



## **EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 25TH MARCH 2021**

**SUBJECT: 21<sup>ST</sup> 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 21<sup>st</sup> 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) 21<sup>st</sup> Century School and Colleges Capital Programme.
- 2.2 The Centre for Vulnerable Learners has been identified as part of the 21<sup>st</sup> 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.

### **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 Centre for Vulnerable Learners proposal prior to consideration by Cabinet on 7<sup>th</sup> April 2021.

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

- 4.1 To ensure Members are updated on the progress of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools and Colleges Capital programme and seek Members views and endorsement on the recommendation to Cabinet 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 21<sup>st</sup> 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 21<sup>st</sup> 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 21<sup>st</sup> 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 21<sup>st</sup> 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 endorse the recommendations 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. **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 21<sup>st</sup> 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 21<sup>st</sup> 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 21<sup>st</sup> 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.

9.2 The proposal in relation to establishment of a Centre for Vulnerable Learners will also have a positive impact on the children and young people with additional support needs who will be attending the site.

## 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
<b>Centre for Vulnerable Learners</b>	<b>£1,375,000 (25%)</b>	<b>£4,125,000</b>	<b>£5,500,000</b>
Llancaeath/Llanfabon	£1,400,000 (35%)	£2,600,000	£4,000,000
Plasyfelin 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 21<sup>st</sup> 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

Author: Andrea West, 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Manager

Consultees: Christina HARRY, 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