

Meeting of:	CABINET
Date of Meeting:	20 JUNE 2023
Report Title:	SCHOOL MODERNISATION PROGRAMME – BRIDGEND WEST MUTUAL INVESTMENT MODEL
Report Owner / Corporate Director:	CORPORATE DIRECTOR - EDUCATION AND FAMILY SUPPORT
Responsible Officer:	GAYNOR THOMAS SCHOOLS PROGRAMME MANAGER
Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:	There is no effect upon policy framework or procedure rules.
Executive Summary:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welsh Government has approved the Outline Business Case for the Bridgend West scheme, as detailed in the School Modernisation Programme. • Approval is sought to progress the scheme to Stage 2 and to confirm a BCBC representative for the Welsh Education Partnership Strategic Partnering Board.

1. Purpose of report

1.1 This report seeks Cabinet approval to:

- submit the Mutual Investment Model (MIM) Stage 2 application to the Welsh Education Partnership Company (WEPco) in respect of the Bridgend West School Modernisation Programme scheme; and
- nominate Cllr Jon-Paul Blundell to be the Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) Participant Representative on the Welsh Education Partnership Strategic Partnering Board (SPB).

2. Background

2.1 On 14 September 2021, Cabinet approved the submission of the Bridgend West Stage 1 MIM 'New Project Request' to Welsh Government. The Bridgend West scheme includes provision of a new-build, two-form-entry English-medium school

on the Marlas Estate (suitable for Afon y Felin and Corneli Primary Schools combined) and provision of a new-build, two form-entry Welsh-medium school on the existing Ysgol y Ferch o'r Sgêr/Cornelly Children's Integrated Centre/Corneli Primary School site (suitable for an enlarged Ysgol y Ferch o'r Sgêr).

- 2.2 The necessary School Organisation Code statutory processes were completed and, on 22 June 2021, Cabinet determined to proceed with the Bridgend West proposal as originally published (that is, to discontinue Corneli Primary School, Greenfield Terrace, North Cornelly, CF33 4LW and Afon Y Felin Primary School, Heol Y Parc, North Cornelly, CF33 4PA and establish a new English-medium primary community school to be maintained by Bridgend County Borough Council on land off Gibbons Way at Plas Morlais with effect from 1 September 2023 and to make a regulated alteration to Ysgol y Ferch o'r Sgêr in the form of an enlargement with effect from 2 September 2024).
- 2.3 While drafting the 'New Project Request' documentation, Gleeds (the Welsh Government appointed project management company for all MIM schemes) revisited the indicative construction programme originally provided by them at the time of the local authority's Strategic Outline Case submission to Welsh Government and the statutory consultation process under the School Organisation Code. The revised programme dates differed significantly from those originally supplied and subsequently published in the statutory notice.
- 2.4 Given that the revised programme dates differed significantly from those originally supplied and subsequently published in the statutory notice, Cabinet determined, on 19 July 2022, to modify the planned opening date of the new Bridgend West English-medium school to September 2024 (the planned opening date may be subject to further modification as the scheme progresses).
- 2.5 Following a series of engagement meetings with key stakeholders, WEPco developed a concept design and completed a Stage 1 report, which enabled an Outline Business Case (OBC) submission to be made to Welsh Government on 2 November 2022.
- 2.6 The SPB acts as the primary mechanism for managing WEPCo's performance and ensuring the commitments contained in the Strategic Partnering Agreement (SPA) are adhered to. The SPB is the central forum in which the Participants work together with WEPCo, Welsh Government and stakeholder representatives. In July 2020, Cabinet determined that Cllr Dr Charles Smith (who, at that time, was the Cabinet Member with responsibility for education) would be BCBC's representative on the SPB.

3. Current situation/proposal

- 3.1 On 17 May 2023, the local authority received approval from the Minister for Education and Welsh Language in respect of the Bridgend West OBC.
- 3.2 This Welsh Government approval of the OBC enables a MIM Stage 2 (detailed design, planning and supply chain assembly) application to WEPco to now be made.

3.3 A replacement BCBC Participant Representative for Dr Charles Smith is required to become a member of the SPB (as Dr Charles Smith is no longer a BCBC member). It is proposed that Cllr Jon-Paul Blundell (Cabinet Member for Education) be appointed.

4. Equality implications (including Socio-economic Duty and Welsh Language)

4.1 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.

5. Well-being of Future Generations implications and connection to Corporate Well-being Objectives

5.1 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 has been considered in formulating the proposal and the assessment was published in the consultation report.

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, 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. The recommendations will further the objective of a County Borough where we help people meet their potential.

6. Climate change Implications

6.1 In recognition of the importance of decarbonisation to help protect and sustain the environment over the long term and in line with our climate change ambitions the Bridgend West scheme will be Net Zero Carbon.

7. Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications

7.1 The Bridgend West scheme will be developed with a recognition that there is a duty which is reflected under BCBC Safeguarding Policy to safeguard and promote the wellbeing of children, young people, and adults at risk of abuse or neglect and to ensure that effective practices are in place throughout the Council and its commissioned services.

8. Financial Implications

8.1 MIM schemes are revenue funded by means of an Annual Service Charge. Funding of the annual revenue service charge will be met from contributions from Welsh Government (81%) and BCBC (19%). It is currently estimated that Bridgend's annual revenue contribution will be in the region of £820k and will start to be paid once the buildings are operational.

8.2 On 1 March 2023, BCBC Council approved the Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2023-24 to 2026-2027 which includes the indicative revenue budget pressure for the Bridgend West MIM scheme from 2024-25 onwards, which will be subject to Council approval when the 2024-2025 budget is presented in February/March 2024.

8.3 In accordance with Table 2 Appendix 1 to Schedule 4 of the Strategic Partnership Agreement, the Bridgend West scheme is classified as a batch of primary school projects for the purposes of calculating the Stage 2 fee cap. Therefore, a Stage 2 development fee cap of 7.84% would apply. Based upon the current (Stage 1) assessment of the capital value for the proposed schemes, the total monetary fee cap for Stage 2 development would be £2,976,946.63, to be met from contributions from Welsh Government (81%) and BCBC (19%). The Stage 2 Development costs will be included in the Annual Service Charge.

9. Recommendations

9.1 It is recommended that Cabinet:

- approves the submission of the MIM Stage 2 application to WEPCo in respect of the Bridgend West scheme; and
- approves the nomination and appointment of Cllr Jon-Paul Blundell to be the BCBC Participant Representative on the SPB.

Background documents

None