

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET REPORT

28 MARCH 2017

REPORT OF THE INTERIM CORPORATE DIRECTOR – EDUCATION AND FAMILY SUPPORT

SCHOOL MODERNISATION PROGRAMME: OUTCOME OF THE EVALUATION REGARDING THE PROPOSED RELOCATION AND ENLARGEMENT OF MYNYDD CYNFFIG PRIMARY SCHOOL TO A REMODELLED SCHOOL BUILDING AND NEW PROVISION ON THE CURRENT CYNFFIG COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL SITE

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 This report is to inform Cabinet:

- Of the outcome of the consultation into the proposal to relocate Mynydd Cynffig primary school to the site of Cynffig Comprehensive School
- of the outcome of the evaluation of the counter proposal received from the community (as part of that consultation) in respect of developing the Junior site for primary provision
- of the outcome of the review of the 2011 feasibility report in respect of the Junior site (ie the counter proposal)
- of the outcome of the re-evaluation of both current junior and comprehensive school sites for primary provision
- of the findings of the environmental impact assessment in respect of the civic amenity site and cement works.
- and request Cabinet approval to abandon the scheme to relocate Mynydd Cynffig to the Cynffig Comprehensive site

2. Connection to Corporate Plan / Other Corporate Priorities

2.1 The school modernisation programme supports many of the corporate priorities, in particular:

- Supporting a successful economy
- Smarter use of resources

3. Background

3.1 A feasibility study was undertaken in 2011 to establish the most suitable site for Mynydd Cynffig Primary School that would provide sufficient new modernised accommodation to deliver 3-11 learning. That study considered the establishment of primary provision on the Infant, Junior and Comprehensive School sites, the outcome of which determined that the preferred site was that of the Junior School as approved by Cabinet on 28th June 2011.

- 3.2 In June 2015, Cabinet determined to implement the proposal to make a regulated alteration to Mynydd Cynffig Junior School by extending the age range from 7-11 to 3-11 to create primary provision with effect from 1st September 2015.
- 3.3 The Corporate Director, Education and Transformation requested further feasibility work be undertaken to build on the previous study to explore the potential of remodelling Cynffig Comprehensive, in order to accommodate Mynydd Cynffig Primary School at that location.
- 3.4 At the time of proposing the option of relocating the primary school to the comprehensive school site, the Local Authority (LA) had identified that there was considerable pressure on the LA's budget as a result of the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy, which required significant cuts to the Council's budget over the 2016/17 to 2019/20 period of £35.5 million as a most likely scenario. It was also identified at that time that protection of school budgets may not continue and the LA may face a situation where schools would be tasked with an annual 1% efficiency saving.
- 3.5 The Local Authority had expressed concern that as there was a large number of unfunded surplus places at the comprehensive school and together with the likely increased pressure on school budgets, this could mean that the school could potentially be unviable moving forward.
- 3.6 The potential risk of closure of a comprehensive school would not be something that would be desirable given the impact on the school, school staff, the governing body, pupils and wider community.
- 3.7 The main mitigation in respect of this risk was identified as to use the surplus space at Cynffig Comprehensive School to accommodate the Mynydd Cynffig Primary school. This has been the most viable site to consolidate and move to, and given the close proximity of the comprehensive school to the primary school sites, this was seen as the ideal solution.
- 3.8 The outcome of the feasibility study to relocate the primary provision to the comprehensive site was reported to Cabinet on 5th July 2016 and Cabinet determined that the comprehensive site was now the preferred site to be taken forward. Approval was provided to commence consultation on the proposal to relocate and enlarge Mynydd Cynffig Primary to the Cynffig Comprehensive School site.
- 3.9 Consultation was carried out between 4th October and 22nd November 2016 in accordance with the statutory 'School Organisation Code'. A copy of the consultation document was also made available during this time on the Council's website:

<http://www.bridgend.gov.uk/services/consultation/hub/mynydd-cynffig-primary-2016.aspx>

- 3.10 During the course of the consultation process, considerable representations were made in respect of the proposal to relocate the primary school to the comprehensive school site. These were included as an appendix in the report that was considered by Cabinet on 10th January, regarding the outcome of the consultation process.

- 3.11 A petition and counter proposal was submitted from the community proposing the provision of a new two form entry primary school on the Junior site of Mynydd Cynffig Primary School.
- 3.12 The community also expressed concerns regarding the location of a concrete mixing facility and the proposal to locate a civic amenity site on Village Farm Industrial Estate, Pyle.
- 3.13 Cabinet determined in their meeting on 10th January that the draft consultation report should be published, a review should be undertaken of the counter proposal, together with a review of the 2011 feasibility report. It was also recommended that an environmental impact assessment should be commissioned to establish the effect, if any, of the concrete mixing facility and the civic amenity site on the school.

