

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO COUNCIL

6 JULY 2016

JOINT REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR – EDUCATION AND FAMILY SUPPORT AND HEAD OF FINANCE AND SECTION 151 OFFICER

SCHOOL MODERNISATION PROGRAMME: UPDATE ON REPLACEMENT MYNYDD CYNFFIG PRIMARY SCHOOL AND REVISED CAPITAL PROGRAMME

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1. This report is to update Members on the outcome of the feasibility study and to obtain approval from Council for a revision to the capital programme 2016-17 to 2025-26.

2 Connection to Corporate Improvement Plan / Other Corporate Priorities

- 2.1 The report supports the following priorities in the Corporate Plan 2016 - 2020:

- Supporting a successful economy, and
- Smarter use of resources.

- 2.2 The Council aims to help all young people to thrive and make the best of their talents. One of the barriers to achieving this aim that the Council has identified is a need to modernise our schools.

- 2.3 In March 2015, the Council set out 5 key principles to inform the organisation and modernisation of our schools:

1. Commitment to high standards and excellence in provision;
2. Equality of opportunity, so that all pupils can access quality learning opportunities, regardless of which school they attend;
3. Inclusive schools, which cater for the learning needs of all their pupils;
4. Community focussed schools, where the school actively engages with its local community;
5. Value for money.

- 2.4 This project formed part of phase 2 of the School Modernisation Programme, which is aimed at helping children achieve their potential, ensuring they are healthy and safe; as well as transforming the way children live and learn.

3 Background

- 3.1 In December 2006, Cabinet approved the 3 phase School Modernisation Programme. This shaped the long term strategy to deal with the major issues and risks around the number of surplus places in schools, the state of repair of many schools and, most importantly, the fitness of our schools to provide an education relevant to the 21st century and the aspiration to excellence in that provision.

- 3.2 One of the three elements of phase 2 of the School Modernisation Programme is 3 - 18 learning provision in the Cefn Cribwr, Corneli, Kenfig Hill and Pyle area. In October 2007, Cabinet approved an options appraisal to determine how 3-18 education provision might best be organised to meet the future needs of learners in this area. The appraisal outlined a number of recommendations for the appropriate number of primary schools and their location, the potential nature of any new build required or remodeling of existing accommodation. The main recommendation from the study was that a programme of work for the area be established to further evaluate and progress the options.
- 3.3 In April 2009, Cabinet approved a number of individual projects that emerged from a feasibility study which reviewed 3-18 learning provision in the Cefn Cribwr, Corneli, Kenfig Hill and Pyle area. One of these projects was to look at 3-11 provision in the Kenfig Hill area and the development of a primary school to provide sufficient new or modernised accommodation to cater for a proposed amalgamation of the then Mynydd Cynffig Infant School and Mynydd Cynffig Junior School. The proposed amalgamation would be dependent on the successful completion of the required statutory processes.
- 3.4 A consultation meeting was held on April 27th 2009. At this meeting it was requested that Cynffig Comprehensive School be further investigated as a potential site for 3-11 provision.
- 3.5 In December 2010, our Strategic Outline Programme for the 21st Century Schools Programme was submitted to Welsh Government. The scheme was put forward for Band 'A' of the Welsh Government's 21st Century Schools Funding Programme in Bridgend's Strategic Outline Plan (SOP). This was followed in November 2011 with our priority band A schemes, of which the Mynydd Cynffig Primary School project was one.
- 3.6 A feasibility study was undertaken in 2011 to establish the most suitable site for the primary school that would provide sufficient new modernised accommodation to deliver 3-11 learning. That study considered the establishment of primary provision on the Infant, Junior and Comprehensive School sites, the outcome of which determined that the preferred site was that of the Junior School.
- 3.7 In December 2014, Cabinet approved that consultation with the relevant governing bodies, staff, parents, pupils and interested parties be conducted, with the outcomes reported back to Cabinet, on the proposal to close Mynydd Cynffig Infants School on 31st August 2015 and make a regulated alteration to Mynydd Cynffig Junior School by extending the age range from 7-11 to 3-11 to create primary provision with effect from 1st September 2015. It was agreed that the new Mynydd Cynffig Primary School would continue to operate on the infant and junior sites until such time as the provision could be accommodated on the same site. Subsequently, on 9th June 2015, Cabinet determined to implement the proposal.
- 3.8 The then Corporate Director, Education and Transformation requested further feasibility work be undertaken to build on the previous study to explore the potential of remodeling Cynffig Comprehensive, in order to accommodate Mynydd Cynffig Primary School at that location. The new provision would provide an education relevant to the 21st century and reduce the number of surplus places at secondary level.

