

Meeting of:	SUBJECT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 1
Date of Meeting:	31 MARCH 2025
Report Title:	SCHOOL MODERNISATION
Report Owner / Corporate Director:	CORPORATE DIRECTOR EDUCATION, EARLY YEARS AND YOUNG PEOPLE
Responsible Officer:	GAYNOR THOMAS MANAGER, SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES FOR LEARNING
Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:	There is no effect upon the policy framework or procedure rules.
Executive Summary:	This report provides a progress update on the individual schemes being delivered through the School Modernisation Programme.

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Subject Overview and Scrutiny Committee 1 (SOSC1) of progress made in respect of the School Modernisation Programme (SMP).

2. Background

Objectives

- 2.1 The SMP is a long-term strategy of investment which aims to deliver on the following objectives:
- transforming learning environment and learner experience;
 - address pupil place requirements to meet demand;
 - improving the condition and suitability of the education estate;
 - deliver sustainable learning environments;
 - create schools which are community focused; and
 - deliver the local authority's key strategies (for example, the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP)).

Governance

- 2.2 The SMP is overseen by the School Modernisation Strategic Programme Board (SMSPB), which has cross-directorate representation. The Corporate Director,

Education, Early Years and Young People is the Senior Responsible Owner for the SMP and chairs SMSPB meetings. The SMP is managed by the Sustainable Communities for Learning Team Manager.

- 2.3 All projects are coordinated by the Sustainable Communities for Learning Team and cross-directorate project teams are in place to support the development of each scheme. The status of each project is regularly reported to the SMSPB. Issues and risks are escalated to Corporate Management Board and Cabinet, as necessary.

Welsh Government – Sustainable Communities for Learning

- 2.4 The following schemes have transitioned into Welsh Government's Sustainable Communities for Learning nine-year rolling programme (2024-2033) and are detailed in the Strategic Outline Programme:

- Bridgend West (that is, the replacement Ysgol y Ferch o'r Sgêr and a new English-medium primary school in Cornelly, to replace Afon Y Felin and Corneli Primary Schools);
- replacement Heronsbridge School;
- replacement Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Ogwr; and
- replacement Mynydd Cynffig Primary School.

- 2.5 Each of the above schemes are subject to Welsh Government's business case processes. Business cases are submitted at key stages as schemes are developed:

- Strategic Outline Case (SOC) – long list of options;
- Outline Business Case (OBC) – short list, detailing the preferred option; and
- Full Business Case (FBC) – post-tender and prior to contract award (that is, for construction).

- 2.6 At each stage of the business case process, the local authority must consider the strategic, economic, financial, commercial and management cases, to demonstrate the need for Welsh Government investment and obtain the Cabinet Secretary for Education's approval to progress to the next business case stage.

- 2.7 Schemes have been subject to a long-list options appraisal process in respect of land and education options. Feasibility studies have also been undertaken to consider the developability of each site for education.

- 2.8 It is critical that a range of options are considered to ensure that schemes align to the investment objectives. Also, the local authority is required to set out the options considered and the reason for discounting as part of any school reorganisation proposal consultation undertaken under the School Organisation Code, 2018.

- 2.9 Community benefits will be sought on each project, maximising the available opportunities to lever social, economic, and environmental outcomes. Community benefits include:

- supply chain opportunities for social enterprises and local business;
- contributing to education through engagement;
- contributing to community initiatives that help tackle poverty and leave a lasting legacy;

- supporting people into work; and
- the creation of employment and training opportunities.

- 2.10 All projects are subject to lessons learned evaluations (that is, positive and negative). Post-occupation evaluation survey responses received from completed school schemes are collected at years one, two and five (post-occupation). The information obtained through these processes is used to inform the design development and delivery of future schemes.
- 2.11 Measurables are collected in respect of each scheme that has been delivered and are reported to the SMSPB.

