



## **CABINET - 26<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2022**

**SUBJECT: 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES BAND B PROGRAMME - COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT REPORT: CENTRE FOR VULNERABLE LEARNERS (PUPIL REFERRAL UNIT)**

**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 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools and Colleges Band B proposal in respect of the establishment of a new Centre for Vulnerable Learners (Pupil Referral Unit) on the former Pontllanfraith Comprehensive School site.
- 1.2 Members are asked to consider the information contained in the Community Engagement Report and approve the recommendations to proceed to Planning Application stage and Full Business Case submission to Welsh Government.

### **2. SUMMARY**

- 2.1 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. However, engagement with the school as well as the wider community was undertaken throughout the process in line with the Authority's Consultation and Engagement framework to enable transparent and open decision making.
- 2.2 The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Band B proposal for the establishment of a new Centre for Vulnerable Learners (Pupil Referral Unit) in Pontllanfraith went to formal consultation between the 20<sup>th</sup> October 2021 and the 1<sup>st</sup> December 2021.
- 2.3 A Community Engagement Report has been compiled and attached as an annex to this report. The Community Engagement Report summarises each of the issues raised by consultees. Any themes that have emerged through gathering the views of consultees during the consultation process have been responded to by means of clarification with supporting reasons.

2.4 Members approval is being sought in relation to progression to Planning Application stage and Full Business Case submission to Welsh Government.

### **3. RECOMMENDATIONS**

3.1 Cabinet Members are asked to: -

- a) Note the contents in this report
- b) Consider the information contained in the Community Engagement Report
- c) Approve the recommendation to proceed to Planning Application Stage
- d) Approve the recommendation to proceed to Full Business Case submission to Welsh Government

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

4.1 To ensure Members are updated on the progress of Phase 2 of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools and Colleges Capital Band B programme

4.2 To seek Members approval on the recommendations to proceed to Planning Application Stage.

4.3 To seek Members approval to proceed to Full Business Case submission to Welsh Government for final review and approval by Welsh Government's Business Case Scrutiny Group and Programme Investment Panel

### **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 Welsh Government, 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 Band B Phase 2**

5.2.1 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 (Pupil Referral Unit), 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.

#### **Phase 2 - Centre for Vulnerable Learners**

- 5.3.1 The proposal is to adapt and refurbish the old grammar school building on the former Pontllanfraith High School site and develop bespoke sporting provision and facilities for pupils which will also be available for the wider community outside of school hours.
- 5.3.2 For the purposes of reporting to Welsh Government, the Centre for Vulnerable Learners will be referred to in all correspondence to Welsh Government and supporting documentation as a Pupil Referral Unit.
- 5.3.3 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.
- 5.3.4 Further to Cabinet approval gained on the 13<sup>th</sup> October 2021, formal consultation for the proposal was carried out between 20<sup>th</sup> October 2021 and 1<sup>st</sup> December 2021.
- 5.3.5 A prescribed list of recipients, mirroring those outlined in the School Organisation Code 2018 were written to and a consultation document was published in both hardcopy and electronically via the Authority's website based. Reasonable access to information was promoted from an Equalities perspective and other formats were available on request, including a child friendly version and video.
- 5.3.6 The consultation period ran for 42 days (with at least 20 of these being school days) to provide adequate time for response and conscientious consideration has been given to any responses received.
- 5.3.7 Members of the Education Scrutiny Committee who met on the 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2021 in their capacity as a consultee under the School Organisation Code 2018, endorsed the proposal, voting 13 For, 0 Against and 0 Abstentions.
- 5.3.8 There were 20 responses received in respect of the proposal to establish a Centre for Vulnerable Learners (Pupil Referral Unit) on the former Pontllanfraith Comprehensive site. In addition, a number of pupils across a multiple EOTAS settings engaged in the consultation process through 'learner voice' sessions which have been reported on separately. All responses are broken down into more detail in the Community Engagement Report.
- 5.3.9 A Community Engagement Report has been compiled and has been attached as an annex to this report. The Community Engagement Report summarises each of the issues raised by consultees. Any emerging themes that have been raised through gathering the views of consultees during the consultation process have been responded to by means of clarification with supporting reasons.
- 5.3.10 Estyn was advised of the publication of the Consultation Document, however advised that "unfortunately as the current legislations and consultation process as prescribed by the School Organisation Code 2018 does not apply to PRU's, it is not appropriate for us to respond to this particular consultation".
- 5.3.11 The Community Engagement Report will be published electronically on the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools pages on the Council's website. Consultees who have indicated in their consultation response that they wish to be notified will be advised by letter or email of the availability of the Community Engagement Report along with the key stakeholders as identified from the School Organisation Code 2018.

