 180 to the original concept to house 80 when the school was originally handed occupancy of the site.

5.3.3 The site the school occupies has a total area of approximately 0.3 Hectares which accommodates 5 structures and limited outdoor play areas. The site is enclosed on all sides, with no option for expansion, and has no direct access routes other than via a side street adjacent to the local public houses and village institute. Notably the site has a topography gradient, resulting in multiple levels for both indoor and outdoor space which significantly reduces access and functionality for less able-bodied individuals.

5.3.4 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 one million Welsh speakers in Wales by 2050. 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/Trethomas/Machen.

5.3.5 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.

5.3.6 As part of the 21st Century Schools and Colleges Programme Band B Phase 1 proposal for Ysgol Gymraeg Cwm Gwyddon, a detailed programme has been developed for the delivery of this project and a combined Outline Business Case and Strategic Business Case was submitted to Welsh Government at the end of the Autumn term 2019. As part of this submission, a full options appraisal was undertaken and the preferred option recommended for progression to consultation was to:

- Build a new school offering high quality, modern educational facilities fit for the 21st Century to accommodate 420 pupils plus nursery, childcare and community use at the former Cwmcarn High site.
- Potential to achieve better educational outcomes for pupils currently at the school through enhancing their learning environment.
- Improved access to outdoor learning facilities.
- Improved school building and facilities. The project will deliver a school building that will be more energy efficient, reduce the backlog maintenance and ensure compliance with Equality Act 2010.
- Increase childcare provision to enable the delivery of wrap around, after school and holiday provision with a view to improving transition rates within Welsh Medium between childcare provision and the foundation phase
- Increase in Welsh Medium learners by the expansion of Education and Childcare provision to support CCBC in meeting WG target of one million Welsh speakers by 2050.
- Facility with an ability to meet community need.

5.3.7 In addition to the original concept, the design of the new school will now incorporate a Special Resource Base, Rising 3's and PPA room and additional nursery facilities. As a result, this has increased the project cost by an additional £2,129,287, the Council's contribution to which will be £666,332 (25% for the Special Resource Base and 35% for the mainstream school provision as per WG intervention rates) to be met from monies already earmarked for the 21st Century Schools programme.

5.4 **Current Phase 1 Position**

5.4.1 The Welsh Government and Minister for Education has approved the combined Strategic Outline Case / Outline Business Case for both of the above projects and in order to progress to Full Business Case, full consultation exercises are required. This consultation is scheduled to commence Autumn 2020 subject to Cabinet approval.

5.4.2 The consultation process will proceed in line with the requirements of Welsh Government Statutory Code document no 011/2018 - School Organisation Code 2nd Edition 2018.

5.4.3 A prescribed list of recipients as outlined in the code will be written to. A consultation document will be published in both hardcopy and electronically via the Authority's website based on the preferred option as evidenced from the options appraisal for

each project. Reasonable access to information will be promoted from an Equalities perspective and other formats will be made available on request.

- 5.4.4 The consultation period will be for 42 days (with at least 20 of these being school days) to provide adequate time for consideration and response and conscientious consideration will be given to any responses received.
- 5.4.5 The principles of engagement outlined in the Local Authority's Consultation and Engagement Framework 2020 will also be acknowledged and the project team will engage with any additional 'interested parties' as required.
- 5.4.6 Following the consultation period, a consultation report along with any responses received will be collated and reported back to Members for full consideration prior to proceeding to Full Business Case.
- 5.4.7 Pursuant to Section 3.3 of the School Organisation Code 2018, there is no requirement to hold face-to-face consultation meetings. Furthermore, in line with the COVID-19 guidance provided by Welsh Government to reduce social interaction between people in order to reduce the transmission of coronavirus, the avoidance of large and small gatherings in public spaces and avoidance of non-essential travel is mandatory. The 21st Century Schools team will engage consultees as outlined in 5.4.3 to ensure the dissemination of information and provision of a suitable platform for the consultees to make their views known.

6. ASSUMPTIONS

- 6.1 No assumptions have been made in relation to this report.

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 21st 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 21st 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 21st 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 Members have previously agreed to earmark a total of £6.975m for Band B of the 21st Century Schools and Colleges programme.
- 10.2 Cabinet agreed on the 10th July 2019 to allocate £5.1m of the £6.975m earmarked Band B 21st Century Schools funding to the projects outlined in this report.
- 10.3 As outlined in 5.2.6, the Trinity Fields project cost has increased by an additional £2.588 million, the Council's contribution to which will be £647,000 (25%). It is proposed that this sum should be funded through Social Services Capital earmarked reserves.
- 10.4. As outlined in 5.3.7, the Ysgol Gymraeg Cwm Gwyddon project cost has increased by an additional £2,129,287, the Council's contribution to which will be £666,332 (25% for the Special Resource Base and 35% for the mainstream school provision as

per WG intervention rates). It is proposed for this sum to be met from monies already earmarked for the 21st Century Schools programme as outlined in 10.1 above.

10.5 The Authority's contribution to both projects is now £6.413m.

11. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

11.1 This will be dependent 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:

Welsh Government Statutory Code document no 011/2018
- School Organisation Code 2nd Edition 2018.