3. Current situation

- 3.1 Statutory consultation processes (that is, to enlarge, relocate, or discontinue a school), have concluded and Cabinet approvals are in place to implement each proposal.
- 3.2 Each scheme that is being funded with a contribution from Welsh Government has received the Cabinet Secretary for Education's approval in respect of their SOC's and OBC's.
- 3.3 All schemes are at various stages of development and an update detailing the current position is provided in the following paragraphs.

Bridgend West – replacement Ysgol y Ferch o'r Sgêr – two-form-entry on the Cornelly site and a new two-form-entry English-medium primary school (to replace Afon Y Felin and Corneli Primary Schools) on the Marlas site – funded by Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) and Welsh Government

- 3.4 This scheme will:
- provide additional Welsh-medium places to deliver on the local authority's WESP;
 - remove two poor condition school buildings and backlog maintenance; and
 - rationalise English-medium provision in the area.
- 3.5 The Bridgend West scheme was originally planned to be delivered as a revenue funded Mutual Investment Model (MIM) scheme. The pre-application consultation ahead of submitting a planning application concluded in November 2023. Following this, Welsh Government undertook a detailed review of the scheme and the entire MIM programme. Upon conclusion, Welsh Government officials advised that progressing the scheme via the MIM revenue funding route may no longer represent good value for money, and approval was received from the Cabinet Secretary for Education to transition the scheme to capital which was subsequently approved by BCBC's Cabinet.
- 3.6 The detailed design of the scheme has concluded. However, due to the delay associated with the reviews detailed in paragraph 3.5, Cabinet has approved a modification of the implementation date for both schools to September 2026, and stakeholders have been advised accordingly.

- 3.7 Cabinet approval was received in January 2025 to tender the scheme, and the tender process commenced on 5 February 2025. The tender return date is 30 April 2025. The planning application has been submitted and officers are awaiting the outcome of this process. On 26 February 2025, Council approved BCBC's funding contribution to the scheme and its inclusion in the capital programme.

Héronsbridge School (300 places plus residential) at Island Farm – funded by BCBC and Welsh Government

- 3.8 The existing accommodation at Heronsbridge School is not fit for purpose. The school is overcrowded and has inadequate toilets, hygiene rooms, circulation space and classrooms. The new 300-place school will:
- address the demand for places;
 - address building suitability and sufficiency issues;
 - eradicate backlog maintenance;
 - provide school facilities which support 21st century teaching and learning;
 - provide a building and site that meets the needs of our most vulnerable pupils;
 - presents invest to save opportunities in respect of revenue costs (for example, cost of transporting pupils to alternative provision);
 - present cost avoidance opportunities (for example, out-of-county places); and
 - present opportunity costs (for example, provides facilities that can also be used by the community).
- 3.9 A multi-disciplinary design team was appointed to develop the concept design for the replacement Heronsbridge School. The importance of early engagement with stakeholders was a key requirement to ensure the concept design captured all that is required for a 300-place school which would cater for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties, severe learning difficulties and complex Autism Spectrum Disorder. The appointed team successfully captured and understood the requirements of key stakeholders, including pupils. The process was efficient, and addressed the school's needs in relation to health, wellbeing, priorities, and values. The schedule of accommodation, using Building Bulletin 104, together with the information collected from the stakeholder engagement sessions informed the brief. Through a series of client engagement meetings with local authority officers and the school's Senior Leadership Team, the multi-disciplinary design team successfully developed the concept design for the new school.
- 3.10 The concept design informed a cost plan, which detailed the additional funding required to deliver the scheme, based on mid-point construction rate. The information was subject to a revised OBC to Welsh Government, which was subsequently approved, and permission to proceed to FBC was received. In November 2024, Council approved the additional BCBC funding required to deliver the scheme.
- 3.11 In January 2025, Cabinet approval was received to tender the scheme via Lot 9 of the South East and Mid Wales Collaborative Construction (SEWSCAP4) Framework under a two-stage tender process (that is, stage 1 – completion of the design and stage 2 – construction). The tender process will commence in March 2025. Once appointed, the contractor will review the programme, confirm the implementation date and Cabinet approval will be sought to modify to reflect the

revised date. It is anticipated that stage 2 construction will begin in the summer 2026.

