BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO CRI OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

11 SEPTEMBER 2014

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR RESOURCES

SCHOOL MODERNISATION

1. Purpose of Report.

1.1 Following the transfer of the School Modernisation team from Children’s to Resources Directorate, the purpose of this report is to provide an understanding to Committee members of the areas covered by this service, its responsibilities and the risks raised within the Corporate Risk Assessment Register. This report will address issues relating to budget pressures which may impact on the number of schemes which can be delivered or delay the 21st Century Schools Programme, the capacity to deliver this programme and associated risks and mitigation of those risks.

2. Connection to Corporate Improvement Objectives/Other Corporate Priorities

2.1 Sound management of the Council’s school building assets contributes to the achievement of the Council’s Corporate Plan 2013-17. The Schools Modernisation Asset Management Plan and the 21st Century Schools Programme provide a coherent approach to the management of the Council’s School buildings. The school modernisation programme contributes to many of the 6 Corporate Priorities and in particular:

2.2 Improvement Priority 2: Working together to raise ambitions and drive up educational achievement

2.3 Improvement Priority 6: Working together to make the best use of our resources

3. Background.

3.1 On 1st April 2014, following the Children’s Directorate staff restructuring, the Strategic Resources and Planning team transferred to the Resources Directorate reporting to the Group Manager, Property Services. The team, is now referred to as the School Modernisation team and is responsible for delivering:

- The 21st Century Schools Modernisation Programme
- The management and maintenance of the schools estate and childrens residential homes.
3.2 The 21st Century Schools Modernisation Programme up to 2018/19 equates to £44.95 million funding for Band A school projects. 50% of the cost is to be funded by the Welsh Government and 50% from capital receipts arising from the sale of surplus school sites, Section 106 payments and core funding agreed within the Council’s capital programme. The programme is monitored by the School Modernisation Programme Board, sponsored by the Corporate Director Children’s Services and chaired by the Head of Strategy Partnerships and Commissioning (Children’s Directorate). Extensive work has been undertaken ensuring that all projects comply with the Welsh Government 5 case business model, with recent projects carried out under the South East Wales Schools and Capital Programme Contractor (SEWSCAP) framework utilizing external consultants and contractors. Over the past number of years there have been a number of schemes contracted out of the Authority, however the design work has been undertaken primarily within the Architectural Services Department and this will now be carried out on all schemes.

3.3 The team also oversees the strategic maintenance and management of the school estate, together with 3 no. childrens residential homes (including one respite). There are 49 no. primary schools, 9 no. secondary schools and 2 special schools. Schools have delegated budgets and are responsible for the day to day management of the buildings. They are responsible for ensuring statutory building compliance with such matters as fire safety.

3.4 Head teachers and governors have a degree of autonomy over the day to day maintenance of their buildings. They have a responsibility to ensure the safety of their operation including health and safety matters such as fire risk assessments, legionella and asbestos management. Budgets are delegated to schools and through a service level agreement (SLA) schools ‘buy back’ services from the Council to provide a range of health and safety functions.

3.5 Schools can choose to opt out of the SLA and appoint contractors to do works on the premises as long as the Council is notified. Where a school does decide to appoint contractors themselves, the Council would require sight of all plans, specifications and certification of contractor competence prior to any work being undertaken.

3.6 The budget available for schools’ maintenance for 2014/15 is as follows:
- Capital minor works (including energy & fire safety) : £1,444,000
- Children’s Directorate revenue funding (including DDA) : £615,000
- (the schools will also use their own delegated budgets to carry out or contribute to works)
- The current Schools maintenance backlog is circa £36million
There is also a small budget of circa £13,000 in respect of the Childrens Homes.


4.1 Roles and Responsibilities

4.1.1 Following the transfer of the team from Children’s to Resources’ Directorate in April 14, the team effectively acts as client agent for Children’s directorate in delivery of the 21st Century Schools Programme and repairs and maintenance of school
buildings. With key roles and responsibilities identified as follows remaining with Children’s Directorate:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Responsible Party</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Senior Responsible Owner for the 21st Century Schools Programme</td>
<td>Corporate Director Children’s Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schools Modernisation Programme Sponsor</td>
<td>Corporate Director Children’s Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schools Modernisation Programme Manager</td>
<td>Head of Strategy and Commissioning (Children’s Directorate)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High level strategy direction and approval to funding programme</td>
<td>Corporate Director Children’s Services / Head of Strategy and Commissioning (Children’s Directorate)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final signoff of schemes/ programmes including submissions to Welsh Government and Delegated Powers</td>
<td>Corporate Director Children’s Services/ Head of Strategy and Commissioning (Children’s Directorate)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public face for consultation including: LA Representative at public consultation Meetings including school closures and amalgamations etc.</td>
<td>Corporate Director Children’s Services/ Head of Strategy and Commissioning (Children’s Directorate)</td>
</tr>
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4.1.2 Detailed roles and responsibilities for Children’s Directorate and Property Services, Resources are contained in appendix 1.