4 Current Situation/Proposal

- 4.1 Mynydd Cynffig Primary currently operates on a split site utilising the former Mynydd Cynffig Junior and Mynydd Cynffig Infant School sites; the junior site is experiencing overcrowding. In contrast, Cynffig Comprehensive School currently has 416 surplus places.
- 4.2 A feasibility study has been conducted by BCBC technical officers and education specialists, each of whom have provided a technical report or guidance with, where appropriate, conclusions on the relative advantages and disadvantages of locating the Primary School on the Cynffig Comprehensive School site.
- 4.3 The feasibility study considered two options for utilising the accommodation at the Cynffig site for primary provision. An evaluation workshop was held to determine the preferred option.
- 4.4 The following provides a summary of the key aspects of the findings:
- Locating the primary on the Comprehensive site will provide greater stability/continuity for children transitioning between the phases as well as providing the benefit of the Primary School being able to utilise the comprehensive school's resources, including sports facilities;
 - The Comprehensive school currently has 416 surplus places which will be reduced as a result of the development;
 - The site is located adjacent to highway infrastructure which has the ability to be accessed in a convenient way;
 - There is the potential for enhanced parking, drop off and pick up areas on the site; and is the preferred site from a highways perspective;
 - The comprehensive has an area of 29.3 acres to accommodate both schools;
 - This option would enable revenue savings through the eradication of the repair and maintenance backlog at both the junior and infant sites and could potentially allow for resale or reuse of both sites.
- 4.5 A second evaluation workshop was undertaken to consider the advantages and disadvantages in utilising either the Cynffig Comprehensive school site or the Mynydd Cynffig Primary School (Junior Site) for the replacement primary provision and to determine the preferred location.
- 4.6 The following issues were taken into consideration during the site selection process:
- Investment objectives of the scheme including: the delivery of educational benefits of school provision in the Kenfig Hill area and development of provision that is sustainable and meets the needs of the area;

- The factors by which the success of the scheme is being evaluated, including: how far it meets the strategic aims of the school modernisation programme, how the option fits with local and national strategies, potential value for money, potential achievability, deliverability and potential affordability;
- Proposed school size for Mynydd Cynffig Primary including: A detailed review of pupil projections was undertaken for the catchment area of Mynydd Cynffig Primary Schools, together with demand for school places from the wider areas of Cefn Cribwr, Corneli, Kenfig Hill and Pyle and plans within the school modernisation programme for schools in this wider area;
- Proposed school size for Cynffig Comprehensive including the analysis of pupil projections against catchment areas, which take account of the surrounding Cefn Cribwr, Corneli, Kenfig Hill and Pyle area and the comparison of current capacity against pupil projections and the current school curriculum;
- Location of Cynffig Comprehensive to its catchment;
- Project funding including: expenditure to date and 'Band A' funding from the Welsh Government's 21st Century Schools Programme;
- Property and Legal issues including: information on existing school buildings, land ownership, land use and possible land acquisition, title issues, covenants and site valuations;
- Architectural design issues including: external works, developable area suitability, internal design for the primary and comprehensive school, electrical and mechanical services to the primary school;
- Biodiversity issues including: designated sites of wildlife interest, protected and priority species, and known tree preservation orders on each site;
- Transportation issues including a full Transport Assessment for the area which focused on: existing access, congestion and parking problems, potential new site access option, impact on the road network, provision of adequate pedestrian and cycle routes, safe routes to schools and preliminary design guidance;
- Drainage issues including: existing drainage, additional drainage requirements, flooding history, Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) and the requirement for further evaluation of the site prior to the build;
- Site issues including: site history, ground conditions, mining, and archaeology;

4.7 The study showed that Cynffig Comprehensive presents the most appropriate and beneficial location for the development of the primary school. The site allows for suitable solutions to the critical issues of sufficient developable area and appropriate site access. It also offers sufficient space to develop a 2 form entry school if projected growth in the area is realised and it removes surplus places in the Comprehensive school.

4.8 In comparison, the Junior site presented serious obstacles for development of a suitable scheme:

- Development on the junior site depends upon the relocation of the allotment gardens and playground and the natural choice for this relocation would be to the Infant site. There is the possibility that this may further reduce the Infant site's potential for sale or re-use. Associated allotment and playground relocation costs, along with time implications, would also need to be taken into account, including resistance from the allotment holders and local residents;
- The 2011 feasibility study identified that the site gradient at the junior school means that considerable re-grading may be required to achieve suitable external terraces and the required amount of accommodation at ground floor level, which could prove challenging for overall site accessibility;
- Highways have ongoing safety issues with the existing junior site and feel it would get worse with the development of the primary school on the site;
- Negotiations are required with local land owners to encourage the use of an existing private carpark to the west of Croft Goch Road;
- Work is still required to extinguish the 'highway rights' on the land.

4.9 Site access issues which led to the discounting of the Cynffig Comprehensive site in the previous 2011 feasibility study have been revisited. Appropriate measures to ensure the safety of pedestrian, cycle and vehicular traffic through the industrial estate and Heol Mostyn have been identified. The details of the highway reports have been noted by Highway and Transportation Officers and they have confirmed that the conclusions, along with mitigation measures, will technically meet the requirements of providing acceptable routes to the proposed new school. Officers have confirmed that they would be satisfied for the Primary School to be located on the Comprehensive site if the recommended mitigation works are undertaken.

5 Effect upon Policy Framework & Procedure Rules

There is no effect upon the policy framework or procedure rules.

