

Meeting of:	CABINET
Date of Meeting:	16 APRIL 2024
Report Title:	SCHOOL MODERNISATION PROGRAMME BRYNTIRION COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL – FOUR- CLASSROOM BLOCK – HIGHWAY WORKS
Report Owner / Corporate Director:	REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR, EDUCATION AND FAMILY SUPPORT AND THE CHIEF OFFICER – FINANCE, HOUSING AND CHANGE
Responsible Officer:	GAYNOR THOMAS – SCHOOLS PROGRAMME MANAGER
Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:	There is no effect upon policy framework or procedure rules.
Executive Summary:	<p>Active travel/highway improvements have been conditioned as part of the planning consent in respect of a scheme for additional accommodation at Bryntirion Comprehensive School.</p> <p>A funding bid for these works was submitted to Welsh Government. However, the bid was unsuccessful. Consequently, the local authority will need to fund the works so that the building can be brought into beneficial use.</p> <p>Cabinet approval is sought to make a recommendation to Council to vire School Modernisation budgets within the capital programme for this purpose and to include the active travel/highway improvements as a separate scheme in the capital programme.</p>

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 This report seeks Cabinet approval for the following recommendations to be made to Council:

- to vire £141k of capital budgets detailed in this report for the purpose of active travel/highway improvements associated with the delivery of a four-classroom block at Bryntirion Comprehensive School; and

- include a scheme for active travel/highway improvements in respect of Bryntirion Comprehensive School in the capital programme with a budget of £141k.

2. Background

- 2.1 The availability of school places at Bryntirion Comprehensive School is an issue. Based on Welsh Government's Circular number 021/2011 'Measuring the capacity of schools in Wales' the school is currently operating at capacity.
- 2.2 There are a number of housing developments within the school's catchment area that have been/are in the process of being built. The local authority has entered into Section (s) 106 agreements and has secured education contributions for pupil places to serve those developments. A scheme for additional accommodation at Bryntirion Comprehensive School, which is partly funded by s106, is included in the approved capital programme and the construction element of the project is currently subject to a tender process.

3. Current situation / proposal

- 3.1 Planning approval for the teaching block stipulated that active travel/highway improvements shall be implemented in permanent materials before the accommodation is brought into beneficial use. The estimated cost of the scheme (that is, works and professional fees) is £121k.
- 3.2 Active travel/highway improvement grant funding opportunities were identified and the Communities Directorate submitted a funding bid to Welsh Government which included the improvements identified in the planning conditions, as part of a wider bid in respect of the Bryntirion area. However, officers have now advised that the improvements associated with the Bryntirion Comprehensive School scheme cannot be incorporated into the wider active travel programme in the Bryntirion area this financial year. Notwithstanding this, as active travel/highway improvements are a planning condition, the local authority will need to progress those works so that the teaching block can be brought into beneficial use.
- 3.3 There are a number of school modernisation schemes within the capital programme, and technical officers have advised that no further expenditure is anticipated on these projects:

Gateway to the Valleys	£32k
Garw Valley primary highways	£30k
Mynydd Cynffig Primary School – mobile classrooms	£79k
Total	£141k

- 3.4 In January 2024, Cabinet/Corporate Management Board (CCMB) was advised of the funding bid (detailed in paragraph 3.2) and agreed that, should the funding bid be unsuccessful, school modernisation budgets could be re-purposed to address the active travel/highway improvements, subject to Council approval.
- 3.5 Construction of the additional accommodation at Bryntirion Comprehensive School is anticipated to be completed by January 2025, with the building being available for occupation in February 2025.

4. Equality implications (including Socio-economic Duty and Welsh Language)

- 4.1 A full equality impact assessment (EIA) has been conducted as part of the development of this proposal. The full EIA considers the impact of the proposal on the nine protected characteristics, the Socio-economic Duty, and the use of the Welsh Language.
- 4.2 The EIA has identified that there would be no negative impact on those with one or more of the protected characteristics, on socio-economic disadvantage or the use of the Welsh Language.