4.2 The Corporate Risk Register highlights the following concerns:

4.2.1 Capacity Pressures

i. The risk register identifies that as a result of the bringing forward of the Band A projects within the 21st Century Schools Programme to 2019, there may not be the capacity within the Directorate to deliver the Band A schemes.

ii. The programme of work for the team is significantly progressing from feasibility to project delivery. This is resulting in resourcing pressures, increased by a reduction in leadership capacity and team staff shortages as detailed below.

iii. Prior to transfer, the team was lead exclusively by the Group Manager, Strategic Planning and Resources Unit, reporting directly to the Head of Strategy, Partnership and Commissioning. Following transfer, the team now falls under the Group Manager, Property Services with some line management from the Principal Surveyor Asset Management. Due to ongoing responsibilities for both of these posts the support given to the team is less than previously available.

iv. Together with this reduction in leadership capacity, the number of project managers employed to undertake procedures associated with the new School Organisation Code, feasibility studies, options appraisal, deliver BCBC capital projects and Band A projects named within the 21st Century Schools Programme, has been reduced from 4 to 3. Notwithstanding this, significant progress in delivery of schemes has been achieved as detailed in section 4.3 below: ‘21st Century programme progress and project delivery status’.
4.2.2 Budget Pressures:

i. The risk register identifies that budget pressures may reduce or delay the 21st Century Schools Programme, which has increased by Welsh Government’s decision to reduce the programme by two years. The risk register notes that capital receipts may not be available within this shorter timeframe.

ii. Because it depends on the ability of the Council to release sufficient land to support the programme. This would potentially delay school building improvements, repairs and new builds and also prejudice the Council’s ability to provide for sufficient school places. The capital receipt requirement from the sale of school buildings is £11.135 million. In this respect Property Services has a fully resourced disposal programme in place, which it is progressing to deliver timely capital receipts. The 14/15 programme is detailed below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Asset</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Misc. School assets</td>
<td>Completed: £399,000 (£260,000 generated in 2013)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YBC Phase 1</td>
<td>Progressing agreement with preferred developer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ogmore Playing Fields</td>
<td>Tenders currently being assessed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

iii. There is an ongoing review of schemes in line with budget pressures to determine which schemes we can progress within Welsh Government parameters. Project delivery, strong programme and project management arrangements also contribute to addressing budget risks, with the team having a track record of delivering projects to time, cost and quality.

iv. Certain schemes have been procured through the South East Wales Schools & Capital Programme Contractor (SEWSCAP) Framework which is due to expire in March 2015. SEWSCAP 2 is due to be rolled out later in the year and it is proposed that the Council continues to use this framework which will come into effect April 2015. The framework offers best value in terms of procurement processes.

4.2.3 Disabled Adaptations and Repairs

i. The risk register identifies that demand for disabled adaptations and repairs and maintenance are creating a significant demand on the budget. Failure to provide for disabled learners may result in litigation or tribunals.

ii. Equality legislation places responsibilities on local authorities and responsible bodies of schools to improve access to their schools. Specifically, the provisions in Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010, place a duty on local authorities to prepare an accessibility strategy and a duty on responsible bodies of schools to prepare an accessibility plan. Bridgend County Borough Council has a corporate Access Improvement Strategy for Council Premises in place and school access audits are currently underway as part of a 5 year rolling programme on all council assets. There is an annual budget of £150,000 for all Council premises to carry out Equalities Act general improvement works. Any decision to spend this budget is agreed in consultation with Bridgend Coalition for Disabled People and approved.
through the Corporate Property Group for the purpose of improved general community access and use.

iii. Many adaptations are however now required to support the complex medical needs of individual children and represent a significant budget cost against the limited Children’s Directorate revenue budget of £615,000, with adaptations for an individual child having costs often into tens of thousands of pounds. In total since 2010 and including estimated costs for planned adaptations for 2014/15 the costs of adapting schools over this 5 year period is circa £700,000.

iv. The result of this is an ongoing reduction in the funding available to carry out repairs and maintenance. The cost of adaptations is exacerbated by issues associated with the school building stock in terms of the age, design and the fact that many of the school buildings in Bridgend are built on steeply sloping sites, particularly those in the Valley areas.