4. Current situation

- 4.1 A number of quotes were obtained from external consultants for undertaking the environmental impact assessment (EIA). The report concluded that the resulting effect on air quality from the concrete mixing facility and the civic amenity site is considered to be negligible with the planned levels of control and mitigation in place, as determined through the planning process. No additional mitigation is considered necessary.
- 4.2 Officer meetings have been held with representatives from each directorate to examine the counter proposal in detail and review the feasibility of the proposal. A summary of the findings relating to the counter proposal have been collated in the table attached as Appendix 1.
- 4.3 There has also been a review undertaken of the 2011 feasibility report and officers have confirmed that the information is still relevant in respect of the Junior site.
- 4.4 A panel, comprising of Council Officers, Head Teachers and Chairs of the School Governing Bodies, have evaluated two options for the primary school; the comprehensive site and the junior site.
- 4.5 It was recognised during the evaluation scoring sessions, that there would be difficulties in developing primary provision on both the Junior and Comprehensive sites.

The main issues identified by the evaluation panel are detailed below:

Junior site

- Insufficient land currently available on the site to develop primary provision without the use of adjacent land which is currently leased (land required for parent drop off, staff parking, maintaining existing Junior provision and outdoor play whilst constructing the new school)
- Affordability (budget estimate in excess of £10 million)
- Substantial Highways works would be required to ensure safe routes to school for the additional children
- Loss of capital receipt for Junior site to reinvest in the 21st Century Schools programme

- Potential reduction in value of the Infant site if allotments are relocated to this site

Comprehensive site

- Adaptation as opposed to new build
- Affordability (budget estimate now in excess of £10 million due to the increase in the area required for drop off and parking arrangements. This increase impacts on pitch provision, therefore there is a requirement for an all-weather pitch and drainage improvements to certain remaining grassed pitches. There was also an additional requirement for a footbridge to improve access arrangements to the south of the site. These increases also impact on the level of professional fees, increasing the project cost further).
- Substantial Highways works would be required to ensure safe routes to school for the additional children
- Loss of Youth block may result in a loss of income for the school and potential loss of provision
- Primary school would be split over three levels plus 2 mezzanines
- Concern from some parents regarding the mixing of older and younger children
- Site management complexities

- 4.6 As a consequence of the evaluation, together with the revised budget estimates in respect of the development at the comprehensive site (£10 million) the panel considered that the proposal does not represent value for money.
- 4.7 A budget cost estimate was prepared for development of primary provision at the Junior site which was in excess of £10 million and excluded works to the external Highway.
- 4.8 In light of the aforementioned potential costs, and considering the available budget for the scheme of £7.05 million, it is considered that circumstances have changed significantly. A considerable increase in funding would be required to develop primary provision at the comprehensive site. This renders the original proposal cost prohibitive and as the counter proposal has been costed at a similar level, there is insufficient funding currently available to take forward either scheme.
- 4.9 Consequently, Cabinet approval is sought to abandon the original proposal to locate Mynydd Cynffig Primary on the Cynffig Comprehensive site. This means that the replacement of the school would not be taken forward under Band A of the 21st Century Schools Programme.
- 4.10 The Welsh Government had approved the Strategic Outline Case (SOC) in respect of the Mynydd Cynffig Primary scheme and had invited the Council to proceed to Outline Business Case (OBC) stage. Subject to Cabinet's decision, Welsh Government will be advised of the outcome of this process.

5. Effect upon Policy Framework and Procedure Rules

- 5.1 There is no effect upon the policy framework or procedure rules.

6. Equality Impact Assessment

- 6.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out as part of the consultation stage and has been further informed by responses to the consultation papers. The assessment has concluded that there is a negative impact on the duties of the Council in respect of age.

