



EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 25TH MARCH 2021

**SUBJECT: 21ST CENTURY SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES BAND B
PROGRAMME – PHASE 2 PROPOSAL FOR PLASYFELIN
PRIMARY**

**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 Plasyfelin Primary 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 Plasyfelin Primary School has been identified as part of the 21st Century Schools and Colleges Band B Phase 2 programme.
- 2.3 The proposal is to build a new and enlarged replacement school in the grounds of the existing school site, to accommodate future projected demand within the area. The new school will provide 420 pupil places 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.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Members are asked to:

- a) Note the contents in this report.
- b) Give their views and endorse the recommendation to proceed to Welsh Government Business Case stage on the Plasyfelin Primary School proposal prior to consideration by Cabinet on 7th April 2021.

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 views and endorsement on the recommendation to Cabinet to progress the Plasyfelin Primary 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 and enlarged replacement Plasyfelin Primary school in the grounds of the existing school site to accommodate future projected demand.

- 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 Plasyfelin Primary 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 Plasyfelin primary school as requiring investment. Originally designed as a separate Infant and Junior School, the current Plasyfelin Primary School site consists of 2 separate CLASP (Consortium of Local Authorities Special Programme) prefabricated school buildings, linked together by an exposed walkway. Only 30% of classrooms meet the size compliant requirements (56m²) set by Welsh Government in line with the Building Bulletin 99 Regulations.
- 5.2.3 The proposal relates to a new and enlarged build replacement school for Plasyfelin Primary School to be situated within the current grounds of the existing school site to include increased accommodation for up to 420 pupils plus nursery provision and also additional multi-use sporting and community facilities. This proposal will ensure future projected demand can be met within the area and to update a facility to provide a fit for purpose 21st Century facility.
- 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
Plasyfelin Primary	£3,150,000 (35%)	£5,850,000	£9,000,000

- 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 there is no need to undertake a formal period of consultation as per the statutory guidance provided in the School Organisation Code 2018. However, engagement with the school 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

5.2.9 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 endorse the recommendations to proceed to business case submission to Welsh Government in relation to the phase 2 project – Plasyfelin Primary 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. **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 **Corporate Plan 2018-2023.**

The proposal contributes towards the following Corporate Well-being Objectives:

- Objective 1 - Improve education opportunities for all
- Objective 2 - Enabling employment
- Objective 5 - Creating a county borough that supports a healthy lifestyle in accordance with the sustainable Development Principle within the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

7.3 The proposal also contributes to the following Strategies:

- Caerphilly Sport and Active Recreation Strategy (2018-2028)
- Shared Ambitions Strategy (2019-2022)
- Sport Wales Vision for Sport
- Decarbonisation Strategy: Reduce-Produce-Offset-Buy

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 in Phase 2 will be undertaken at the appropriate stage and will be made available to any persons who wish to receive copies in addition to being published on the Council's website.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 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.

- 10.2 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
Plasfelin Primary	£3,150,000 (35%)	£5,850,000	£9,000,000
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

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

11. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 These will be dependent on specific proposals and have been 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:
None provided