Replacement Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Ogwr (2.5-form-entry) plus Welsh-medium childcare at Ffordd Cadfan – funded by BCBC and Welsh Government

3.12 An enlarged replacement Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Ogwr will:

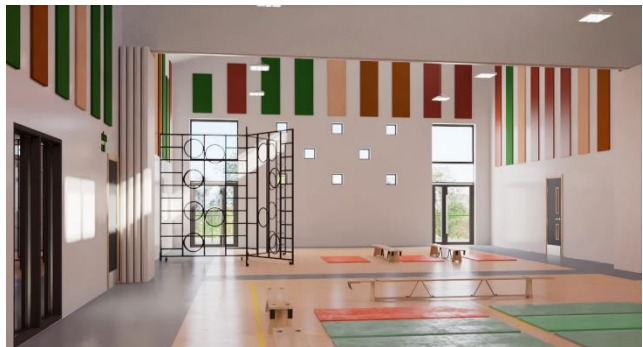
- provide additional Welsh-medium pupil places in the area;
- grow the Welsh language, supporting the delivery of WESP targets;
- include provision for an eight-place Welsh-medium observation and assessment class;
- provide a co-located Welsh-medium childcare setting, allowing transition from early years to mainstream education on one site; and
- present opportunity costs (for example, provides facilities that can also be used by the community).

3.13 The lead designer for the scheme is the Major Projects Team and certain professional services have been procured to support the design development (for example, drainage, civils, and structures). The design has been informed by site surveys (for example, site investigation, drainage, transport impact assessment), and is based on a BCBC standardised approach to primary school layouts. While the school is a bespoke design to suit site constraints, the design approach provides consistency throughout different projects, in terms of the general arrangement for teaching elements and both the building and services specification. Further site investigation works are required to inform the sub-structure design. However, ecology issues are impacting on the timing of these works. Although some ecology mitigation has been undertaken further works will be required in the spring. It will be necessary to undertake the ecology mitigation works in order to clear the site to allow the site investigation to take place.

3.14 Notwithstanding this, the internal and external layouts have been agreed in consultation with the school and the pre-application consultation ahead of submitting a planning application will commence in the spring term. A planning consultant has been appointed and information to inform the consultation process, including computer-generated imagery, is currently being finalised. Detailed design is progressing.

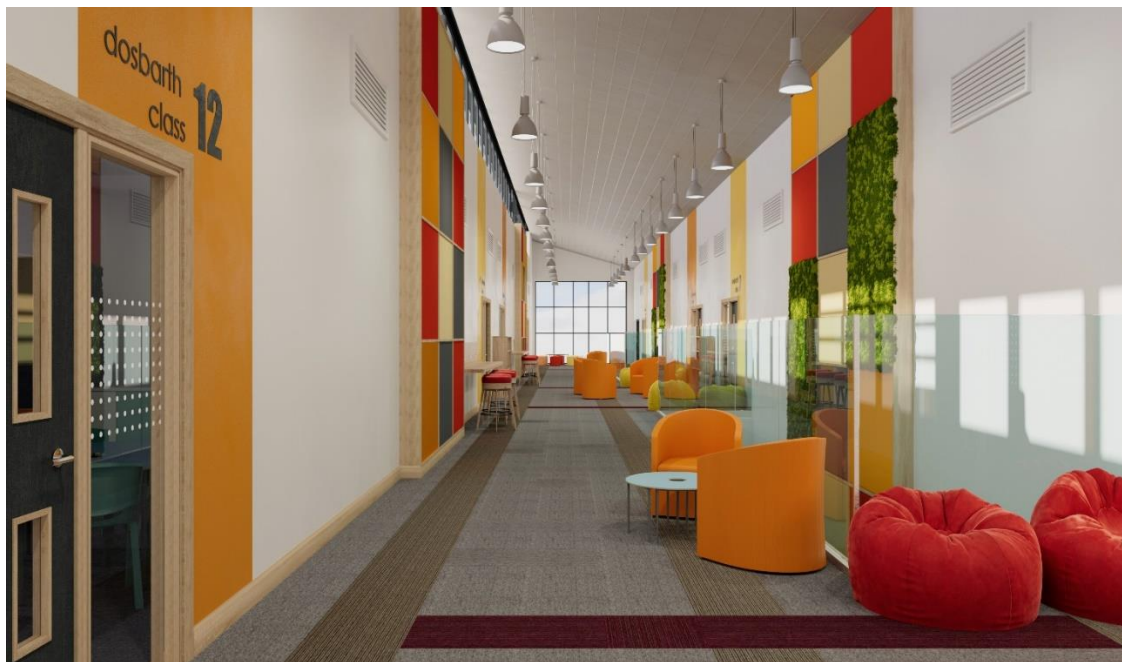
3.15 The developed design has informed a cost plan, which detailed the additional funding required to deliver the scheme. In November 2024, Council approved the additional BCBC funding. The information was subject to a revised OBC to Welsh Government, which was subsequently approved, and permission to proceed to FBC was received.