7 Financial Implications

- 7.1 The current capital programme, approved by Council on 1 March 2017, shows the Mynydd Cynffig Primary School total scheme budget as £7.050 million, which comprises £5,044,798 funding from BCBC and £2,005,202 funding from Welsh Government. Bridgend's contribution is a combination of general capital funding, capital receipts and S106 funding.
- 7.2 The capital programme also includes a budget of £700,000 in respect of highways works identified as necessary to complete the proposed relocation of the Primary school to the Cynffig site. As highways works outside the boundary of the school are not considered to be eligible funding within the 21st Century Schools Programme, this was to be funded from the capital receipt generated from the sale of the Junior school site.
- 7.3 For Bridgend, the total current 21st Century Schools programme budget, following the approval of additional S106 funding for Brynmenyn Primary School in the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2017-18 to 2020-21, is £50.024 million, with funding of £25.299 million from BCBC and £24.725 million from Welsh Government. Following discussions with Welsh Government on the proposal to remove the Mynydd Cynffig Primary School scheme from the Band A programme, a revised funding matrix has been drafted and, subject to Cabinet's decision regarding this proposal, will be submitted to Welsh Government. Welsh Government has confirmed that funding for the 21st Century Schools Programme is on a 50:50 funding basis between the local authority and Welsh Government, so the funding matrix has been adjusted to ensure this ratio still applies if the scheme does not proceed.
- 7.4 The revised programme budget would be £42.974 million, a reduction of £7.050 million, with funding of £21.487 million from both BCBC and Welsh Government. The effect of this is the release of £3.238 million of Welsh Government funding and £3.812 million of BCBC funding, comprising capital receipts, general capital funding and earmarked reserves.
- 7.5 If the decision is made not to continue with the scheme then any design or other works associated with the scheme are considered to be abortive costs and cannot be charged to capital. Consequently they will have to be met from the directorate revenue budget. The estimated total value of costs incurred to date is between £250,000 and £300,000.
- 7.6 Financial Procedure Rules state:

3.4.8 Remedial action which necessitates the retardation or deletion of a scheme within the first year of the programme shall be subject to the prior approval of the Council based on a joint report of the Chief Finance Officer and Chief Officer.

Consequently, Council will be requested to approve the removal of the school scheme from the capital programme, along with the associated highways works.

8. Recommendations

Cabinet is therefore recommended:

- 8.1 to abandon the proposal to relocate Mynydd Cynffig Primary to the Cynffig Comprehensive site.
- 8.2 to provide approval to inform Welsh Government to remove the scheme from Band A of the 21st Century Schools Programme
- 8.3 to request that Council remove the scheme and associated Highways works from the capital programme

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Background documents

Cabinet report, 9th October 2007, "SCHOOL MODERNISATION PROGRAMME: PHASE 2 3-18 PROVISION IN THE AREA OF CEFN CRIBWR, CORNELLY, KENFIG HILL AND PYLE"

Cabinet Report, 28th April 2009, "SCHOOL MODERNISATION PROGRAMME: PHASE 2 3-18 PROVISION IN THE AREA OF CEFN CRIBWR, CORNELLY, KENFIG HILL AND PYLE"

Cabinet Report 26th May 2009, "SCHOOLS OF THE FUTURE – THE SCHOOL MODERNISATION PROGRAMME OVERVIEW AND PROGRESS"

Cabinet Report 2nd November 2010, "THE SCHOOL MODERNISATION PROGRAMME OVERVIEW AND BRIDGEND'S 21ST CENTURY SCHOOLS' STRATEGIC OUTLINE PROGRAMME SUBMISSION TO WELSH GOVERNMENT"

Cabinet report, 28th June 2011, "SCHOOL MODERNISATION PROGRAMME: SITE RECOMMENDATION FOR A PRIMARY SCHOOL IN MYNYDD CYNFFIG"

Cabinet report 9th December 2014, "SCHOOL MODERNISATION: PROPOSAL TO CONSULT ON THE PROPOSAL TO CLOSE MYNYDD CYNFFIG INFANTS SCHOOL AND EXTEND THE AGE RANGE OF MYNYDD CYNFFIG JUNIOR SCHOOL TO CREATE AN ALL THROUGH PRIMARY SCHOOL"

Cabinet Report 16th June 2015, "SCHOOL MODERNISATION PROGRAMME: OUTCOME OF PUBLIC NOTICE ON THE PROPOSAL TO CLOSE MYNYDD CYNFFIG INFANTS SCHOOL AS AT 31ST AUGUST 2015 AND EXTEND THE AGE RANGE OF MYNYDD CYNFFIG JUNIOR SCHOOL FROM A 7-11 TO A 3-11 SCHOOL TO CREATE AN ALL THROUGH PRIMARY WITH EFFECT FROM 1ST SEPTEMBER 2015"

Report to Council 18 May 2016: Capital Programme 2016-17 to 2025-26

Cabinet Report 5th July 2016, "SCHOOL MODERNISATION PROGRAMME: MYNYDD CYNFFIG PRIMARY SCHOOL – OUTCOME OF FEASIBILITY STUDY AND PROPOSAL TO CONSULT ON THE RELOCATION AND ENLARGEMENT OF THE SCHOOL"

Report to Council 6th July 2016, "SCHOOL MODERNISATION PROGRAMME: UPDATE ON REPLACEMENT MYNYDD CYNFFIG PRIMARY SCHOOL AND REVISED CAPITAL PROGRAMME"

Report to Cabinet 10th January 2017, "SCHOOL MODERNISATION PROGRAMME: OUTCOME OF CONSULTATIONS TO MAKE A REGULATED ALTERATION TO MYNYDD CYNFFIG PRIMARY SCHOOL"