

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO CABINET

19 JANUARY 2021

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR – EDUCATION AND FAMILY SUPPORT

SCHOOL MODERNISATION PROGRAMME – BRIDGEND WEST – PERMISSION TO CONSULT ON STATUTORY PROPOSAL

1. Purpose of report

1.1 This report provides a summary of the evaluations undertaken in respect of proposed School Modernisation Programme schemes for the Bridgend West area and recommends that Cabinet:

- notes the evaluations that have been undertaken;
- notes the preferred means to achieve the necessary school organisation ie discontinue the two English-medium schools (Corneli Primary School and Afon y Felin Primary School) and establish a new two-form entry (FE) plus 60-place nursery English-medium school with a 15place Additional Learning Needs Resource Centre on land at Plas Morlais (with effect from September 2023) – and to make a regulated alteration to the Welsh-medium school (Ysgol Y Ferch O'r Sgêr) in the form of an enlargement to a two form-entry plus 60-place nursery Welsh-medium school on the existing Corneli Primary School/Ysgol Y Ferch O'r Sgêr site (with effect from September 2024); and
- give approval to formally consult on the proposal.

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 for 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.

3. Background

3.1 As Cabinet will be aware, the Band B Strategic Outline Programme (SOP) was submitted to Welsh Government (WG) in July 2017, for which Cabinet approval was

subsequently sought in October. Cabinet was presented with a report detailing the outcome of the Band B review and the revised SOP submission and gave approval to discontinue the original Band B schemes identified in the November 2010 Cabinet report, and approved the revised and B schemes:

- Bridgend North East (primary)
- Bridgend South East (primary) - subsequently substituted by Mynydd Cynffig Primary School
- Bridgend West – Welsh-medium (primary)
- Bridgend West – English-medium (primary)
- Bridgend Special School

- 3.2 On 6 December 2017, WG gave 'approval in principle' for Bridgend's second wave of investment, which at that stage had an estimated programme envelope cost of £68.2m. Further costs, which were to be determined, may be required and these would be associated with additional infrastructure capacity.
- 3.3 In July 2018, the School Modernisation Strategic Programme Board and Cabinet and Corporate Management Board (CCMB) undertook a gateway review of a longlist of education and site options in relation to each of the proposed schemes. The longlist of options was presented to Cabinet which resulted in a site shortlist. Officers subsequently undertook a desktop evaluation of the Bridgend West site shortlist.
- 3.4 Welsh Government published the Mutual Investment Model (MIM) contract notice on 9 July 2019 via Sell2Wales (and Official Journal of the European Union). Cabinet resolved at a meeting on 21 July 2020 to enter into a Strategic Partnering Agreement (SPA) with Welsh Education Partnership Company (WEPCo) Limited to facilitate the delivery of education and community facilities.
- 3.5 Cabinet in their meeting on 21 January 2020 gave approval for the Bridgend West schemes to be taken forward via the MIM funding arrangements. The preferred way forward for the Bridgend West scheme being:
- preferred education options of provision of a new-build, two-form entry English-medium school on 'a' site - suitable for Afon y Felin and Corneli Primary Schools combined) and;
 - provision of a new-build, two-form entry Welsh-medium school on 'a' site - suitable for an enlarged Ysgol Y Ferch o'r 'Sgêr
- 3.6 The preferred sites for progression of feasibility for the new schools were determined by Cabinet as Valleys to Coast (V2C) owned Marlas Estate site and the existing Ysgol Y Ferch o'r Sgêr/Cornelly Integrated Children's Centre/Corneli Primary School site.

4. Current situation/proposal

- 4.1 School Modernisation Team officers have had a series of meetings with V2C and WG in order to progress the Bridgend West 'Band B' MIM scheme and to outline an appropriate programme (see draft summary programme at Appendix 1).

- 4.2 Both V2C and WG are keen for the scheme to progress. The MIM Programme Director 21st Century Schools and Colleges has confirmed that Bridgend West can be considered a *de facto* 'MIM pathfinder scheme' (and consequently the 'site investigation' works were scheme funded by WG). The Director of Development and Asset Investment for V2C has confirmed that V2C are comfortable with the proposed programme.
- 4.3 It should be noted that a MIM scheme differs from a capital scheme in that the WG has appointed a private company (Gleeds) to work in partnership with authorities to develop a site-specific brief. Gleeds are also responsible for the detailed feasibility works required for all MIM schemes.
- 4.4 Gleeds has undertaken 'site investigation' surveys of the sites and a scheme test fit. Neither of these have raised any concerns which would prevent the schemes from progressing.
- 4.5 One site for the proposed replacement schools in the West has been identified as land at Plas Morlais, owned by V2C. The principle of the proposed land transaction is based upon a 'swap' deal with V2C, whereby BCBC swap the Afon-Y Felin Primary School site for V2C's Plas Morlais site. Land issues were agreed by Cabinet and Council in December and built into the capital programme.
- 4.6 Heads of terms in respect of the land swap required for the scheme have been agreed with V2C.
- 4.7 WG have confirmed that the Welsh Education Partnership Co. (WEPCo) was established in September 2020. Consequently, we are now able to move forward with delivering individual projects through the New Project Request process as set out in the Strategic Partnering Agreement.
- 4.8 In November 2020 WG approved BCBC's Strategic Outline Case submission in respect of the Bridgend West proposal.
- 4.9 In order to progress the proposed Bridgend West Band B schemes to WG MIM stage 2 and business case approval stage it is necessary to have first completed the necessary School Organisation Code statutory processes.
- 4.10 In order to bring about a change of the proposed nature, the Code requires that a consultation exercise with the school governing body, staff, parents, pupils and interested parties is undertaken. This is the first step in the statutory process. If carried through to completion, it is currently anticipated that this proposal will come into effect on 1 September 2023 (in respect of the English-medium proposal) and 2 September 2024 (in respect of the Welsh-medium proposal). The consultation paper will set out the implications of the proposal.
- 4.11 Following this period of consultation, a further report on the outcome of the consultation would be submitted to Cabinet to consider the result of that process. Cabinet would then need to decide whether to authorise the publication of a statutory notice. If such a notice were issued, it would invite formal objections during the statutory 28-day period.

