

# BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

## REPORT TO CABINET

9 MAY 2023

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

#### SCHOOL MODERNISATION PROGRAMME – COETY PRIMARY SCHOOL OUTCOME OF CONSULTATION PROCESS

#### 1. Purpose of report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to:

- inform Cabinet of the outcome of the consultation on the proposed enlargement of Coety Primary School;
- present the findings of the consultation in a detailed consultation report (Appendix A);
- seek a decision regarding the following in respect of Coety Primary School:
  - either publish the proposals with or without modifications and issue a public notice as prescribed in the School Organisation Code 2018;
  - abandon the proposals; or
  - significantly recast the proposals and re-consult on the following options:
    - change the language category of the school to Welsh-medium; or
    - change the language category of the school to dual language.

#### 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 Coety Primary School, which is a two-form-entry school located on Parc Derwen, was constructed during Band A of the School Modernisation Programme and opened in November 2015.
- 3.2 The adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) 16, applicable at that time, was used to calculate the size of provision required. However, a 2019 review of pupil yield rates from new housing developments demonstrated a higher pupil-yield figure compared to the rates contained in the then Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) adopted SPG16. SPG16 has since been updated and the revised rates have been adopted by the Council.
- 3.3 Additional housing has also been constructed at Parc Derwen, which was not planned as part of the original section (s) 106 for the development. The local authority has entered into a separate s106 agreement in respect of this additional housing and is awaiting payment from the developer.
- 3.4 In order to address the demand for places at Coety Primary School, officers undertook an options appraisal which identified the need to increase provision at the school. The appraisal resulted in a preferred option being identified in the form of a two-storey, four-classroom extension.
- 3.5 On 15 June 2022, Council approval was received to include the scheme in the capital programme and to utilise Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) capital resources to fund the extension. Once the s106 contribution has been received (approximately £300k in total), this funding will displace some of the BCBC funding.
- 3.6 On 18 October 2022, Cabinet approval was received to commence a statutory consultation process to make a regulated alteration in the form of an enlargement to Coety Primary School. The enlargement would result in Coety Primary School being a 2.5-form-entry (FE) school with an 88 full-time-equivalent nursery. The capacity would increase from 420 to 525 places for pupils aged 4 to 11 years. As a result of the enlargement, the published admission number (PAN) of the school would be 75.
- 3.7 The proposal, if approved, would come into effect from the beginning of the spring term 2025.

### **4. Current situation/proposal**

- 4.1 Prior to commencing consultation, the nursery provision was reviewed. The school has 72 full-time-equivalent (FTE) nursery places and because of the development and through mixing year groups, there will be an opportunity to increase the nursery provision by an additional 12 full-time-equivalent nursery places. This presents an opportunity to provide 75 full-time places for pupils aged 3-4 (which would align with the PAN), plus part time places which equate to 9 FTE. The total number of nursery places at the school would be 84 FTE.
- 4.2 As Cabinet will be aware, Coety Primary School's catchment area has been subject to major housing developments (that is, Parc Derwen and the Taylor

Wimpey and Persimmon sites at Brackla northeast). The proposed enlargement of the school is part of a wider strategy to increase pupil places to serve the Bridgend northeast area and a phased strategy has been adopted to expanding primary provision, as follows:

- Welsh-medium capacity is being addressed as part of Band B of the School Modernisation Programme and Cabinet approval has been received to relocate an enlarged Ysgol Gymraeg (YG) Bro Ogwr (that is, a 2.5 FE Welsh-medium primary school that serves the Bridgend town, Valleys Gateway and Pencoed areas) to a new site, which is located near to the existing school site.
- The proposed enlargement of Coety Primary School to 2.5 FE school to increase primary places in the area.
- Utilisation of the residual YG Bro Ogwr site additional primary provision.

4.3 The above strategy addresses the longer-term demand for pupil places in the Bridgend northeast area of the county. The outcome of this strategy will necessitate a catchment area review. Preliminary high-level options have been considered. However, these options will be informed by the outcome of this statutory process plus education option appraisal and consultation in respect of the residual YG Bro Ogwr site. Therefore, any proposed catchment changes can only be progressed in line with a decision regarding the use of that site. The views of stakeholders would be sought in respect of any proposed changes.

4.4 In order to progress the proposed regulated alteration to Coety Primary School, consultation exercises were carried out between 12 December 2022 and 25 January 2023, in accordance with the statutory School Organisation Code, 2018 (Code). A copy of the consultation document was made available during this time on the Council's website and prescribed consultees were advised of its availability and sent a link to the document. The document can be viewed via the following link:

<https://www.bridgend.gov.uk/my-council/consultations/coety-primary-school-consultation/>

4.5 The Coety Primary School consultation document invited views and opinions to be submitted in respect of the proposal and the local authority asked if consultees wished to make alternative suggestions to the proposal, as required by the Code. The following alternative suggestions were submitted which will require Cabinet's consideration:

- Change the language category of Coety Primary School to Welsh-medium.
- Redesignate Coety Primary School as dual language.

