



CABINET – 21ST FEBRUARY 2024

**SUBJECT: DEMOLITION OF THE FORMER PONTLLANFRAITH
COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL**

REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR ECONOMY AND ENVIRONMENT

--

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To seek approval to partially reinstate some of the original budget to finalise the demolition and site clearance of the former Pontllanfraith Comprehensive school.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 In late December 2023 the contractor alerted property services to two areas of the site where abnormal ground conditions were identified.
- 2.2 The original budget for the demolition was £1.269m agreed by Cabinet on 20th September 2017. In 18/19 £470,000 was released back into capital reserves.
- 2.3 Demolition of the former Pontllanfraith Comprehensive school is required to enable the development of the Centre for Vulnerable Learners and adjoining respite facilities for adult and children.
- 2.4 The demolition commenced in July 2023 and was scheduled for completion in January 2024. The demolition of the buildings are now complete but there are issues relating to the ground clearance that now require additional works resulting in cost increases.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 That approval is given to allocate a further £310,000 to the demolition and site clearance of the former Pontllanfraith comprehensive school.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 To enable the safe and effective site clearance required for the current development of the Centre for Vulnerable Learners and future development of the site.

5. THE REPORT

5.1 Pontllanfraith Comprehensive School was vacated at the end of June 2017 following the construction of Islwyn High School.

5.2 The site was identified as a suitable location for the development of the Centre for Vulnerable Learners alongside the development of respite facilities for adults and children.

5.3 The site also contains Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre which most recently has been used as a Mass Vaccination Centre by the NHS and a 3G sports pitch. It was a requirement of the contract to maintain access and operation of these assets throughout the contract which was achieved. **For absolute clarity Pontllanfraith Leisure Centre or 3G pitch is unaffected by this report.**

5.4 Work began on site in July 2023 and was scheduled for completion in January 2024. All buildings on the site have now been demolished.

5.5 In December 2023 the contractor alerted property services to two areas of abnormal ground conditions which were beyond the original scope of the contract but affected the site. The conditions identified are required to be dealt with in order to progress the development of the Centre for Vulnerable Learners.

5.6 The abnormal conditions relate to the discovery of asbestos cement sheets within substructures beneath the original school buildings. These sheets were not identified during the preparatory asbestos survey due to their subterranean location. It was only when the buildings were demolished and site clearance and regrading commenced that the asbestos was identified.

5.7 The presence of the material and the need to remove has been confirmed by a suitably qualified asbestos surveyor within the property team. This surveyor will also oversee the removal in conjunction with colleagues from Health and Safety.

5.8 Conclusion

The abnormal ground conditions could not have been reasonably foreseen however now identified they must be dealt with in a safe, compliant and timely manner in order to progress the development of the Centre for Vulnerable learners.

6. ASSUMPTIONS

6.1 No assumptions have been made in connection with this report.

7. SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

7.1 There is no effect on service delivery or services to any members of the public so an IAA is not required for this report.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 An additional £310,000 is required for the project to be successfully completed. It is proposed that this sum is funded from uncommitted capital reserves.

9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no personnel implications associated with this report.

10. CONSULTATIONS

10.1 The views of the listed consultees have been reflected in the report.

11. STATUTORY POWER

11.1 Section 123 of the local government Act 1972 (as amended). Local Government Act 2000. This is a Cabinet function.

Author: Ben Winstanley, Head of Land and Property winstb@caerphilly.gov.uk

Consultees: David Street, Deputy Chief Executive
Mark Williams, Corporate Director for Economy and Environment
Richard Edmunds, Corporate Director of Education and Corporate Resources
Robert Tranter, Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer.
Stephen Harris, Head of Financial Services and Section 151 Officer.
Lynne Donovan, Head of People Services.
Sue Richards, Head of Education Planning and Strategy
Liz Lucas, Head of Customer and Digital Services.
Cllr Nigel George, Cabinet Member for Corporate Services, Property and Highways.
Cllr Colin Gordon, Pontllanfraith Ward Member.
Cllr Mike Adams, Pontllanfraith Ward Member.
Cllr Mrs Patricia Cook, Pontllanfraith Ward Member.

Background Papers:

[Link to the original Cabinet report 20th September 2017 - Demolition of Oakdale and Pontllanfraith Comprehensive Schools.pdf \(caerphilly.gov.uk\)](#)