

<b>Meeting of:</b>	<b>CABINET</b>
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>3 FEBRUARY 2026</b>
<b>Report Title:</b>	<b>SCHOOL MODERNISATION PROGRAMME PORTHCAWL WELSH-MEDIUM SEEDLING SCHOOL AND CHILDCARE</b>
<b>Report Owner / Responsible Chief Officer / Cabinet Member</b>	<b>CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION AND YOUTH SERVICES</b>  <b>CORPORATE DIRECTOR – EDUCATION, EARLY YEARS AND YOUNG PEOPLE</b>
<b>Responsible Officer:</b>	<b>GAYNOR THOMAS MANAGER, SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES FOR LEARNING</b>
<b>Policy Framework and Procedure Rules:</b>	<b>There is no effect upon policy framework or procedure rules.</b>
<b>Executive Summary:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Approval is sought to tender the Porthcawl Welsh-medium Seedling School and Childcare scheme, subject to obtaining Welsh Government funding approval for the childcare element of the scheme (contract award will not take place until funding is confirmed and planning approval granted).</b></li> </ul>

## **1. Purpose of Report**

1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek Cabinet approval to invite tenders for the Porthcawl Welsh-medium Seedling School and Childcare scheme, with the award of contract subject to the Council obtaining Welsh Government funding approval for the childcare element of the scheme (contract award will not take place until funding is confirmed and planning approval granted).

## **2. Background**

2.1 Following a desktop appraisal of options for developing a Welsh-medium seedling school with co-located childcare in the Porthcawl area, a report was submitted to Cabinet in September 2021, and approval was received to submit an expression of interest to Welsh Government in respect of a second tranche of the Welsh-medium capital grant funding.

2.2 Welsh Government subsequently approved the expression of interest for 100% Welsh funding support and on 16 November 2022, Council gave permission for a capital budget for this scheme's design and survey costs (up to tender stage) to be included in the Council's capital programme (on the assumption that costs will be fully recovered once Welsh Government has formally approved the Business Justification Case).

2.3 The seedling school is a 'starter class' with 30 full-time-equivalent nursery places, and 30 reception places. The seedling provision will be operated and governed by Ysgol y Ferch o'r Sgêr, and pupils would transition to that school at Year 1 to conclude their primary education, that is until a Welsh-medium primary school is established in Porthcawl (on 21 January 2020, Cabinet gave 'approval in principle' to the development of a new Welsh-medium school to serve the Porthcawl area as part of a future band of the School Modernisation Programme, to be aligned to the development of the Porthcawl Regeneration scheme).

2.4 There was no requirement to consult on the proposal under the School Organisation Code, since this proposal does not fall within any of the elements of school reorganisation that require the publication of proposals under the statutory process.

2.5 Notwithstanding the fact that there was no statutory requirement to consult on the proposal, the then Education and Family Support Directorate wished to undertake a (non-code) public consultation by means of the 'Consultations' section of the Council's website, to obtain stakeholder views. Consequently, in December 2022, Cabinet gave permission to consult on the proposal to establish a Welsh-medium seedling school and childcare provision for the Porthcawl area on land at the Porthcawl Primary School site.

2.6 The consultation exercise ran from 28 February 2023 to 11 April 2023 (views were sought from key stakeholders). In June 2023, Cabinet gave approval to establish a Welsh-medium seedling school and childcare provision for the Porthcawl area on land at the Porthcawl Primary School site.

### **3. Current situation**

3.1 The scheme has been fully designed, and the planning application was made on 12 September 2025. The local authority is currently awaiting the outcome of this process.

3.2 In October 2025, Welsh Government requested the submission of a revised Business Justification Case (BJC) in respect of the scheme, due to the anticipated uplift in estimated costs since the original expression of interest was approved.

3.3 Following a revision of pre-tender estimated costs, in October 2025, separate revised BJC's were submitted to Welsh Government in respect of the seedling school and the childcare elements of the scheme.

3.4 On 10 December 2025, Welsh Government gave in principle approval of the revised school element pre-tender total estimated cost of the project (that is, £5,442,918). However, the local authority is awaiting a Welsh Government decision on the revised childcare element of the funding (that is, £951,970). It is anticipated that this will be

received shortly. The school and childcare facilities are parts of a single build on the Porthcawl site, and will be tendered as a whole.

- 3.5 The Major Projects Team has provided a revised programme based on an anticipated January 2026 Welsh Government funding decision. Subject to funding approval being received as programmed, the revised opening date is projected to be January 2027.
- 3.6 It is intended that construction will be competitively tendered via the South East and Mid Wales Collaborative Construction Framework (SEWSCAP4). The invitation to tender (ITT) for the scheme can be undertaken at risk, 'subject to necessary approvals,' but the tender award will not be able to take place until funding is confirmed and planning approval granted. The ITT will make it clear that the tender is subject to necessary approvals. A report will be presented to Cabinet when tender returns have been received and evaluated, seeking approval to award a contract, subject to all necessary approvals and funding being in place.

#### **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 implementation of the service.

Long-term	The scheme fulfils the Council's statutory duty to provide sufficient pupil places and will allow teaching and learning to take place in a building and site which is suited to the needs of the pupils and staff. The scheme would provide additional Welsh-medium primary pupil places to serve the Porthcawl area and thereby support the authority's Cymraeg 2050 aspirations
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Prevention	The Council has a statutory duty to ensure there are a sufficient supply of school places, and this scheme will safeguard the Council's position in terms of any potential legal challenge in this regard.
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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. It is intended that construction will be competitively tendered the SEWSCAP4 Framework. This provides 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. Social value will be maximized.
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**Collaboration** The Council will work effectively with the school, Estyn, health, town and 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 continue to work with the designers in developing the scheme to ensure that the building design is sustainable and energy efficient and delivers on the decarbonisation agenda.

**Involvement** This scheme was subject to a long list of education and site options. These were systematically evaluated and have been reduced from a long list to a short list to confirm the preferred option. Further work involved the engagement of potential stakeholders including Cabinet, members, governors, staff, pupils, community, internal and external partners during the consultation exercise.

As a result of the assessment, it is considered that there will be a positive impact upon the achievement of well-being goals/objectives.

## **6. Climate Change and Nature 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 seedling school will be Net Zero Carbon.

## **7. Safeguarding and Corporate Parent Implications**

7.1 The scheme will be developed with a recognition that there is a duty which is reflected under Bridgend County Borough Council's 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 The scheme is intended to be fully funded by Welsh Government (that is, £5,442,918 Welsh-medium Capital Grant and £951,970 Childcare Grant).

8.2 Once the revised BJC's are approved, Welsh Government should confirm the grant funding, which will then be added to the capital programme.

8.3 A construction contract will not be awarded until the necessary funding approvals are in place, and planning approval confirmed.

## **9. Recommendations**

9.1 It is recommended that Cabinet approval is given to invite tenders for the Porthcawl Welsh-medium Seedling School and childcare scheme, with the award of contract subject to the Council obtaining Welsh Government funding approval for the childcare element of the scheme (contract award will not take place until funding is confirmed and planning approval granted).

## **Background documents**

None