

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

**REPORT TO CABINET
14 SEPTEMBER 2021**

**REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR – EDUCATION AND FAMILY
SUPPORT**

SCHOOL MODERNISATION

PORTHCAWL WELSH-MEDIUM SEEDLING SCHOOL

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 This report seeks Cabinet approval to submit an expression of interest to Welsh Government (WG) in respect of the recently announced second tranche of the Welsh-medium Capital Grant.

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 to deliver the Council’s well-being objectives.

3. Background

- 3.1 There is a duty on local authorities to promote the Welsh language and support WG’s Cymraeg 2050 ambition (ie whereby ‘the Welsh language is thriving, the number of speakers has reached a million, and it is used in every aspect of life’).
- 3.2 In November 2018, the authority secured £2.6m of WG Capital Grant funding for the development of Welsh-medium childcare provision in strategic geographical areas of the county borough, in order to support the vision as detailed in paragraph 3.1 of this report. Four areas were identified for investment, one of which was Porthcawl.
- 3.3 The Porthcawl Regeneration Scheme, as identified in the Local Development Plan, is being progressed, and as part of that scheme it is proposed that additional housing/apartments are delivered which will significantly contribute to the redevelopment of the area.

- 3.4 The local authority has calculated the pupil yield arising from the planned development according to Supplementary Planning Guidance 16 and this has identified that additional education provision will be required to serve the area.
- 3.5 On 21 January 2020, Cabinet gave 'approval in principle' to the development of a 1 form entry Welsh-medium school to serve the Porthcawl area as part of a future band of the school modernisation programme. The intention is that the new provision would be aligned to the development of the Porthcawl Regeneration scheme.

4. Current situation/proposal

- 4.1 In order to promote the Welsh language and deliver on the Cabinet commitment within this part of the county borough, the need for an interim measure in the form of a Welsh-medium seedling school has been identified.
- 4.2 In considering the Welsh-medium childcare provision (ie as detailed in paragraph 3.2 of this report) and supporting the transition from childcare into a formal Welsh-medium education, there are significant merits in co-locating both provisions. From an economic perspective, it would make the most efficient use of funding to co-locate childcare and seedling Welsh-medium provisions on a single site (since the associated economies of scale would mean that significant savings could be made as compared to providing separate provisions at disparate locations). Also, from a logistical perspective, it would be beneficial to parents/carers since there would be a natural progression from the childcare provision through to the seedling school.
- 4.3 A desktop site options appraisal has been progressed for a co-located facility and the outcome will be reported in due course.
- 4.4 Although the council currently has WG approved funding in place for the provision of the childcare facility, it does not currently have funding in place for a Welsh-medium seedling school.
- 4.5 Corporate Landlord Department (ie the Major Projects Team) has provided an estimated cost for the provision of a combined Welsh-medium seedling school and childcare facility of £3.75m. As WG funding of £500k is already in place for the Welsh-medium childcare scheme, in order to deliver a scheme the shortfall would have to be met (ie £3.25m).
- 4.6 On 11 March 2021 WG announced an additional £30m to develop Welsh-medium education across Wales. The funding is a second tranche of investment from the Welsh-medium Capital Grant, established in 2018 to support capital projects dedicated to supporting and growing the use of the Welsh language in education. WG has asked local authorities to submit expressions of interest in the first instance and have advised that, in addition to the 100% capital grant funded, there may opportunities for revenue funding (ie of up to two years) to support capital projects. However, these will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

4.7 Should the application for grant funding be successful, the establishment of a seedling school would require a statutory process under the School Organisation Code and would be dependent on future Cabinet decisions.

5. Effect upon policy framework and procedure rules

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

6. Equality Act 2010 implications

6.1 An initial EIA screening has identified that there would be no negative impact on those with one or more of the protected characteristics, on socio-economic disadvantage or the use of the Welsh language. It is therefore not necessary to carry out a full EIA on this policy or proposal.

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

7.1 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 has been considered in formulating the proposal.

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.

It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable impacts upon the achievement of well-being goals/objectives as a result of this report.

8. Financial implications

- 8.1 The currently estimated cost for the provision of a combined Welsh-medium seedling school and childcare facility of £3.75m includes an element of £150k for anticipated highways works. The full extent of the highways work required for the proposed scheme will not be known until a Transport Assessment is undertaken at detailed design stage. WG currently only grant fund construction within the curtilage of development sites (ie they do not grant fund highways works falling beyond site boundaries). Consequently, BCBC would be required to fund any necessary highways works falling beyond the site boundary. A report will be submitted to Council at a later stage when the extent of any additional capital funding and additional revenue costs are known.

9. Recommendation

- 9.1 Cabinet is requested to give approval for an expression of interest to be submitted to WG in respect of the Welsh-medium Capital Grant in order to create a Welsh-medium seedling school in the Porthcawl area.

Lindsay Harvey

CORPORATE DIRECTOR - EDUCATION AND FAMILY SUPPORT

14 September 2021

Contact officer: Gaynor Thomas
Schools Programme Manager

Telephone: (01656) 642626

E-mail: gaynor.thomas@bridgend.gov.uk

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

Background documents:

Relevant documents are already in the public domain.