



CABINET – 7TH APRIL 2021

**SUBJECT: 21ST CENTURY SCHOOLS AND EDUCATION BAND B
PROGRAMME – PHASE 2 PROPOSAL FOR A CENTRE FOR
VULNERABLE LEARNERS**

**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 Centre for Vulnerable Learners 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 The Centre for Vulnerable Learners has been identified as part of the 21st Century Schools and Colleges Band B Phase 2 programme.
- 2.3 The proposal is to adapt and refurbish the old grammar school building, formerly the Pontllanfraith High School site, to accommodate creating a new Centre for Vulnerable Learners.
- 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.
- 2.5 For the purposes of reporting to Welsh Government, the Centre for Vulnerable Learners will be referred to in the business case and supporting documentation as a Pupil Referral Unit.
- 2.6 Pupil Referral Units are exempt from the consultation processes outlined in line School Organisation Code 2018 and the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013.

2.7 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 Centre for Vulnerable Learners 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 Centre for Vulnerable Learners 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 the Centre for Vulnerable Learners

- 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 The Authority has undertaken an extensive and far reaching review of ALN provision across the County Borough. The outcome of this work is the development of a model for service delivery that meets the needs of all learners across the Borough, quality assures the provision and continually evaluates the future requirements for our most vulnerable learners, placing the child at the heart.
- 5.2.3 The proposal related to the adaption and refurbishment of the former Pontllanfraith High School site to accommodate a Centre for Vulnerable Learners. The requirements of the ALN reform bill has led to the need to expand this type of provision.
- 5.2.4 Funding for the project has been identified from the Band B funding envelope:

Project Name:	LA Contribution	WG contribution	Total Funding
Centre for Vulnerable Learners	£1,375,000 (25%)	£4,125,000	£5,500,000

- 5.2.5 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. This does not include Pupil Referral units.
- 5.2.6 A Pupil Referral Unit is a type of school or establishment maintained by the Local Authority to provide suitable education for children and young people who, by reason of illness, exclusion or otherwise, may not receive such education in mainstream settings as per Section 19 of the Education Act 1996.
- 5.2.7 For the purposes of reporting to Welsh Government, the Centre for Vulnerable Learners will be referred to in the business case and supporting documentation as a Pupil Referral Unit to enable access to the appropriate funding and match ratios.
- 5.2.8 The Welsh Government's 21st Century Schools Business Case process will be followed in conjunction with the Council's internal decision making processes and with reference to the CCBC Consultation and Engagement Framework.
- 5.2.9 The process to be followed is outlined below:
- 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 there is no need to undertake a formal period of consultation as the statutory guidance provided in the School Organisation Code 2018 does not apply in this instance. However, engagement with relevant agencies as well as the wider community will be undertaken throughout the process in line with the Authority's Consultation and Engagement framework.

- 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

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

5.2.11 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 – Centre for Vulnerable Learners proposal.

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

Centre for Vulnerable Learners	£1,375,000 (25%)	£4,125,000	£5,500,000
Llancaeach/Llanfabon	£1,400,000 (35%)	£2,600,000	£4,000,000
Plasfelin Primary	£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 asked if this facility would be for out of county placements in addition to pupils from within the County Borough. The 21st Century Schools Manager advised Members that the centre would accommodate children from within the borough.

Following consideration and discussion the Education Scrutiny Committee unanimously ENDORSED the recommendation of the 21st Century Schools and Education Band B Programme – Phase 2 Proposal for a Centre for Vulnerable Learners.

11. STATUTORY POWER

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

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Background Papers:

None provided