



CABINET – 7TH APRIL 2021

**SUBJECT: 21ST CENTURY SCHOOLS AND EDUCATION BAND B
PROGRAMME – PHASE 2 LLANCAEACH JUNIOR SCHOOL
AND LLANFABON INFANTS SCHOOL**

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

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to seek Members views on the next stage (Phase 2) of the 21st Century Schools and Colleges Band B programme.
- 1.2 There are 3 projects identified as part of Phase 2, one of which is the Llancaeath Junior School and Llanfabon Infants School proposal outlined in this report.

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 Llancaeath Junor School and Llanfabon Infrants Schools have been identified as part of the 21st Century Schools and Colleges Band B Phase 2 programme.
- 2.3 The proposal is to amalgamate Llancaeath Junior School and Llanfabon Infants School via the expansion and refurbishment of the existing Llanfabon Infants site to accomodate the new Primary School with places for 275 pupils plus nursery.
- 2.4 The project outlined in 2.3 above is in early developmental stage and officers will ensure that Members are updated on a regular basis in relation to all aspects of the proposal and processes in line with the requirements of the School Organisation Code 2018 and the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013.
- 2.5 The proposal outlined within this report was supported unanimously and endorsed by the Education Scrutiny Committee on 25th March 2021.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Members are asked to:

a) Note the contents in this report.

b) Approve the recommendation to proceed to Welsh Government Business Case stage on the Llancaeath Junior School and Llanfabon Infants School proposal.

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 on the recommendation to progress the Llancaeath Junior School and Llanfabon Infants School proposal to Welsh Government business case submission.

5. THE REPORT

5.1 Band B

5.1.1 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.

5.1.2 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.

5.1.3 The schemes identified as part of Phase 2 of the Band B programme include the adaption and refurbishment of the old grammar school building on the former Pontllanfraith High School site to accommodate a Centre for Vulnerable Learners, the amalgamation of Llancaeath Junior and Llanfabon Infants school via the expansion of the existing Llanfabon Infants site to accommodate 275 pupils plus nursery, and a new build replacement Plas-y-felin Primary school in the grounds of the existing school site to accommodate 420 pupils plus nursery.

5.1.4 The 21st Century Schools Band B Programme looks to deliver a combination of new school builds, expansions, amalgamations, relocations and refurbishments, all with the potential to support the Welsh Government and Council's strategies on decarbonisation and provide a new model of delivery.

5.2 This report focusses on Llancaeath Junior School and Llanfabon Infants School

5.2.1 Educational transformation remains a vital outcome of our investment in Band B of the Programme. We also recognise that that it is hugely important that we address the condition of our school buildings. Several projects were identified and agreed by a cross-party working group as part of the formation of the Strategic Outline Plan submitted to Welsh Government outlining the Band B programme for Caerphilly.

- 5.2.2 As per 5.2.1, the Authority identified Llancaeath Junior School and Llanfabon Infants School as requiring investment to create a 3-11 through Primary provision from a single location to provide a fit for purpose 21st Century facility, reducing surplus places, increasing opportunities for community use and removing 2 category C schools in relation to condition.
- 5.2.3 The proposal related to the amalgamation Llancaeath Junior School and Llanfabon Infants School via the expansion and refurbishment of the existing Llanfabon Infants site to accommodate the new 3-11 Primary School provision with places for 275 pupils plus nursery.
- 5.2.4 Our aspiration and a pre-requisite for Welsh Government investment, is to commit to making assets available to support educational need, community use, promote community resilience and contribute to meeting several Local Authority Strategies. To optimise the use of the new infrastructure and resources, as part of the proposal, flexibility will be built into the school suited to local demand.
- 5.2.5 Funding for the project has been identified from the Band B funding envelope. The Welsh Government intervention rate is 65% for this type of Capital scheme, with the Local Authority meeting the remaining 35% of the costs as broken down below, subject to any abnormalities:

Project Name:	LA Contribution	WG contribution	Total Funding
Llancaeath/Llanfabon	£1,400,000 (35%)	£2,600,000	£4,000,000

- 5.2.6 The School Organisation Code 2018 applies to proposals in respect of maintained schools as defined by Section 98 or the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013.
- 5.2.7 The School Organisation Code 2018, provides clear statutory guidance as to the processes that need to be adhered to by the Education Directorate when progressing a proposal.
- 5.2.8 The process to be followed is outlined below (based on the assumption that approval is reached at each stage):
- Report presented to Cabinet for approval to progress proposal through the Welsh Government's 21st Century Schools Business Case process
 - Outline Business Case submitted to Welsh Government for review and approval at their Business Case Scrutiny Group and their Programme Investment Panel
 - Due to the nature of the scheme a consultation process as per the statutory guidance provided in the School Organisation Code 2018 will be undertaken.
 - A 'Consultation Document' will be published and consultees as prescribed in the School Organisation Code 2018 will have the opportunities to express their views on the proposal during the consultation period.
 - Children and Young People's views will also be captured to ensure the 'pupil voice' is included as part of the process.
 - A 'Consultation Report' will be produced summarising the views received and presented to Education Scrutiny Committee to endorse the recommendations and then to Cabinet for approval to progress to Statutory Notice.
 - A 'Statutory Notice' will be published for a 28 day period where formal written objections may be submitted by prescribed consultees as outlined in the School Organisation Code 2018

