

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO CABINET

18 OCTOBER 2022

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR – EDUCATION AND FAMILY SUPPORT

WELSH-MEDIUM CHILDCARE – BRIDGEND TOWN

1. Purpose of report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to:

- detail the outcome of the options appraisal process for the delivery of Welsh-medium childcare provision for the Bridgend Town area; and
- seek approval to co-locate the Welsh-medium childcare provision for the Bridgend Town area with Ysgol Gymraeg (YG) Bro Ogwr.

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 to deliver the Council's well-being objectives.

3. Background

3.1 In March 2018, the Cabinet Secretary for Finance made available £30m across Wales for projects dedicated to supporting and growing the use of the Welsh language in education. This funding would assist the delivery of Welsh Government's ongoing commitment to achieve a million Welsh speakers by 2050.

3.2 Welsh Government advised that this funding was in addition to the existing allocation announced for Band B of the then 21st Century Schools and Education Programme (that is, the Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme).

3.3 A childcare sufficiency audit of settings within Bridgend had identified gaps in this vital provision. These gaps, together with a lack of Welsh-medium

childcare, resulted in a decision being taken to centre Bridgend's proposals on Welsh-medium sessional, child and wraparound care.

- 3.4 In determining the locations that would benefit from such provision, consideration was given to developing centres to support transition from Welsh-medium childcare provision to Welsh-medium primary education, thereby encouraging transition, and in turn, promoting and supporting Welsh-medium schools in key areas of the county borough.
- 3.5 Bettws and Ogmere Valley areas were identified as key locations that would benefit from Welsh-medium childcare provision. It was considered that such facilities at these strategic locations would help support transition from childcare into Welsh-medium primary education at Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Calon Y Cymoedd.
- 3.6 In addition, the geographical areas of Bridgend Town and Porthcawl were also identified as requiring Welsh-medium childcare settings, which in turn would support transition into YG Bro Ogwr and Ysgol y Ferch o'r Sgêr respectively.
- 3.7 A bid for funding was submitted to Welsh Government and in September 2018, the then Minister for Welsh Language and Lifelong Learning announced the successful outcome of the process, and Bridgend County Borough Council was awarded £2.6m capital grant.
- 3.8 A Welsh-medium steering group, comprising of officers and key stakeholders was established in order to help inform each project, develop business plans and aid the future sustainability of provision post-construction.
- 3.9 In July 2019, Cabinet determined the site locations for the Bettws and Ogmere Valley schemes (that is, the site of the former Boys and Girls Club at Bettws and Isfryn Industrial Estate at Blackmill respectively). Both schemes are currently under construction and will be completed in the near future.

4. Current situation

- 4.1 Officers have considered a long list of sites in the Bridgend Town area, based on their suitability and location for the development of the childcare facility (Appendix 1).
- 4.2 The project team has considered the potential sites and determined that the preferred option for the Welsh-medium childcare provision should be that it is co-located alongside YG Bro Ogwr.
- 4.3 If the proposal to enlarge YG Bro Ogwr to a 2.5-form-entry provision at the Ffordd Cadfan site in Brackla proceeds, the childcare provision will be an integral part of the school, but with a separate access into that part of the building. Incorporating the provision into the new build presents economies of scale. If the new school proposal does not proceed, the provision could be located on the existing YG Bro Ogwr site. However, it will be necessary to construct a stand-alone childcare facility that could be accommodated on the grassed area opposite the main entrance to the school.

- 4.4 Co-locating the Welsh-medium childcare provision alongside the Welsh-medium primary school will encourage excellent transition links and promotion of the Welsh language, by having all-through provision in the same location.
- 4.5 The outcome of the options appraisal undertaken by the project team has been reported to the School Modernisation Strategic Programme Board and the preferred option recommended within this report was agreed by the Board.

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 Equality Impact Assessment (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. The assessments confirm that there would be a positive impact on the Welsh language provision currently available.

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. The required assessment template has been completed and a summary of the implications from the assessment relating to the five ways of working is outlined below:

Long-term	This project will meet both short and long-term planning with regard to both the number of childcare places available in the borough, alongside increasing Welsh-medium provision and focused Welsh language benefits for the communities identified.
Prevention	It will reduce the impact of long-term demands on the level of childcare in relation to information on the Bridgend local authority Childcare Sufficiency Assessment. The project also has at its aim the ability to increase Welsh speakers and the number of children entering Welsh language education.
Integration	The project will deliver social, economic, and cultural outcomes, as it will be a community asset.
Collaboration	The project development and planning phase is being supported by a steering group, where stakeholders with vested interests both internal to Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) and external, are members.

Involvement The stakeholders involved in the steering group reflect both childcare and Welsh language organisations. The schemes will deliver beyond the key focus of childcare and education with other services planned, focused on sustainability, community benefit and wellbeing of citizens.

8. Financial implications

- 8.1 The £2.6m capital allocation was initially split equally between the four Welsh-medium childcare projects. However, the developments at Bettws and Ogmre Valley were complex and necessitated a virement within the overall funding allocation plus additional funding from Welsh Government. Therefore the funding allocation for the Bridgend Town project is £550k, which covers costs associated with the design and construction of the building. No capital contribution is required from the Council as the cost is 100% funded by Welsh Government for the Welsh-medium childcare element.
- 8.2 Welsh Government has not made revenue funding available for the ongoing running cost of the building, as such, all associated costs (that is energy, cleaning) will have to be borne by the end user. It is therefore critical for the steering group to work together to ensure the future sustainability of the provision.
- 8.3 Loose furniture, equipment and IT will also have to be provided by the end user.

9. Recommendations

- 9.1 Cabinet is recommended to give approval to co-locate the Bridgend Town area Welsh-medium childcare provision with YG Bro Ogwr.

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Background documents

Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 Assessment
Equalities Impact Assessment

Appendix 1

Site	Status	Comment
Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Ogwr site	PREFERRED OPTION	
Bridgend College	DISCOUNTED	Investment in non BCBC owned building, accommodation on first floor
Land near Newbridge fields	DISCOUNTED	Flood plain
Play area off Brackla Way	DISCOUNTED	Public open space
Pendre Community Centre (land)	DISCOUNTED	Poor location
Former Post Office, Court Road	DISCOUNTED	Cost of purchase
YMCA	DISCOUNTED	Cost of purchase
Brynteg/Heronsbridge sites	DISCOUNTED	Part of Band B proposals
Bridgend Resource Centre	DISCOUNTED	Fully utilised
Newbridge House	DISCOUNTED	Residential property
Litchard Cross Community Centre	DISCOUNTED	Childcare already operational
Penybont Primary school field	DISCOUNTED	English-medium school
Llangewydd Junior site	DISCOUNTED	English-medium school
Land adjacent to Bryntirion Comp	DISCOUNTED	Not BCBC owned
Evergreen hall	DISCOUNTED	Fully utilised
Ashfield Surgery site	DISCOUNTED	No longer available
Public Open Space at Cefn Glas Road	DISCOUNTED	Ecological issues
Innovation Centre	DISCOUNTED	Under refurbishment, likely high rental
Bridgend Life Centre	DISCOUNTED	No space available within the centre; flood plain issues