

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO CABINET

30 JUNE 2020

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR – EDUCATION AND FAMILY SUPPORT

SCHOOL MODERNISATION PROGRAMME – BAND B MYNYDD CYNFFIG PRIMARY SCHOOL

1. Purpose of report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to:

- seek approval to submit a revised Band B Strategic Outline Programme (SOP) to Welsh Government (WG) which substitutes the Bridgend South East scheme with a replacement Mynydd Cynffig Primary School (2 form entry plus nursery); and
- seek approval for an options appraisal and feasibility study to be conducted for a replacement Mynydd Cynffig Primary School.

2. Connection to corporate well-being objectives/other corporate priorities

2.1 This report assists in the achievement of the following corporate well-being objectives under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015:

- **Supporting a successful sustainable economy** - taking steps to make the county borough a great place to do business, for people to live, work, study and visit, and to ensure that our schools are focused on raising the skills, qualifications and ambitions of all people in the county borough.
- **Smarter use of resources** – ensure that all resources (financial, physical, ecological, human and technological) are used as effectively and efficiently as possible and support the creation of resources throughout the community that can help deliver the Council's well-being objectives.

2.2 On 3 March 2015, Cabinet approval was received for the Council to adopt revised principles as a framework for school organisation in Bridgend. Five key principles were set out to inform the organisation and modernisation of our schools. These are:

- commitment to high standards and excellence in provision;
- equality of opportunity, so that all pupils can access quality learning opportunities, regardless of which school they attend;
- inclusive schools, which cater for the learning needs of all their pupils;
- community-focused schools, where the school actively engages with its local community; and
- value for money.

- 2.3 The Policy and Planning Framework sets out 17 areas where these principles should be applied in practice.
- 2.4 The principles which are particularly relevant in the context of Band B are:
- the size of primary schools (to ensure that “all Bridgend’s primary schools are large enough to make the full range of necessary provision”); and
 - value for money, efficiency and effectiveness (“narrowing the gap between the most and the least expensive provision currently”).

3. Background

- 3.1 In April 2009, Cabinet approved a number of individual projects that emerged from a feasibility study, which reviewed 3 to 18 learning provision in the Cefn Cribwr, Cornelly, Kenfig Hill and Pyle area. Approval was received to progress a project to cater for a proposed amalgamation of the then Mynydd Cynffig Infant and Junior Schools.
- 3.2 In December 2010, the Council’s SOP for the 21st Century Schools Programme was submitted to WG and a replacement Mynydd Cynffig Primary School scheme was identified as a Band A project. In 2011, the project was again confirmed as a priority Band A scheme in a further SOP submission to WG.
- 3.3 A feasibility study was undertaken in 2011 to establish the most suitable site for the primary school. That study considered the establishment of primary provision on Mynydd Cynffig Infant and Junior Schools’ sites plus the site of Cynffig Comprehensive School, the outcome of which determined that the preferred site was that of the Junior School.
- 3.4 Following the establishment of Mynydd Cynffig Primary School in September 2015, a decision was made to undertake further feasibility work to explore the potential of remodelling Cynffig Comprehensive School, in order to accommodate Mynydd Cynffig Primary School at that location.
- 3.5 The feasibility study showed that Cynffig Comprehensive School site allowed for suitable alternative solutions to the critical issues of sufficient developable area and appropriate site access. It also offered sufficient space to develop a 2-form entry school plus nursery and remove some secondary surplus places.
- 3.6 The outcome of the feasibility study was reported to Cabinet in July 2016 and approval was provided to commence the consultation process to relocate the primary school to the secondary site.
- 3.7 The outcome of the consultation was reported to Cabinet in January 2017. The community strongly opposed the proposal and Cabinet determined to consider a counter proposal from the objectors (ie to locate the new school on the junior site).
- 3.8 In March 2017, the outcome of a review of the 2011 feasibility study and the counter proposal was reported to Cabinet together with concerns regarding revised budget estimates for the new school development at the secondary

site. Cabinet determined to abandon the proposal, as there was insufficient funding available to take forward the scheme at the comprehensive or junior school site.