3.16 The development of the scheme has been challenging and has impacted on the original planned completion date (that is, September 2025). Cabinet approval will be sought in the summer term 2025 to modify the school opening date to the early part of 2027. Some computer-generated imagery in respect of the build/site is included below.



Replacement Mynydd Cynffig Primary School (two-form-entry) on the junior school site – funded by BCBC and Welsh Government

- 3.17 Mynydd Cynffig Primary School operates on a split site. The majority of the infant school building has been condemned and almost all classes are taught in temporary mobile classrooms and junior classrooms are undersized. A replacement Mynydd Cynffig Primary School:
- allows all pupils to be educated on one site (removes the split site scenario);
 - addresses building suitability and sufficiency issues;
 - eradicates backlog maintenance;
 - provides school facilities which support 21st century teaching and learning; and
 - presents opportunity costs (for example, provides facilities that can also be used by the community).
- 3.18 The lead designer for the scheme is the Major Projects Team and certain professional services have been procured to support the design development (for example, drainage, civils, and structures). The design has been informed by site surveys (for example, site investigation, drainage, transport impact assessment), and is based on a BCBC standardised approach to primary school layouts. While the school is a bespoke design to suit site constraints, the design approach provides consistency throughout different projects, in terms of the general arrangement for teaching elements and both the building and services specification. Following consultation with the school and BCBC officers (including Highways), the internal and external layouts were agreed. The design informed a cost plan, which detailed the additional funding required to deliver the scheme. In November 2024, Council approved the additional BCBC funding.
- 3.19 The information was subject to a revised OBC to Welsh Government, which was subsequently approved, and permission to proceed to FBC was received. A planning application was submitted on 14 November 2024, and officers are awaiting the outcome of this process. Subject to obtaining planning consent and Cabinet approval, the aim is to tender the scheme via the SEWSCAP4 Framework in the summer term.
- 3.20 Due to the replacement school being constructed on the existing junior department site (plus the BCBC sites formerly occupied by Pwllgath Allotment Association and the Air Training Corps), construction will take place over a series of phases in order to keep the junior department operational during the works. Seasonal ecology mitigation works are necessary and will be undertaken as part of the scheme. Replacement allotments will be provided as part of the development. The development of the scheme has been challenging which has impacted on the original planned completion date (that is, September 2025). Cabinet approval will be sought in May 2025 to modify the school opening date to December 2026 (phased completion). Some computer-generated imagery of the build/site is included below.