6 Equality Impact Assessment

An Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out for this project. The assessment recognises that the project may impact on some groups or individuals and be relevant to some public duties. The level of EIA has been given a high priority and a full EIA will be undertaken 6 months, or before the approval of policy. Each issue will be carefully considered throughout the design process with a view to mitigate the risk.

7 Financial Implications

7.1 The scheme was put forward for Band 'A' of the Welsh Government's 21st Century Schools funding programme in Bridgend's Strategic Outline Plan (SOP) in December 2010. Notification of the outcome of our SOP submission was provided in July 2011 and the £4.5 million funding identified to progress the scheme at that time received Ministerial '*approval in principle*'.

- 7.2 The cost of the proposed scheme at the Cynffig site is estimated to be £7.05 million, an increase of £2.55 million on the original approved scheme by Welsh Government. Currently within the capital programme, the allocation for the new school is £4.9 million – the additional £400,000 relates to funding previously allocated to the school that has so far been unspent, and can be used towards the new scheme. It is proposed that a further £150,000 will be vired from the School Modernisation Retentions budget, leaving a shortfall of £2 million. The submission of a revised Strategic Outline Plan in respect of Mynydd Cynffig Primary School has been submitted to Welsh Government and has received '*approval in principle*' for additional matched funding of £1 million, with the Council to provide the remaining £1 million. Funding was provisionally set aside within the total amount of capital receipts and capital earmarked reserves set aside during 2015-16 to meet this commitment, should approval to progress with the scheme be granted, and Council is asked to approve a change in the capital programme for the scheme to reflect the new proposed costs of £7.05 million. A revised capital programme allowing for the proposed changes along with slippage from 2015-16, additional external funding approvals and changes to expenditure profiles is attached as Appendix 1 to this report. If, following consultation, the scheme does not progress as proposed, the capital programme will be reviewed and amended accordingly.
- 7.3 Relocating the Primary School allows for the disposal of both Mynydd Cynffig Primary School sites. Council approval had been previously received to use the receipt from the sale of the Junior site, estimated at £700k, for highways improvement works, subject to the outcome of the feasibility study. These works have been identified by Highways and Transportation as being essential to allow the Primary school to relocate to the Cynffig site.
- 7.4 There may be revenue savings arising from the transfer of the split site school onto the single site at Cynffig Comprehensive School. However, until further work is undertaken, and information received on likely changes to non-domestic rates for the new single site school, the actual figures are unknown.

8 Recommendation:

That Council approves the revised capital programme 2016-17 to 2025-26.

Deborah McMillan
Corporate Director, Education and Family Support

Randal Hemingway
Head of Finance & Section 151 Officer

Contact Officer: Nicola Echanis
Head of Education and Early Help

Telephone: (01656) 642611

E-mail: Nicola.Echanis@bridgend.gov.uk

Postal Address: Civic Offices, Angel Street, Bridgend, CF31 4WB

Background documents

Cabinet report, 9th October 2007, "SCHOOL MODERNISATION PROGRAMME: PHASE 2 3-18 PROVISION IN THE AREA OF CEFN CRIBWR, CORNELLY, KENFIG HILL AND PYLE"

Cabinet Report, 28th April 2009, "SCHOOL MODERNISATION PROGRAMME: PHASE 2 3-18 PROVISION IN THE AREA OF CEFN CRIBWR, CORNELLY, KENFIG HILL AND PYLE"

Cabinet Report 26th May 2009, "SCHOOLS OF THE FUTURE – THE SCHOOL MODERNISATION PROGRAMME OVERVIEW AND PROGRESS"

Cabinet Report 2nd November 2010, "THE SCHOOL MODERNISATION PROGRAMME OVERVIEW AND BRIDGEND'S 21ST CENTURY SCHOOLS' STRATEGIC OUTLINE PROGRAMME SUBMISSION TO WELSH GOVERNMENT"

Cabinet report, 28th June 2011, "SCHOOL MODERNISATION PROGRAMME: SITE RECOMMENDATION FOR A PRIMARY SCHOOL IN MYNYDD CYNFFIG"

Cabinet report 9th December 2014, "SCHOOL MODERNISATION: PROPOSAL TO CONSULT ON THE PROPOSAL TO CLOSE MYNYDD CYNFFIG INFANTS SCHOOL AND EXTEND THE AGE RANGE OF MYNYDD CYNFFIG JUNIOR SCHOOL TO CREATE AN ALL THROUGH PRIMARY SCHOOL"

Cabinet Report 16th June 2015, "SCHOOL MODERNISATION PROGRAMME: OUTCOME OF PUBLIC NOTICE ON THE PROPOSAL TO CLOSE MYNYDD CYNFFIG INFANTS SCHOOL AS AT 31ST AUGUST 2015 AND EXTEND THE AGE RANGE OF MYNYDD CYNFFIG JUNIOR SCHOOL FROM A 7-11 TO A 3-11 SCHOOL TO CREATE AN ALL THROUGH PRIMARY WITH EFFECT FROM 1ST SEPTEMBER 2015"

Report to Council 18 May 2016: Capital Programme 2016-17 to 2025-26