- 3.9 In October 2017, Cabinet approved Bridgend's Band B priorities, which included a 2.5-form entry school plus nursery for the Bridgend South East area of the county borough. At that time, Cabinet also agreed for further feasibility work to be undertaken for a replacement Mynydd Cynffig Primary School which, depending on the outcome and available funding, could be delivered as a priority scheme in Band C. Subsequent Cabinet approval was received in January 2020, to undertake a feasibility study for a 2-form entry dual-stream school plus nursery (ie Welsh and English-medium provision) at the proposed Parc Afon Ewenni development site. At that meeting Cabinet also approved the submission of a revised SOP to WG to reflect strategic changes which would rebalance the programme and the forms of entry between the proposed North East scheme (revised increase to 2.5-form entry plus nursery) and South East (revised decrease to 2-form entry plus nursery).
- 3.10 In November 2019, the Mynydd Cynffig Primary School's infant site suffered a catastrophic failure of its heating system and the repair forced the school to close for three weeks. Pupils and staff were temporarily decanted to neighbouring schools in order for teaching and learning to continue.
- 3.11 A building condition survey which was undertaken during the above closure period reduced the condition of the school from its previous condition, that is, "C" to a category "D" (ie 'Bad – life expired and/or at risk of imminent closure, requiring significant immediate/urgent works'). The nature and assortment of the disrepairs highlighted within the condition survey made isolated repair works to individual fabric elements at the school extremely challenging and economically unfeasible.
- 3.12 The outcome of the condition survey and the potential issues were reported to the School Modernisation Strategic Programme Board (Board) and as a result of the health and safety risk to pupils and staff, the Board agreed that the school building would close to pupils on 13 March 2020 and alternative teaching accommodation would be provided as a matter of urgency. In the meantime, pupils would receive their education from available teaching spaces at Corneli Primary School, Ysgol y Ferch O'r Sgêr and the Integrated Children's Centre, as per previous arrangements.
- 3.13 A scheme for the provision of temporary classrooms was tendered via a mini competition of Lot 11 of the South East Wales Schools Capital Procurement Framework (SEWSCAP 3). The submissions were evaluated to establish the most economically advantageous tender. Council has responsibility to approve additions to the capital programme. However, due to the urgency of the works, it was necessary to revise the capital programme to include a budget allocation for Mynydd Cynffig Primary School (infants) so that the contract for the works could be awarded (subject to delegated approval). Due to the urgent nature of this approval, the Chief Executive used his emergency powers to amend the capital programme for the necessary funding (ie £1.2m), in order to purchase the accommodation and undertake infrastructure works relating to

sections of the main school building that are required to be retained and kept in use (eg hall and kitchen).

4. Current situation/proposal

- 4.1 WG officials have confirmed that the revised SOP, which rebalances the programme between the North East and South East (as detailed in paragraph 3.9 of this report), has been considered by the capital panel. The panel has recommended that the Minister approves the revision. However, official confirmation of the Ministerial decision is yet to be received.
- 4.2 Tender award for the purchase of the temporary accommodation for the infants site of Mynydd Cynffig Primary School is being progressed. Although there is a significant financial commitment for the supply of accommodation, the overarching concerns regarding the primary school occupying two separate sites, plus the size of the junior building remains. Added to this concern is that the Foundation Phase will be taught in temporary accommodation until such time that a new school is provided.
- 4.3 Despite Cabinet's approval to progress a feasibility study in respect of a dual-stream school for Bridgend South East (Parc Afon Ewenni) in January 2020, a development at this location is currently being reviewed in terms of viability. In due course, it will be determined whether Parc Afon Ewenni will be included as an area for development within the new Local Development Plan (LDP). Given the current position in terms of developing the site for housing, the Parc Afon Ewenni Board has confirmed that a school at this location will not be deliverable within the Band B period, as it would need to align to the timing of the residential development. Therefore, consideration must be given to deliver a school at Parc Afon Ewenni in Band C (should the site be included in the new LDP), and to re-prioritise Band B to bring forward a replacement 2-form entry plus nursery Mynydd Cynffig Primary School scheme. The WG intervention rate for Band B is 65% for mainstream school capital schemes, and this would be lost if neither scheme is progressed.
- 4.4 The development of a replacement Mynydd Cynffig Primary School would be subject to the WG business case process, options appraisal and feasibility study. The junior site would be considered as part of the option appraisal process and there are known land issues that would need to be resolved, should a decision be taken to progress a scheme at that site. However, early indications are that they are not insurmountable and can be worked through.

