

Date of Meeting	Item	Members wished to make the following comments and conclusions:	Response/Comments
12-Mar-2018	School Modernisation	<p>Members recommended that Officers adopt a whole Council approach to the School Modernisation Programme whereby it is ensured that officers from all Directorates including Highways, Transport, Finance and Social Services are consulted throughout the whole of the planning and development stages, are also given the opportunity to provide their input and are present at the relevant Scrutiny Committee to give their representations.</p>	<p>There is excellent representation from officers at programme and project level meetings. Officers contribute to their areas of expertise during project development and delivery, with the make-up of teams evolving as projects progress.</p> <p>Notwithstanding the above, there have been some issues in recent years as a result of re-structuring and resource availability, however as the programme is a priority, resourcing issues have been suitably addressed so as not to hinder schemes. Members' request for officers to be present at the relevant Scrutiny Committee is noted, and this will be conveyed to the appropriate officers.</p>

Members recommended earlier consultation and engagement with Highways and Planning officers to ensure that the Safe Routes to School provision is applied when plans are being developed for each new school

Early engagement is taking place with Highway Officers in relation to Band B schemes of the School Modernisation Programme. Highway officers are part of the project team their views are recognised as being essential in terms of determining the location of any new schools. Highway officers will initially give their views on the suitability of the location from knowledge and experience of the following: accessibility via modes and modal requirements (pedestrian requirements, cycling, busses/minibuses, cars/taxis), proximity to adjacent authorities for travelling pupils, mitigation measures (junctions on periphery, road capacity, speed of vehicles), room for vehicular movements and parking on site, issues arising regarding stopping on the highway outside facilities, competing traffic, incompatible traffic (eg industrial estate movements), community benefits/amenities. When the proposed long-list of sites have been shortlisted, taking into account all educational requirements, then those sites will need to be considered in detail and the previous process repeated.

Members further recommended that plans for new schools include adequate facilities for pupils and staff to store and secure their bicycles to encourage them to cycle safely to school.

Encouraging building users to cycle, and in doing so promoting exercise and helping to reduce congestion and emissions, is an important element of school design. This can only be achieved by ensuring that there is adequate cyclist facilities available for staff and pupils. Cycle infrastructure and links to cycle paths from school sites assist with this, together with the provision of cycle parking. The number of cycle parking spaces are determined by the Council's adopted parking standards (Supplementary Planning Guidance 17) plus BREEAM requirements which together determine the number of spaces and other facilities associated with cycling eg showers, lockers etc. Such facilities aide the cyclist and promote the use of this sustainable mode of travel. The members' recommendations are duly noted and this matter will be given serious consideration in progressing Band B schemes with Highway officers and designers.

The Committee recommended that for the development of any new schools where a private road would be a designated drop off zone, legally compliant parking spaces are incorporated into the plans to ensure the safety of children, staff and parents using the same road to cross and park.

When considering any new school development, a project team is established to consider the design which will include how pupils, staff and parents access the school. Highway officers are part of those project teams. Advice is sought from Highway officers as to best practice with regard to any drop-off zone that may be suggested in order to ensure the safety of children, staff and parents using the facility. It is now usual for a number of layout options to be presented and evaluated by teams, comprising of designers, end users and officers from the 'School Transport Advisory Group', which includes a health and safety adviser. The number and size of parking spaces will need to comply with the Council's adopted parking standards.

Members recommended that Officers take into account the demographic changes when considering the placement of new schools and not just consider the new housing developments but also the changes in current housing where increasingly younger families are moving into homes in and around the Town centres. Many young families currently have to travel out of town by car for school provision as there is not sufficient provision in the immediate area

The supply and demand of school places is one of the fundamental elements which help inform the future investment needs of the School Modernisation Programme. The provision of places for housing developments, for which there are no places currently available, are a priority, as there is a statutory duty on the Council to ensure there are a sufficient supply. Officers regularly monitor places. There are an annual calculations of school capacity and pupil projections. The projections take into consideration a series of demographic data available to the Council including live births, housing data and historical information regarding the take-up of places. This method of calculating projections is a robust, tried and tested methodology. The methodology accounts for a 'pupil drift' of pupils year-on-year and also highlights unusual increases above the norm. However, apart from the 'pupil drift' element, in-year increases in population are not accounted for. We will explore opportunities to identify suitable data which may help inform population changes to existing schools and the impact on the supply/demand for places.

