



CABINET – 9TH JUNE 2021

SUBJECT: INVESTMENT AT VIRGINIA PARK / 2ND SATELLITE AT ST CENYDD FOR TRINITY FIELDS

REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR FOR EDUCATION & CORPORATE SERVICES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To provide Cabinet with details of 2 proposed building investments, the development of Virginia Park in Caerphilly for both the Youth Service and EOTAS (Education Other Than At School) provision and; investment to provide a 2nd satellite class for Trinity Fields on the St Cenydd High School site.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The report provides Members with details of proposed building related investments at the 2 sites detailed in para 1.1. This investment will provide an increased capacity to support some of most vulnerable learners. The Virginia Park site has provided an opportunity to create a base in the Caerphilly Basin for the Youth Service, whilst also expanding in-house capacity for some of our EOTAS pupils.
- 2.2 This proposed investment was supported by Education Scrutiny Committee, details provided in the Budget Monitoring Report presented to Scrutiny on 22nd March 2021.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Support the use of £472k of Corporate Services Capital Earmarked Reserves for the development of Virginia Park and for a 2nd Satellite Class for Trinity Fields at St Cenydd High School.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 To support the provision of a Youth Service base in the Caerphilly Basin and to increase capacity for our most vulnerable learners through in-house EOTAS provision.
- 4.2 To provide additional capacity for learners accessing Trinity Fields provision.

5. THE REPORT

- 5.1 The estimated £300k at Virginia Park is designed to meet the need for a youth service hub and to provide an education centre for the hours of the school day. This investment would include extensive refurbishment and re-configuration across the ground floor and selective refurbishment of the first floor. This would include a reception area, sliding partitions, versatile education spaces, a nurture room, youth spaces, 1-1 support areas, offices and improved toilet facilities. The site will provide a youth setting to service the Caerphilly basin area, supporting the Youth Services work with approximately 5,000 young people and directly contributing to its NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training), Homelessness, Health, Welsh Language and crime reduction activity. A conservative estimate of the Youth Services membership is 16,000 plus, the 5,000 is an estimate for the Caerphilly cluster although it's recognised that this number is likely to be significantly higher given the population demographic for the basin area.
- 5.2 For EOTAS this site will initially enable the Authority to focus specifically on the needs of a small number of the KS3 or 4 cohorts who move out of Glan Y Nant. The development of this facility will also allow for a short term assessment centre for older students. This will serve to reduce the amount of education missed by students who may have received an exclusion from school and to ensure students are linked to the most appropriate EOTAS provision based on their needs.
- 5.3 Provision will also allow for the delivery of targeted interventions and an expansion of the focus around wellbeing and nurture as well as curriculum delivery. Developments linked to Virginia Park support the capacity to transition students from Home Tuition into an educational setting. Developing several "layers of classroom" will help staff work with students, their behaviours and encourage transition. The pathway plan will continue as they progress back to mainstream education.
- 5.4 The proposed building developments allow for both floors to be developed ensuring there is appropriate teaching space, intervention room and space for staff. This will enable the delivery of formal and informal learning via EOTAS and the non formal learning of the Youth Service. The development of this provision will support and enhance the development of the proposed CVL (Centre for Vulnerable Learners) as part of the portfolio of provision.
- 5.5 Once arrangements for the Youth Service and EOTAS are established at Virginia Park, Local Authority Officers will seek to maximise opportunities for community use. Operational timetables for the provision for pupils accessing both services are currently being refined, identifying usage during the school day and evenings. Other availability can then be shared with community groups once the educational schedules have been confirmed. Consideration will need to be given to an appropriate rental rate that would not put financial pressure on the service and equally not compromise the use of other community buildings in the area.
- 5.6 Building works at St Cenydd Comprehensive are required to ensure that facilities are fit for purpose to support a 2nd satellite class for Trinity Fields pupils, based at this site.
- 5.7 This cost includes splitting the existing space into 2 classrooms, electrical, network alterations, decoration & flooring, furniture and equipment; refurbishment of 2 disabled toilets and shower area; canopy for entrance and outside classroom; to knock 2 store rooms into 1 to create a physiotherapy room and associated works.