4.12 A number of options are available under the Code in terms of achieving the school organisation necessary for the Bridgend West 'Band B' schemes proposed:

Welsh-medium

1. 'Enlarge' the existing Ysgol Y Ferch O'r Sgêr to a two-form entry plus 60-place nursery Welsh-medium school; and
2. 'Discontinue' Ysgol Y Ferch O'r Sgêr and establish a new two-form entry plus 60-place nursery Welsh-medium school.

English-medium

1. 'Discontinue' Afon y Felin Primary School, 'discontinue' Corneli Primary School and establish a new two-form entry plus 60-place nursery English-medium school with 15-place Additional Learning Needs Resource Centre (existing Corneli Primary School provision);
2. 'Enlarge' Afon y Felin Primary School into a two-form entry plus 60-place nursery, and 'discontinue' Corneli Primary School;
3. 'Enlarge' Corneli Primary into two-form entry plus 60-place nursery, and 'discontinue' Afon y Felin Primary School.

4.13 Traditionally, when bringing schools together, BCBC has most frequently closed the 'old' schools and created a 'new' school wherever possible (this has the advantage of creating a 'fresh start' for predecessor schools).

4.14 In respect of the Welsh-medium proposal there is no need to close a school (the existing Ysgol Y Ferch O'r Sgêr could simply be formally enlarged). In respect of English-medium, however, two schools (with two headteachers) would be replaced by a single school.

4.15 The Integrated Children's Centre (ICC) building currently located on the Corneli site would remain in situ under the proposal 'as is' and consequently would be adjacent to one of the new school buildings upon completion. Both newly created school buildings would have integrated community facilities. It is therefore envisioned at this stage that the existing Flying Start provision at Afon y Felin Primary School would transfer to the ICC building if the proposal is progressed (it should be noted that for this to be possible, the community facilities in the new school buildings would need to be made available for bookings in respect of community activities currently accommodated within the ICC).

4.16 There is an existing hard court pitch on the land at Plas Morlais (owned by V2C) which would be part of the site required to be developed for provision of the new school building. Community accessible outdoor sports provision would be included as part of the proposed new build schemes, which should negate any perceived detriment involved in developing the site.

4.17 Corporate Management Board in their meeting of 1 December 2020 determined that their preferred means to achieve the necessary school organisation is to discontinue the two English-medium primary schools (Corneli Primary School and

Afon y Felin Primary School) and establish a new school – and to make a regulated alteration to the Welsh-medium school (Ysgol Y Ferch O'r Sgêr) in the form of an enlargement.

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 Band B. Once schemes have been sufficiently developed, they will be subject to a separate EIAs, as the detail will vary between projects. Equality reports on all proposals will be referred to as part of the individual Cabinet reports on each individual scheme.

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.

Long-term	Supports the statutory duty to provide sufficient pupil places and promote the Welsh language.
Prevention	Councils have a statutory duty to ensure there are a sufficient supply of school places, and these schemes will safeguard the Council's position in terms of any potential legal challenge in this regard.
Integration	Providing sufficient places ensures that the curriculum can be delivered and meets social, environmental and cultural objectives.
Collaboration	The local authority works effectively with schools, Estyn and with the Central South Consortium (CSC), health, community councils and many internal and external partners to ensure that the building meets the short-term and future needs of the users and the community which it will serve.
Involvement	This area of work involves the engagement of all potential stakeholders including Cabinet, members, governors, staff, pupils, community, internal and external partners which will include third sector organisations.

8. Financial implications

8.1 The costs of the consultation will be met from existing resources.

8.2 If the proposal does go ahead then the cost of the new school will be funded via an annual charge to the revenue budget, over a 25-year period, which will need to be built into the MTFs as a budget pressure. Early estimates are that this could be in

the region of £500k per annum, but this will be determined as the scheme progresses. The cost is based on a Welsh Government intervention rate for MIM schemes of 81%, with the authority funding 19% of the annual costs, plus 35% of any up-front capital investment for ICT and furniture and equipment.