4.6 It is evident that there is a high demand for additional pupil places in the Bridgend northeast area. However, the potential implications of the linguistic nature of the provision requires consideration and a decision is required in

terms of whether those additional places are English or Welsh-medium. The following high-level observations need to be considered in terms of decision making:

- Demographic data and data from successive statutory school admission rounds (including in-year transfers), supports the creation of additional English-medium places in the northeast of the county borough. Unless the local authority is content in a significantly higher risk of additional transport being required in the future to transport pupils in this area to schools in other parts of the county borough (which would result in revenue implications for school transport), there will be a requirement to ensure there is a sufficient supply of places for English-medium pupils in the northeast as well as support for the growth of Welsh-medium places. This has previously been an accepted way forward.
- Changing Coety Primary School to a Welsh-language school would mean a significant policy shift for the local authority. However, such a change would result in insufficient English-medium places being available in the area which is likely to be contentious and will undoubtedly receive significant objections and possible legal challenge. Currently, there is no legal requirement for the local authority to deliver such a policy change.
- Increasing the number of English-medium pupil places could have a detrimental impact on achieving the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan Outcome 2 percentage target (as set by Welsh Government) for the local authority. There is a duty on the local authority to support Welsh Government's Cymraeg 2050 Strategy of one million Welsh speakers. The education system plays a key part in achieving this vision. However, the local authority will endeavour to increase the number of Welsh-medium places to balance this increase in places.

4.7 In addition, other alternative suggestions were received from the consultation exercise which are detailed below, together with the local authority's response.

- **A 3FE school is required**

Coety Primary School's site is not large enough to facilitate a 3FE school. The site would be at full capacity if the proposed enlargement is implemented.

- **Move the nursery to a separate site**

This proposal seeks to improve the position for those children who currently are unable to transition from nursery into reception. Coety Primary School has good quality nursery provision and this needs to be located on the same site as the school, supporting transition from early years into mainstream education. By locating the nursery on an alternative site, would result in the school becoming split-site, and this could prove challenging for some parents in terms of drop-off/pick-up arrangements and leadership and management in terms of operating two sites.

- **Nursery years are located together in an extension built on the green space at the front of the school**

During the consultation period, site layout plans were provided purely to demonstrate site fit. During design development, the local authority would work with the school to determine an agreed location for the extension.

- **Smaller schools in the surrounding areas could be adapted to accommodate a slight increase of pupils per school (such as Litchard Primary School or Coychurch Primary School)**

The replacement YG Bro Ogwr, which is to be located at Ffordd Cadfan, would result in the residual YG Bro Ogwr site being available to create additional pupil places, which, with an enlargement of Coety Primary School, would satisfy demand in the area. Utilising the residual YG Bro Ogwr site would be subject to a future Cabinet decision and a separate consultation process.

- **Change the boundaries**

A review of the catchment area will be progressed, and if a change is required, then a separate consultation process will be undertaken. Nevertheless, just changing catchment boundaries does not create additional capacity it merely reallocates the existing pressure to adjacent schools, the majority of which are also oversubscribed and are facing similar pressures as Coety Primary School. Additional capacity to support the growth in the area (in addition to the proposed Coety Primary School enlargement) would satisfy the demand for places. However, utilising the residual YG Bro Ogwr site would be subject to a future Cabinet decision and a separate consultation process.

- 4.8 A summary of the issues raised by consultees and the local authority's responses are provided in the consultation report as detailed in Appendix A of this report. Cabinet will need to consider the consultation report and determine the preferred way forward
- 4.9 Should Cabinet wish to proceed with the proposal, the next stage of the process is to publish a statutory notice outlining the proposal which would need to be published for a period of 28 days. Any formal written objections would be invited during this time.
- 4.10 If there are no objections during the public notice period, then the proposal can be implemented with Cabinet's approval. If there are objections at this public notice stage, an objections report will be published summarising the objections and the local authority's response to those objections and Cabinet will need to consider the proposal in light of any objections made. Cabinet could then accept, reject or modify the proposal.
- 4.11 The following timetable provides an indication of the likely timescales involved:

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Dates</b>
Consultation period.	12 December 2022 to 25 January 2023
Outcome of consultation reported to Cabinet.	11 April 2023
Subject to Cabinet approval, publish the approved consultation report on the BCBC website and inform prescribed stakeholders of its availability ('subject to Council call in procedures').	19 April 2023
If agreed by Cabinet, a statutory public notice will be published and there will be a period of 28 days in which to submit any objections to the proposal in writing.	9 May 2023
If there are no objections, Cabinet can decide whether to proceed or not. If there are any objections, an objection report will be forwarded to Cabinet for consideration and subsequent determination. The approved report will then be published on the BCBC website and hard copies of the report will be made available upon request. Cabinet approval would also be sought to publish a decision letter in respect of the proposal. The decision letter has to be made available within 7 days from the date of the decision being taken. Therefore, the letter would be published 'subject to Council call in procedures'.	July 2023
Implement the proposal (that is, subject to the successful outcome of the activities detailed in this table).	January 2025

## **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 A full Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has identified that there could be a negative impact on those with one or more of the protected characteristics, on socio-economic disadvantage or the use of the Welsh language. No changes have been identified to the full EIA as a result of the consultation.