- An 'Objection Report' will be presented to Scrutiny summarising the concerns and Members will be asked to endorse the recommendations to Cabinet to proceed to Full Business Case
- Property Services to undertake full planning application process including formal consultation as per planning guidance
- Full Business Case submission to Welsh Government for final review and approval at Welsh Government's Business Case Scrutiny Group and Programme Investment Panel

5.2.9 Progression at each stage is subject to scrutiny, review and approval by Cabinet Members and/or Welsh Government.

5.2.10 Any project that requires construction or alteration of existing facilities is subject to a full and separate planning process conducted by the Council's Property Services Division.

5.3 **Conclusion**

Members are asked to approve the recommendation to proceed to business case submission to Welsh Government in relation to the phase 2 project – Llancaeath Junior School and Llanfabon Infants School.

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. **SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

7.1 This report provides an update on one of the proposed Phase 2 projects for the 21st Century Schools Band B programme therefore an Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) has not been undertaken. An IIA has been initiated and will be provided when the proposal is brought forward for a decision.

Link to full Integrated Impact Assessment

When the IIA becomes live it will be made available through the Council's 21st Century School webpage.

8. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 Members have previously agreed to earmark a total of £6.975m for Band B of the 21st Century Schools & Colleges Programme.

The Authority's contribution to the Trinity Fields Project and the Ysgol Gymraeg Cwm Gwyddon Projects is currently estimated at £6.413m. This figure includes a contribution of £647k from a Social Services Capital earmarked reserve to support additional spend on the Trinity Fields Project. Consequently the balance remaining as uncommitted from the £6.975m is currently £1.209m.

8.2 Phase 2 of the programme, totals £18,500,000. The Authority's contribution within this sum is £5,925,000.

Project Name:	LA Contribution	WG contribution	Total Funding
Llancaeath/Llanfabon	£1,400,000 (35%)	£2,600,000	£4,000,000
Centre for Vulnerable Learners	£1,375,000 (25%)	£4,125,000	£5,500,000
Plasfelin	£3,150,000 (35%)	£5,850,000	£9,000,000

The Authority's contribution towards phase 2 of the programme is estimated at £5,925,000, as detailed above. This cost will be met from the remaining funding of £1.209m already earmarked for 21st Century Schools, plus a figure of £4.716m from the Authority's Place-Shaping Reserve.

The total funding commitment from the Authority towards these 5 projects is £12.338m.

9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 These will be dependent on specific proposals and have been considered as part of the consultation process.

10. CONSULTATIONS

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

10.2 SCRUTINY COMMITTEE COMMENTS

This report was introduced by the Cabinet Member and was followed by a presentation from the 21st Century Schools Manager.

One Member observed that she welcomed the decision to amalgamate the two schools because it made dropping children off easier for parents. The Member also said that she would like quality of build included in the Business Case to avoid large maintenance costs in the future. The Member also stressed that the current outdoor space for children on site should be protected. The 21st Century Schools Manager assured the Member all schools delivered as part of the 21st Century Schools programme would have to meet a high standard and gave the example of Idris Davies 3 -18 school. The Officer also said that an area of land in Council ownership had been earmarked to be utilised for school car parking facilities as part of this proposal.

One Member asked is any land would be gained after knocking the Llancaeath Junior School building down. The 21st Century Schools Manager said that the building would be surplus to requirements and that discussions would take place about its future usage.

Following consideration and discussion the Education Scrutiny Committee unanimously ENDORSED the recommendation of the 21st Century Schools and Colleges Band B Programme – Phase 2 Llancaeath Junior School and Llanfabon Infants School Report.

11. STATUTORY POWER

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

Author: Andrea West, 21st Century Schools Manager

Consultees: Christina Harray, Chief Executive
Richard Edmunds, Corporate Director of Education and Corporate Services
Dave Street, Corporate Director, Social Services
Mark S. Williams, Corporate Director Communities
Councillor Ross Whiting, Cabinet Member, Education and Achievement
Councillor Teresa Parry, Chair of Education Scrutiny Committee
Councillor Carol Andrews, Vice Chair of Education Scrutiny Committee
Steve Harris, Head of Financial Services and S151 Officer
Keri Cole, Chief Education Officer
Sue Richards, Head of Education Planning & Strategy
Sarah Ellis, Lead for Inclusion & ALN
Sarah Mutch, Early Years Manager
Paul Warren, Strategic Lead for School Improvement
Jane Southcombe, Financial Services Manager
Lynne Donovan, Head of People Services
Anwen Cullinane, Senior Policy Officer, Equalities, Welsh Language & Consultation)
Rob Tranter, Head of Legal Service and Monitoring Officer
Ros Roberts, Business Improvement Officer
Mark Williams, Interim Head of Property Services
Steve Pugh, Corporate Communications Manager

Background Papers:
None provided