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 initial screening has been undertaken for Mynydd Cynffig Primary School, the outcome of which indicates that a full Equality Impact Assessment will be required prior to any formal decision in terms of a specific proposal.

7. Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 implications

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

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| Long term | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fulfils the Council's statutory duty to provide sufficient pupil places.• Allows teaching and learning to take place on one site, assisting with sharing expert knowledge and resources.• Supports the day-to-day management and operation of the school.• Helps parents with drop-off and pick-up arrangements, as all pupils will attend one site. |
| Prevention | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Safeguards the Council's position in terms of any potential legal challenge regarding the supply of school places. |
| Integration | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensures that the curriculum can be delivered from a purpose built facility that meets social, environmental and cultural objectives. |
| Collaboration | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Works effectively with schools and many internal and external partners to ensure that the building meets the short-term and future needs of users and the community that it will serve. |
| Involvement | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Engagement of potential stakeholders including Cabinet, members, governors, staff, pupils, community, internal and external partners. |

8. Financial implications

8.1 In December 2018, Council approved a programme envelope of £71.3m covering Band B new school builds of £68.2m, along with funding for potential highways works which is currently budgeted at £3.4 million across all Band B schemes (the cost of highway works will have to be met in full by the local authority, as there is no match funding from WG).

8.2 Since that time, WG has amended the Band B intervention rates, and in March 2019 Cabinet reviewed the funding options available, having regard to the increased contribution from WG, and the advantages/disadvantages of each of the options. Approval was received to proceed with two primary schools to be funded via Mutual Investment Model and two primary schools and one special school to be funded via capital grant.

8.3 Following this decision, the revised funding requirement, based on two MIM schemes and three schemes funded from capital grant, was detailed in the capital programme, and received subsequent Council approval. This has since been amended and updated as part of ongoing capital programme updates.

- 8.4 It is currently anticipated that a replacement 2-form entry plus nursery Mynydd Cynffig Primary School would require the same funding envelope as the planned 2 form entry plus nursery school at Bridgend South East (Parc Afon Ewenni). Options appraisal work and a detailed feasibility study will determine whether the £10.2m capital funding allocation is sufficient. However, site choice and potential abnormalities may impact on the funding requirement. Any financial implications for this scheme will be reported in a future Cabinet and Council report.
- 8.5 It must be noted that the approved funding for highway works may be insufficient, or there may be additional costs associated with land. Cabinet will be apprised of the outcome of the study in due course.

9. Recommendations

Cabinet is recommended to:

- give approval to submit a revised Band B SOP to WG which substitutes the Bridgend South East scheme with a replacement Mynydd Cynffig Primary School (2 form entry plus nursery); and
- give approval for an options appraisal and feasibility study to be conducted for a replacement Mynydd Cynffig Primary School.

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Background documents

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

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

Cabinet Report (28 June 2011): "SCHOOL MODERNISATION PROGRAMME: SITE

RECOMMENDATION FOR A PRIMARY SCHOOL IN MYNYDD CYNFFIG”

Cabinet Report (9 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 (16 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

Cabinet Report (5 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 (6 July 2016): “SCHOOL MODERNISATION PROGRAMME: UPDATE ON REPLACEMENT MYNYDD CYNFFIG PRIMARY SCHOOL AND REVISED CAPITAL PROGRAMME”

Report to Cabinet (10 January 2017): “SCHOOL MODERNISATION PROGRAMME: OUTCOME OF CONSULTATIONS TO MAKE A REGULATED ALTERATION TO MYNYDD CYNFFIG PRIMARY SCHOOL”

Cabinet Report (3 October 2017): “SCHOOL MODERNISATION PROGRAMME – BAND B (2019-2024)”

Cabinet Report (19 December 2018): “SCHOOL MODERNISATION PROGRAMME – BAND B”

Council Report (20 December 2018): “SCHOOL MODERNISATION PROGRAMME – BAND B”

Cabinet Report (19 March 2019): “SCHOOL MODERNISATION PROGRAMME – BAND B”

Council Report (20 March 2019): “SCHOOL MODERNISATION PROGRAMME – BAND B”

Cabinet Report (21 January 2020): “SCHOOL MODERNISATION PROGRAMME – BAND B”