6.2 This proposal creates additional English-medium places in the catchment area and the parents of pupils in this area who might currently be considering a Welsh-medium education due to some of the difficulties in securing a place for

their child at Coety Primary School due to the oversubscription at the school, may no longer consider this, should the proposal go ahead. However, evidence of previous refusals for admission indicate that this risk is low, as only one child chose a Welsh-medium education as a result of not being able to obtain a place at the school.

## **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 This scheme has been identified through a collaborative strategic approach with officers from key departments of the Council including Education and Family Support Directorate and Corporate Landlord Department. A strategic group considered the fit with local and national strategy, outcomes for learners and families, and economic considerations. Should the scheme proceed, it will fulfil the Council's statutory duty to provide pupil places and support the day-to-day operation of the school.

Coety Primary School's catchment area has been subject to major housing developments (that is, Parc Derwen and the Taylor Wimpey and Persimmon sites at Brackla northeast).

This proposal is part of a wider strategy to increase pupil places to serve the Bridgend northeast area which has been subject to this significant development. The Council has adopted a phased approach to expanding primary provision, as follows:

- Welsh-medium capacity being addressed as part of Band B of the School Modernisation Programme with Cabinet approval being received to relocate YG Bro Ogwr (that is, a Welsh-medium primary school that serves Bridgend town, Valleys Gateway and Pencoed areas) to a new site, which is located near the existing school site. The new school site is located in the Bridgend northeast area.
- Proposed enlargement of Coety Primary School to 2.5 FE school to increase provision.
- It is proposed to create additional pupil places at the residual YG Bro Ogwr site which, with the enlargement of YG Bro Ogwr and the proposal in respect of Coety Primary School, would ensure the demand for pupil places for the area would be met.

An education options appraisal has been undertaken in relation to the residual YG Bro Ogwr site and the outcome will be reported in due course.

The outcome will necessitate a catchment area review. Preliminary high-level options have been considered. Any proposed changes can only be progressed in line with a decision regarding the education options for the residual YG Bro Ogwr site. The views of stakeholders would be sought in respect of any proposed changes.

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| Prevention    | Provision of places at schools is reviewed on an annual basis to ensure there is a sufficient overall supply and there is suitable accommodation to deliver the curriculum effectively. This scheme has been identified to ensure that pupil places can be delivered in the future. The Council has a statutory duty to ensure there are a sufficient supply of school places, and this scheme, and the wider Bridgend northeast strategy 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 the social, environmental and cultural objectives of pupils and the community it will serve. This scheme will promote inclusion and community use of facilities. Should the proposal proceed in the future, construction will be competitively tendered, thereby achieving best value for money, via a mini competition through the South East and Mid Wales Collaborative Construction Framework (SEWSCAP3) or potential future iterations of the framework, or on Sell2Wales. Main contractors will be asked to advertise work on Sell2Wales which will potentially provide opportunities for local businesses to tender for the construction. This will potentially provide opportunities for local companies to engage with the main contractor for inclusion in their supply chain, via 'Meet the Buyer' events. This would support economic activity in the area. Community benefits will be maximised. |
| Collaboration | The local authority works effectively with schools, Estyn, 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. Officers will work with technical colleagues developing the scheme to ensure that the building design is sustainable and energy efficient. The project team will ensure that the scheme will work effectively, in order to maximise the use of resource and capitalise on the expenditure ensuring it meet the needs of current and future generations.   |



Involvement This scheme was subject to an options appraisal. The options were systematically evaluated to confirm the preferred option. Further work involves the engagement of all potential stakeholders including Cabinet, members, governors, staff, pupils, community, internal and external partners. A full public consultation process was undertaken, according to the Code.

It is considered that there will be a positive impact upon the achievement of well-being goals/objectives as a result of this proposal.

## **8. Financial implications**

- 8.1 £1.65m has been allocated in the capital programme for this project. The local authority has entered into a separate s106 agreement in respect of additional housing in the area. Once the s106 contribution has been received (approximately £300k in total), this funding will displace some of the BCBC funding. Any changes to the total cost of the scheme will be reported back to Cabinet and Council as appropriate.
- 8.2 Any revenue implications resulting as a consequence of enlarging Coety Primary School, including increases to the schools' delegated budget to cover a larger premises area and an increase in pupil numbers, along with any potential increases in school transport costs (which would depend on the school admission process and the applications made at that time), will not be known until the scheme is developed further.

## **9. Recommendations**

- 9.1 Cabinet is recommended to:
- note the outcome of the consultation on the proposed enlargement of Coety Primary School;
  - give approval to publish the consultation report (Appendix A);
  - consider the following and determine whether:
    - to publish the proposals with or without modifications and issue a public notice as prescribed in the School Organisation Code 2018;
    - abandon the proposals; or
    - significantly recast the proposals and re-consult on the following options:
      - change the language category of the school to Welsh-medium; or
      - change the language category of the school to dual language.

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**9 May 2023**

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**Background documents: None**