## 5.4 Conclusion

Whilst this proposal is exempt from the requirements of the School Organisation Code 2018, a consultation exercise was undertaken and has now concluded in relation to this proposal. This report has been compiled along with the Community Engagement Report to provide members with the necessary information to make an informed decision as to whether to progress the proposal to the next stage which would entail permission to progress to planning application stage and submission of a full business case to Welsh Government.

## 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 An initial Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) for this proposal was undertaken alongside the original Consultation Document forming part of the outline consultation pack which is published on the Council's website.
- 7.2 The Integrated Impact Assessment has been reviewed to include any additional elements highlighted through the statutory consultation process. The purpose of this further assessment is to take account of any further information that has come forward through the consultation or otherwise.

### Original

<https://www.caerphilly.gov.uk/CaerphillyDocs/IIA/centre-for-vulnerable-learners-sep2021>

### Updated

<http://www.caerphilly.gov.uk/CaerphillyDocs/IIA/CCBC-Integrated-Impact-Assessment-CVL-Updated-2-12>

## 8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 Phase 2 of the 21st Century Schools and Colleges Band B programme, currently totals £18,500,000. The Authority's contribution within this sum is £5,925,000 as detailed below.

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

- 8.2 The Authority's contribution will be met from the remaining funding of £1.209m previously earmarked for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools and through the recently approved earmarking of a further sum of £4.716m from the Authority's Place-Shaping Reserve.

8.3 The Welsh Government Grant allocation for individual projects within the 21st Century Schools Band B programme is calculated consistently across Wales using the Building Bulletin regulations BB98 - Secondary, BB99 – Primary and BB104 – Special/Pupil Referral Units. There are a number different elements which have been included in the calculations provided for each of the Phase 2 proposals, which include:

- Proposed standard price per square metre
- Furniture fitting and equipment per pupil
- ICT per pupil

8.4 Largely due to a combination of the impact of Covid-19 and Brexit there are currently significant inflationary increases within the construction sector. This is being kept under close review but the current projected costs for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Programme will be subject to change. Members will be updated further as matters progress.

## **9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 This will be dependent on specific proposals and will be 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**

#### **Education Scrutiny Committee 10<sup>th</sup> January 2022 Comments Agenda Item 10 – 21st Century Schools and Colleges Band B Programme - Community Engagement Report: Centre for Vulnerable Learners (Pupil Referral Unit)**

This report was presented to the Education Scrutiny Committee on Monday 10<sup>th</sup> January 2022.

One Member asked if the cost of currently sending vulnerable learners out-of-County would be addressed if this proposal is accepted. The Lead for Inclusion and ALN advised that some children with complex needs would still require residential provision, but she outlined how the proposed expansion would help to meet requirement from our own resources in most cases rather than relying on procured provision.

One Member asked about the number of pupils at the Glan-Y-Nant Learning Centre. Officers advised that there was a total of 42 pupils.

Following consideration of the report it was moved and seconded that the recommendations be approved. By way of Microsoft Forms Voting this was unanimously agreed, in noting there were 13 votes for, no votes against and no abstentions.

## 11. STATUTORY POWER

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

Author: Andrea West, 21<sup>st</sup> 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 for Economy and Environment  
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 Transformation  
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:

Appendix 1 Community Engagement Report - Centre for Vulnerable Learners (Pupil Referral Unit)