

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO COUNCIL

16 NOVEMBER 2022

JOINT REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR – EDUCATION AND FAMILY SUPPORT AND THE CHIEF OFFICER (FINANCE, PERFORMANCE AND CHANGE)

SCHOOL MODERNISATION

PORTHCRAWL WELSH-MEDIUM SEEDLING SCHOOL

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 This report seeks Council approval for a capital budget for the proposed Porthcawl Welsh-medium seedling school scheme's design and survey costs up to tender stage to be included in the Council's capital programme, funded from Bridgend County Borough Council resources initially, on the assumption that costs will be recovered once Welsh Government has approved the re-submitted business justification case.

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.

3. Background

- 3.1 Following desktop appraisal of options for developing a Welsh-medium seedling school in the Porthcawl area, a report was submitted to Cabinet in September 2021, who approved the submission of an expression of interest to Welsh Government in respect of the second tranche of the Welsh-medium capital grant.
- 3.2 Welsh Government subsequently approved, in principle, the expression of interest and a business justification case was therefore submitted to them in May 2022.

4. Current situation/proposal

- 4.1 Despite the business justification case being submitted to Welsh Government for approval in May, the local authority has recently been advised that it needs to be re-submitted once tenders relating to the scheme have been returned.
- 4.2 The Welsh-medium capital grant commits Welsh Government to 100% of the scheme funding but only upon their approval of the business justification case.
- 4.3 Council approval is now required, therefore, to include a capital budget for this scheme's design and survey costs (up to tender stage) in the Council's capital programme.

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 Equalities 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.

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 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 is 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, 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 potential stakeholders including Cabinet, members, governors, 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 upfront design/survey costs (required in order to develop the scheme to tender stage and thereby meet Welsh Government business justification re-submission requirements) are currently estimated to be circa £370k. These costs will need to be funded from uncommitted capital in the interim.
- 8.2 The Welsh-medium capital grant commits Welsh Government to 100% of the funding upon approval of the business case. Permission for a budget for this scheme's design and survey costs (up to tender stage) to be included in the Council's capital programme is now sought from Council, on the assumption that costs will be fully recovered once Welsh Government has approved the re-submitted business justification case. Council approval will be sought to accept the risk in the interim - the risk being that should Welsh Government ultimately fail to approve the business case, the incurred design and survey costs (up to tender stage) would need to be funded by the Council as abortive revenue costs.

9. Recommendation

9.1 It is recommended that Council:

- approves a capital budget of £370k for the proposed Porthcawl Welsh-medium seedling school scheme's design and survey costs up to tender stage to be included in the Council's capital programme, initially funded from BCBC resources on the assumption that costs will be recovered

once Welsh Government has approved the re-submitted business justification case.

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Background documents

Where appropriate, relevant papers are in the public domain