Coety Primary School – enlargement of the existing school to 2.5-form-entry – funded by BCBC and section 106

- 3.21 A new-build Coety Primary School opened to pupils in November 2015, and since that time the local authority has adopted revised pupil yield rates from new developments, as detailed in Supplementary Planning Guidance 16. Also, additional housing has been constructed in the school's catchment area. The enlargement was subject to a statutory consultation process, as required by the School

Organisation Code, 2018. The increase from 2-form-entry to 2.5-form-entry will be achieved by delivering a four-classroom extension.

- 3.22 Powell Dobson Architects has been appointed as the lead designer for the scheme, and other design services have also been appointed to support this project (that is, Holloway Partnership (mechanical and electrical), Jubb Consulting Engineers Limited (structures) and Curtis Surveyors (quantity surveying)). The Major Projects Team is the intelligent client and contract administrator.
- 3.23 The design of the extension has been developed in consultation with the school, and the layout has been agreed. The planning application was submitted to the Local Planning Authority on 6 March 2025. Due to the lack of available internal resource to take the scheme forward and the need to appoint consultants, on 11 March 2025, Cabinet approval was received to modify the implementation date to September 2026.

Pencoed Primary School – two-classroom extension - funded by BCBC and section 106

- 3.24 Pencoed Primary School opened to pupils in September 2018, and since that time the demand for places at the school has increased. A two-classroom extension will provide an additional 60 pupil places to serve the area.
- 3.25 The Major Projects Team is leading on the design and additional consultancy services have been procured (for example, drainage). The extension has been designed in consultation with the school and a planning application was submitted in October 2024. Officers are awaiting confirmation of the outcome of this process.



Bryntirion Comprehensive School – four-classroom teaching block – funded by BCBC and section 106

- 3.26 Additional secondary pupil places are required to serve the catchment area of Bryntirion Comprehensive School, as a result of new housing developments in the area. This scheme is primarily funded by section 106 contributions.

- 3.27 The lead designer for the scheme is the Major Projects Team and certain professional services have been procured to support the design development (for example, drainage, quantity surveying). Korbuild Limited has been appointed to undertake the construction for the teaching block and commenced work in August 2024. The current programme indicates a handover date of 19 May 2025. Works are progressing well on site with the building now weathertight and internal works including mechanical and electrical installations ongoing.



Porthcawl Welsh-medium Seedling School at Porthcawl Primary School site (30 full-time equivalent Nursery and 30 Reception places with co-located childcare) – funded by Welsh Government

- 3.28 The scheme will establish a Welsh-medium education presence in the Porthcawl and support the delivery of the local authority's WESP. A co-located Welsh-medium childcare provision will also be delivered as part of this scheme.
- 3.29 Due to issues concerning the availability of internal resourcing, the local authority tendered to appoint a multi-disciplinary design team to deliver the scheme, which resulted in a nil tender return. Following this, the Major Projects Team appointed additional staff members to take the design forward. The provision is currently programmed to be open for pupils in September 2026.

- 3.30 The design has been developed in consultation with Ysgol y Ferch o'r Sgêr (which will take on the management of the seedling provision), Porthcawl Primary School and the Childcare Team. Detailed design is nearing completion, and a planning application will be submitted once the drainage engineers have received positive feedback from Dŵr Cymru/Welsh Water in respect of the storm drainage strategy. A computer-generated image of the building is included below:



Future School Modernisation Programme

- 3.31 Following a review of provision, officers have identified potential future schemes in order to:
- address the demand for places (including provision that would be required to support planned housing in strategic growth areas within the county borough, as identified in the Local Development Plan);
 - deliver the local authority's WESP commitments;
 - rationalise existing provision; and
 - address building condition, suitability, and sufficiency issues.
- 3.32 In due course, Cabinet will determine priority schemes to take forward, having regard to the available capital funding and affordability. All schemes will be subject to an options appraisal process, feasibility study, Welsh Government's business case process and, where necessary, statutory consultation as required by the School Organisation Code.
- 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 conduct 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 Assessment provides a comprehensive summary of the outcomes expected from the delivery of the schemes.

