



CABINET – 7TH APRIL 2021

SUBJECT: 21ST CENTURY SCHOOLS AND EDUCATION 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.
- 2.5 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 Plasyfelin Primary School 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 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 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 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 approve the recommendation 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. **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
Plasyfelin 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.

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 wished to know if there was any specific detail of the plans at this stage of the process. The 21st Century Schools Manager advised that the Business Plan was subject to amendment at the current stage but would be an element of community facilities. Facilities such as Sports Halls would be designed to lend themselves for community use and the school generally would be able to cater for more specialist education provision if required. The Member wished to know if the Headteacher had been consulted in order to draft the plan. The officer confirmed that they had and that consultation with the Ward Member had taken place to establish any specific community needs.

One Member raised the issue of sustainability and asked if green credentials would be considered in the new build. The 21st Century Schools Manager advised that she would be working with colleagues in Property Services on this aspect and with the Welsh Government on this proposal to explore the possibility of creating a school that was zero net carbon.

Following consideration and discussion the Education Scrutiny Committee unanimously ENDORSED the recommendation of the 21st Century Schools and Colleges Band B Programme – Phase 2 Proposal for Plasyfelin Primary.

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