Members recommended that evidence be provided as to how risks relating to a change in political power in Welsh Government have been taken into consideration and mitigated against as this could potentially affect the 25 year financial plan.

Welsh Government (WG) have given a commitment in principle to Band B, however contracts have yet to be entered into on specific schemes. The Council mitigates by not committing to any contracts until there is a signed agreement from WG as to the funding envelope. If anything changes and WG have a change of direction and no longer provides match funding, then we would have to consider this in terms of Bridgend's capital funding availability and priorities. In terms of the 25 year plan, this would only affect the Mutual Investment Model (MIM) and the contract for this would have been entered into at the start of the period so it would be very difficult for WG to break that during the contract period.

Members recommended that Officers engage with Rhondda Cynon Taff Council and the Vale of Glamorgan during the early stages of the planned new housing development near Llanilid to discuss secondary education provision including how the new development could potentially affect the population of

The Communities Directorate and Education and Family Support directorates are engaged in initial discussions regarding the impact of the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal. Furthermore, both directorates work closely together to provide guidance to support the current local development plan and have held initial discussions regarding the revised local development plan from 2021.

Members recommended that as part of Band B of the School Modernisation Programme a solution for the shortfall of pupil places in Bryntirion Comprehensive School is considered as a priority as the school was currently already oversubscribed with children from out of the catchment area opting to be educated there.

Band B has been approved by Council, as has the Strategic Outline Programme. There are 20% surplus places within the county borough's secondary schools so there is no proposal to increase secondary provision for Band B. The issues at Bryntirion Comprehensive School relate to pressure from out-of-catchment applications. The school has sufficient places to meet in-catchment demand ie there are 210 places for the new intake into year 7 in September 2018 with 194 in-catchment applications. Acknowledging the increase pressure from out-of-catchment, the local authority is working to address the issues.

Members recommended that Cabinet and Officers ensure that evidence be provided as to how safety solutions and preventative measures are being addressed in all schools in the Borough, particularly in relation to the newer schools and those that have recently been completed. Members gave the example of schools with mezzanine type floors, which, whilst they complied with safety regulations, were still a cause for concern as children were able to climb onto the safety barriers or throw objects over the top which could cause serious injury to themselves and other pupils

The mezzanine type floor or light well within our schools often takes the form of a cut-out to the floor slab at first floor level, allowing the natural light into areas of the ground floor that would otherwise require artificial lighting. Light wells can also be used to promote ventilation. Certain conditions for their inclusion in designs are likely to be in place eg first floors will be accessed by key stage 2 pupils and management arrangements will be implemented; mostly reliant on one or a combination of supervision, instruction, timing and keeping the first floor landing areas sterile. Building regulations require a guard rail height of 1100mm and for horizontal rails to be avoided; our school designs comply with the requirement of these regulations. Moving forward, it would certainly be advantageous to have an agreed design based on 'normal parameters' which has flexibility if required and technical advice will be sought in this regard. Caerau Primary School, which opened in 2010, has a similar feature and the Headteacher maintains that there have been no known incidents of pupils throwing objects from the first floor to the ground floor. Checks have been made with the Health and Safety adviser to establish whether any incidents have been reported and confirmation has been received that there were two near-miss throwing incidents that occurred at Coety Primary School not long after the school opened in 2015 however, there is no knowledge of any reported incidents regarding this issue since that time.

Further Information Requested

How many pupils that live in walking distance to Brynteg School have opted to go to Bryntirion School

Sixteen pupils have applied for a place at Bryntirion Comprehensive School that reside in the Brynteg Comprehensive School catchment area and live within the 3 miles Welsh Government recommended walking distance to Brynteg.

What criteria is applied when refusing planning applications in relation to new housing developments and provision of school places.

Each application is determined on its own merit plus all material considerations. The Group Manager, Development, is unaware of planning consent being refused based on the lack of school places. Education provision is one of the criteria that Planners consider in making a decision or recommendation. Bridgend's own development plan and supplementary planning guidance provides policy clarification on how schemes are assessed.

Clarification on whether the non MIM spend of approximately £1.1m has been included within the MTFS agreed at last council meeting.

In terms of the £1.1m MIM, this isn't included within the MTFS currently as we have not had confirmation that we have got an approved MIM scheme from WG yet, and also, the pressure would not arise until the school was built (around 2024/25) and this is outside the range of our existing MTFS which currently covers 2018-19 to 2021-22.

Further Points

Members recommended that Scrutiny explore the possibility of having an item on the Local Development Plan and the section 106 contributions and how these contributions can be expended