v. Notwithstanding this, BCBC has made good progress in terms of the physical adaptations to the school building stock. Disabled adaptations planning is carried out in consultation with Complex Medical Needs/ DDA Group, this group meets monthly and identifies pupils coming through the system and their requirements. The group also monitors schemes. Projects to the value of £500,000 have been undertaken since 2010, with an additional £200,000 planned projects for this financial year alone. The 21st Century Schools Programme is also delivering improved accessibility; however, this only represents a small percentage of the total number of schools.

vi. Property Services are also currently managing a project to look at the risks around fire safety within Bridgend Schools and statutory compliance. This has developed into a working group, “Safe Dry Warm Schools Project”, which has been set up to develop protocols to control compliance in schools including the Property Services team, Built Environment and Children’s services. The aims of the Project are to:
  - Keep school buildings safe, dry and warm
  - Ensure clear accountability of both LEA and school budgets
  - Develop clear guidance on:
    - Compliance, repairs and maintenance responsibilities and procedures.
  - Establishment of a robust compliance monitoring system
  - Establish a programme of prioritised works
  - Develop and document communication channels
  - Develop school awareness of implications for non-compliance of risk management procedures
  - Establish a mandatory process to ensure school led modifications are compliant

4.3 21st Century programme progress and project delivery status

4.3.1 Coety Primary School
A the time of writing this report, the replacement Coety Primary School, which will be located on the Parc Derwen development is awaiting contract action. J.B.
Leadbitter & Co is in the process of being commissioned to undertake the construction work and we are awaiting the land transfer and exchange of funding contract with Welsh Government. The new school is due to open November 2015.

4.3.2 SEN Provision – Former Ogmore Comprehensive School
Knox and Wells have been appointed to undertake the remodeling work on the former Ogmore Comprehensive School, which once complete will see the relocation of Ysgol Bryn Castell, the Pupil Referral Unit and EOTAS (Education Other Than At School) provision. Additional support services will also relocate and operate from that site. The project is progressing well and due to be handed over to the Council in March 2015. The relocated Ysgol Bryn Castell will open for pupils at the beginning of the summer term 2015.

4.3.3 Garw Valley South
Design has commenced on the replacement school for Betws and Tynyrheol Primary Schools and Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Cwm Garw, which are to be located on the site of the existing Betws Primary School.

4.3.4 Ongoing feasibility work is continuing in respect of remaining band A projects.

4.3.5 A School Catchment Group has been established to consider the supply and demand for school places within the borough and to determine how best catchment areas are aligned to meet need. This group will help shape a strategy for dealing with provision and determine where changes to catchment areas will be necessary in the future.

4.4 Conclusions
4.4.1 The 21st Century Schools Programme, linked with schools asset management planning is an on-going process which produces buildings fit for purpose, property efficiencies, financial planning, and capital receipts, contributing to many of the 6 Corporate Priorities and in particular:

4.4.2 Improvement Priority 2: Working together to raise ambitions and drive up educational achievement

4.4.3 Improvement Priority 6: Working together to make the best use of our resources

4.4.4 The 21st Century programme of work for the team is significantly progressing from feasibility to project delivery. This is resulting in resourcing pressures, magnified by the reduction in leadership capacity and team staff shortages.

4.4.5 It is evidenced in the report that we are moving forward with notable milestones including:

- Completion of Coleg Cymunedol Y Dderwen
- Completion of Penyfai Primary School
- Completion of temporary classroom provision at Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Ogwr, Ysgol Y Ferch o’r Sger, Tondu and Coychurch Primary Schools
- Completion of Flying Start schemes at Sarn and Blackmill…..
- Completion of Bryncethin Primary Schools Early Years Unit
- Delivery of Capital Receipts
- Development of the Safe Dry Warm Project
- Establishment of school catchment group

4.4.5 It must however be noted that:
- There are resourcing concerns
- The current economic climate and market changes will impact on the delivery of capital receipts
- Increased demands for Disabled Adaptions and Repairs
- The reduction in both the minor capital works budget and capital programme will have a negative impact on our efforts to reduce the maintenance back log.


5.1 As noted in the report

6. Equality Impact Assessment

6.1 Not applicable for the purpose of this report, EIA’s are carried out as part of projects under the Schools Modernisation Programme

7. Financial Implications.

7.1 As noted in the report

8. Recommendation.

8.1 The Committee is requested to note the contents of this report, detailing the areas covered by this Schools Modernisation Team and its areas of responsibility following the transfer of the team from Children’s to Resources Directorate, and consider, the issues raised within the Corporate Risk Assessment Register, covering risks and how these are being mitigated against.

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Background documents
Appendix 1
Children’s Directorate & Resources Property Services Roles/Responsibilities Schools and Children’s Homes