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 buildings meet 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, elected members, governors, staff, pupils, community, internal and external partners.

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 schemes will be Net Zero Carbon.

7. Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications

7.1 Schemes 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 Welsh Government's Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme funds capital schemes at the following intervention rates:

- 65% - primary and secondary schools;
- 75% - special schools and pupil referral units; and
- 85% - voluntary aided and faith schools.

Costs associated with achieving Net Zero Carbon are 100% funded by Welsh Government.

- 8.2 Schemes that will be jointly funded by Welsh Government and BCBC are detailed in Table 1 of Appendix A. The Cabinet Secretary for Education has given approval for these schemes to be progressed to FBC stage. BCBC funding and secured section (s) 106 contributions have received Council approval in the capital programme. Once schemes have been tendered and construction costs are known they will be presented to Welsh Government in a cost plan as part of the FBC. It is at that point in the process that Welsh Government funding approval will be secured. The local authority will not enter a construction contract until the necessary approvals are in place.
- 8.3 The cost of any off-site and s278 works (that is, highway improvements outside the curtilage of the site), deemed as necessary to deliver the projects sit outside of the total project costs detailed in table 1. Such works will be funded from the Council-approved budget, 'Highways Schemes Band B Schools' (that is, £3.4m). Communities Directorate is seeking Welsh Government funding to support active travel improvements deemed necessary to deliver the schools.
- 8.4 The schemes set out in Table 2 of Appendix A are detailed in the capital programme, as approved by Council, and are funded by BCBC and secured s106 funding.
- 8.5 In respect of the Porthcawl Welsh-medium Seedling School development, Council approval was received to underwrite design costs (that is, £370k), which will be claimed from Welsh Government following submission of the Business Justification Case (post-tender). The scheme will be funded from Welsh Government's Welsh-medium capital grant funding.
- 8.6 Welsh Government has provided a capital budget of £1.1m (that is, £550k each) to establish Welsh-medium childcare in the Bridgend Town and Porthcawl areas. The provisions will be co-located with the replacement Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Ogwr and Porthcawl Welsh-medium Seedling School, thereby providing opportunities for a seamless transition from a Welsh-medium early years provision into a Welsh-medium mainstream education.

9. Recommendations

- 9.1 SOSOC1 is requested to:
- consider the contents of this report; and
 - provide feedback.

Background documents

None

Table 1 Schemes funded by Welsh Government and BCBC/s106

Scheme	Previous Years' Spend			Capital Programme 2024-2025 to 2027-2028			Welsh Government Funding - to be approved	Total Cost/Funding		
	BCBC \ S106	Welsh Government	Total	BCBC \ S106	Welsh Government	Total		BCBC \ S106	Welsh Government	Total
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Heronsbridge School	333	-	333	13,732	26,621	40,353	19,299	14,065	45,920	59,985
Ysgol Gymraeg Bro Ogwr	136	-	136	6,189	9,620	15,809	1,844	6,325	11,464	17,789
Mynydd Cynffig Primary School	522	-	522	5,912	8,105	14,017	2,970	6,434	11,075	17,509
Bridgend West	363	232	595	14,540	1,372	15,912	31,872	14,903	33,476	48,379

Table 2 Schemes funded by BCBC/s106

Scheme	Previous Years' Spend			Capital Programme 2024-2025 to 2027-2028			Welsh Government Funding - to be approved	Total Cost/Funding		
	BCBC \ S106	Welsh Government	Total	BCBC \ S106	Welsh Government	Total		BCBC \ S106	Welsh Government	Total
Bryntirion Comprehensive School – four- classroom block	140	-	140	1,660	-	1,660	-	1,800	-	1,800
Coety Primary School – four- classroom extension	12	-	12	1,968	-	1,968	-	1,980	-	1,980
Pencoed Primary School- two classroom extension	38	-	38	862	-	862	-	900	-	900
Porthcawl Welsh- medium Seedling	-	-	-	370	-	370	-	370	-	370