5.8 The revenue implications of funding this second satellite class have been addressed as part of the 2021-22 budget proposals. The satellite class will be led by the Headteacher of Trinity Fields, all relevant monitoring and evaluation processes will be in place in line with the Estyn schools inspection framework.

5.9 **Conclusion**

The investments outlined will provide an increase in capacity to support some of our our most vulnerable learners.

6. **ASSUMPTIONS**

6.1 No related assumptions have been felt necessary in relation to this report.

7. **SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

7.1 IIA Virginia Park

The Virginia Park building / site lies in an ideal location for all the types of work proposed to operate there. All plans are financially viable and the location offers a number of possibilities in terms of future development and or expansion of the educational “footprint”. Its acquisition is in the best interests of young people and the wider community. The building’s size and type represents an educational development option not available elsewhere in the Caerphilly basin area. This includes its other characteristics of availability of parking space, ease of access, proximity to Caerphilly Leisure Centre and Y Gwyndy School not least among them. The IIA is included as Appendix 1.

7.2 IIA St Cenydd Satellite Class

It is the recommendation of the IIA that Members endorse the proposal regarding the Local Authority approach to the development of the hub and spoke model and the second satellite class at St Cenydd School. The approach keeps children at the centre, promotes equality of opportunity and the importance of partnership working between those who support children. Members are asked to consider the IIA alongside the Cabinet Report in support of progressing to develop the class in readiness for September 2021. The IIA is included as Appendix 2.

8. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 It is proposed that Cabinet support the use of earmarked capital reserves for building related work at St Cenydd Comprehensive for a 2nd Satellite Class for Trinity Fields (up to £172k); and Virginia Park site to support the development of Youth and EOTAS Provision (up to £300k).

9. **PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 As part of the Authority’s Budget for 2021/22 the funding for Trinity Fields supports the staffing requirements of this 2nd satellite class. There are no additional funding requirements for staffing at the Virginia Park site. The process will see the relocation of existing personnel from the Youth and EOTAS provisions.

10. CONSULTATIONS

- 10.1 These investments were supported by Education Scrutiny Committee (22nd March 2021).
- 10.2 Recent meeting with Members from St James and Morgan Jones Wards were supportive of the Virginia Parks proposals (subject to receipt of this report). No objections to the proposal were raised or registered.
- 10.2 No discrete, separate consultation exercise has yet been conducted with young people across the Caerphilly basin. Detailed communication arrangements are however planned for the summer, given that the opening of the Virginia Park facility is hoped for in the autumn term. However, all related discussions with young people across the County Borough have indicated a clear need for a Youth Work base in Caerphilly, particularly following the loss of the previous base at the time of the demolition of St Illan School. Partner agencies are strongly in support, including Gwent Police who acknowledge the potential for reducing crime and anti-social behaviour in the area and the contribution that the Youth Service can make to the reduction of exploitation of children and young people in the town centre. The EOTAS offer scheduled to function during school hours in the building has been planned as a direct consequence of cross-county consultation and planning in order to meet modern education requirements for young people unable to attend school.

11. STATUTORY POWER

- 11.1 Local Government Act 1972 and 2000.

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Background Papers:

Minutes of Education Scrutiny 22nd March 2021 – “Supported a recommendation to Cabinet to utilise £472k of Corporate Services Capital Earmarked Reserves for a 2nd Satellite Class at St Cenydd Comprehensive for Trinity Fields, and the development of Virginia Park for both the Youth Service and EOTAS provision as detailed in Section 5.5 of the report”.

Appendices:

- Appendix 1 Integrated Impact Assessment – Virginia Park
- Appendix 2 Integrated Impact Assessment – 2nd Satellite Class for Trinity Fields at St Cenydd