5. Well-being of Future Generations implications and connection to Corporate Well-being Objectives

- 5.1 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 Assessment provides a comprehensive summary of the outcomes expected from the implementation of the service.

Long-term	This scheme has been identified through a collaborative strategic approach with officers from key departments of the Council including the Education and Family Support Directorate and Corporate Landlord Department. A strategic group considered the fit with local and national strategy, outcomes for learners and families, and economic considerations. The scheme addresses the Council's statutory duty to provide pupil places and support the day-to-day operation of the school.
Prevention	Provision of places at schools is reviewed on an annual basis to ensure there is a sufficient overall supply and there is suitable accommodation to deliver the curriculum effectively. This scheme aims to address capacity issues arising from additional housing being constructed within the immediate and surrounding areas and has been identified to ensure that pupil places can be delivered in the future. The Council has a statutory duty to ensure there are a sufficient supply of school places, and this scheme will safeguard the Council's position in terms of any potential legal challenge in this regard.
Integration	Providing sufficient places at Bryntirion Comprehensive School ensures that the curriculum can be delivered and meets the social, environmental, and cultural objectives of pupils and the community it will serve. This scheme will promote inclusion. Construction was competitively tendered to achieve best value for money via a procurement process conducted on Sell2Wales in accordance with the local authority's contract procedure rules and managed on ETenderWales. Tenders will be based on the 'most economical and advantageous tender' (that is, 30% quality and 70% cost). This approach provides opportunities for local companies to engage, thus supporting economic activity in the area. Community benefits will be maximised.

Collaboration	The local authority collaborates effectively with stakeholders which includes schools, Estyn, Central South Consortium, and many internal and external partners to ensure that the building meets needs of the users and the community which it will serve. Officers have collaborated with technical colleagues developing the scheme to ensure that the building design is sustainable and energy efficient. The project team will ensure that the scheme will work effectively, to maximise the use of resource and capitalise on the expenditure ensuring it meets the needs of current and future generations.
Involvement	Stakeholders include Cabinet, members, school governors, staff, pupils, the community, and internal and external partners. Regular email updates and Microsoft Teams meetings, as well as in-person meetings have been held with stakeholders, as required.

6. Climate Change Implications

- 6.1 The local authority's 'Bridgend 2030 – Net Zero Carbon Strategy' and Welsh Government's carbon reduction commitments will also be addressed through the School Modernisation Programme, as all new provision will be designed to ensure that it is Net Zero Carbon 'in operation' and embodied carbon targets are achieved.

7. Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications

- 7.1 Bridgend County Borough Council is committed to promoting equality and valuing diversity through all our services and dedicated to treating all citizens, employees and visitors with respect, while providing services which respond to people's individual needs.
- 7.2 The Education and Family Support Directorate (EFS) Strategic Plan 2023-2026 ensures that equality and fairness remain firmly at the heart of how the council plans, provides, and delivers important services to the people of Bridgend County Borough.

8. Financial Implications

- 8.1 Active travel and highway improvements (consisting of a number of dropped kerbs and signage) have been conditioned through the planning process. Technical officers have advised that a budget of £121,000 for works, professional fees and an allowance for inflation is required to deliver active travel/highway improvements relating to the Bryntirion Comprehensive School scheme. The proposed virement of uncommitted school modernisation budgets of £141k, as detailed in paragraph 3.3 of this report, is considered sufficient to meet the anticipated cost of these improvements along with a contingency sum of £20k.

9. Recommendations

9.1 Cabinet is requested to give approval for the following recommendations to be made to Council:

- to vire £141k of capital budgets detailed in this report for the purpose of active travel /highway improvements associated with the delivery of the four-classroom block at Bryntirion Comprehensive School; and
- include a separate scheme for active travel/highway improvements in respect of Bryntirion Comprehensive School in the capital programme, with a budget of £141k.

Background documents

None