- 8.3 The running costs of the new school would be met from within the Delegated Schools' Budget as is currently the case. It is too early to say whether there will be efficiency savings or additional costs from the proposed new school, and future reports to Cabinet will outline the financial implications, as they are known, in more detail.

9. Recommendations

9.1 Cabinet is requested to:

- note the evaluations that have been undertaken;
- note the preferred means to achieve the necessary school organisation ie discontinue the two English-medium schools (Corneli Primary School and Afon y Felin Primary School) and establish a new two-form entry plus 60-place nursery English-medium school with 15-place Additional Learning Needs Resource Centre school on land at Plas Morlais (with effect from September 2023) – and to make a regulated alteration to the Welsh-medium school (Ysgol Y Ferch O'r Sgêr) in the form of an enlargement to two-form entry plus 60-place nursery Welsh-medium school on the existing Corneli Primary School/Ysgol Y Ferch O'r Sgêr site (with effect from September 2024) and;
- give approval to formally consult on the Bridgend West proposal.

Lindsay Harvey
Corporate Director - Education and Family Support

Contact officer: Nicola Echanis
Head of Education and Early Help

Telephone: (01656) 642611

E-mail: nicola.echanis@bridgend.gov.uk

Postal address: Education and Family Support Directorate
Bridgend County Borough Council
Civic Offices
Angel Street
Bridgend
CF31 4WB

Background documents

Council Report (13 September 2006): "LEARNING COMMUNITIES – SCHOOLS OF THE FUTURE – STRATEGY, PRINCIPLES, POLICY AND PLANNING FRAMEWORK"

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

Cabinet Report (1 September 2015): "STRATEGIC REVIEW INTO THE DEVELOPMENT AND RATIONALISATION OF THE CURRICULUM AND ESTATE PROVISION OF PRIMARY, SECONDARY AND POST-16 EDUCATION"

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

Cabinet Report (30 January 2018): "SCHOOL MODERNISATION PROGRAMME – BAND B"

Council Report (31 January 2018): "SCHOOL MODERNISATION PROGRAMME – BAND B"

Cabinet Report (20 November 2018): "SCHOOL MODERNISATION PROGRAMME – BAND B"

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"

Exempt Cabinet Report (21 January 2020): "SCHOOL MODERNISATION PROGRAMME – BAND B"

Cabinet Report (21 July 2020): "SCHOOL MODERNISATION PROGRAMME BAND B, MUTUAL INVESTMENT MODEL WELSH EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP - STRATEGIC PARTNERING AGREEMENT"

Exempt Joint Report to Cabinet (15 December 2020): "REPORT OF THE INTERIM CHIEF OFFICER – FINANCE, PERFORMANCE AND CHANGE, CORPORATE DIRECTOR – EDUCATION AND FAMILY SUPPORT AND THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR – COMMUNITIES - SCHOOL MODERNISATION - BAND B CAPITAL PROGRAMME - LAND COSTS"

Appendix 1

Anticipated Programme:

Complete Stage 0 MIM activities	August 2020
Begin statutory consultation	January 2021
Complete statutory consultation and make determination	June 2021
Submit new project request to WEPCo	June 2021
Stage 1 MIM activities (indicative)	June 2021 to November 2021
OBC submitted to Welsh Government	November 2021
Stage 2 MIM activities (indicative)	November/December 2021 to May 2022
Full Business Case submitted to Welsh Government	May 2022
Construction period (indicative)	School 1 – May/June 2022 to November 2023 School 2 – November 2023 to September 2024
Completion/Opening	School 1 – September 2023 School 2 – September 2024

Which of the existing schools moves into the first completed new school will be determined at Outline Business Case stage, although at this stage it is envisioned that the phasing will progress as follows:

Phase 1

- Secure the currently vacant public space.
- Commence the site clearance, construction and delivery of the new school on the Marlas site, including some external amenity facilities.
- The existing Corneli Primary School, Afon y Felin Primary and Ysgol Y Ferch O'r Sgêr continue to operate as normal.

Phase 2

- Decant Corneli Primary School and Afon y Felin Primary School into the newly completed Marlas site school.
- Secure the existing Corneli Primary school and segregate it from Ysgol Y Ferch o'r Sgêr and the Integrated Children's Centre, which will continue to operate as normal.
- Ysgol Y Ferch O'r Sgêr and the Integrated Children's Centre to be accessed via Greenfield Terrace, as normal.
- Site access for the secured site containing Corneli Primary School to be via Hall Drive.
- Demolition of the old school and construction of the new school to commence.
- External works at Marlas site school to be completed simultaneously.

Phase 3

- Upon completion of the new school on the former Corneli Primary School/Ysgol Y Ferch O'r Sgêr/Integrated Children's Centre site, decant Ysgol Y Ferch o'r Sgêr into the new school.
- Commence operating out of the new school, with access via Hall Drive for both the new school and the Children's Centre.
- Secure Ysgol Y Ferch O'r Sgêr as a construction site for its demolition.
- Complete the demolition and external works within the vicinity.
- Remove site hoardings.
- Works completed.