

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL
CABINET PERFORMANCE AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

13TH MAY 2014

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND LIFELONG LEARNING

Authors: Chris Bradshaw, Director of Education and Lifelong Learning
Tel: 01443 744001
Andrea Richards, Head of 21st Century Schools
Tel: 01443 744220

21st CENTURY SCHOOLS - SCHOOL MODERNISATION PROGRAMME

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide members with details of the major capital works to Treorchy Primary School and Y Pant Comprehensive School and to approve their inclusion into the Education and Lifelong Learning capital programme, along with agreement of the future release of capital monies to fund these schemes.

2. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Members :

- 2.1 Approve the inclusion of these two schemes into the Education and Lifelong Learning capital programme for 2014/15 as outlined in the report.
- 2.2 Approve the use of savings accrued from the school modernisation programme to utilise Prudential borrowing to finance the Council investment towards the projects (subject to Council approval).

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 In launching the 21st Century Schools Programme in June 2010, the Welsh Government implemented a long term investment strategy for the whole of Wales, creating a generation of 21st Century Schools. The 21st Century Schools Programme provides a major opportunity for schools in the maintained sector in Wales to receive necessary investment.
- 3.2 Members will be aware that as part of the Welsh Government's 21st Century Schools Programme, the Council, along with all other Council's in Wales had to identify a range of options for investment and prioritise those options. Band A schemes are those which the Council gave highest priority to and in the Band A funding allocation from Welsh Government, the Council received approval from Welsh Government for £160 million of major capital works to improve our schools.

- 3.3 Two of the projects that the Council included in its 21st Century Schools Band A schemes have now reached a stage whereby capital investment from the Council is required. These schemes are:-
- Extension and refurbishment works to Treorchy Primary School
 - Extension and refurbishment works to Y Pant Comprehensive School.

4. PROGRESS TO DATE

Treorchy Primary School

- 4.1 At the Cabinet meeting held on 22nd April 2013, Members gave approval to begin a process of formal consultation on the proposal to close Pentre Primary School and transfer education provision to Treorchy Primary School. Following this period of consultation, on 22nd July 2013, Members gave approval to issue a formal statutory notice in relation to the proposal, which was duly published on 6th September 2013. Due to the receipt of statutory objections, the proposals were referred to the Welsh Government for determination.
- 4.2 On 3rd April 2014, following due consideration, the Welsh Government approved the proposal to discontinue Pentre Primary School and make a prescribed alteration to Treorchy Primary School by increasing its capacity to 420 places.
- 4.3 Therefore to enable the two schools to merge, Treorchy Primary School requires major capital works which includes a new five classroom extension block, as well as improvements to the existing accommodation by remodelling and refurbishment.
- 4.4 A planning application will shortly be submitted and it is proposed to commence the building works in January 2015, with the building works being completed on 1st September 2015.

4.5 Y Pant Comprehensive School

Following the five case business model required by Welsh Government for 21st Century Schools proposals; a Strategic Outline Case was submitted by the Council on 11th July 2013 and approved by Welsh Government on 11th December 2013.

- 4.6 An Outline Business Case was duly submitted on 31st January 2014. A response from Welsh Government in relation to the Outline Business Case is anticipated on 22nd April 2014 and the Full Business Case will duly be drafted and submitted thereafter.
- 4.7 The preferred option detailed in the Outline Business Case is for an increase in capacity of Y Pant Comprehensive School to 1,400 places. The preferred option involves the building of a new classroom block with

additional specialist accommodation to replace all temporary dilapidated classrooms; plus the refurbishment of some existing buildings.

- 4.8 To ensure that progress is made to the planned timetable and that robust costings are available for inclusion in the Full Business Case, an external project manager/cost consultant and design team have been procured to progress the strategic planning of the project to provide independent verification of project costs to inform the Business Case submissions to WG.
- 4.9 Subject to approval of the Full Business Case, a full planning application will be submitted in Autumn 2014, with construction commencing summer 2015 and completion of all works targeted by January 2018.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The estimated cost of the building works required is:

- Treorchy Primary School - £2.8M
- Y Pant Comprehensive School - £24.1M.

The opportunity therefore exists to collaborate with WG 21st Century Schools Programme to fund the project, with the Council using savings that accrue from the school modernisation programme to utilise Prudential Borrowing to finance the Councils 50% investment.

6. CONCLUSION

Commitment of monies in the capital programme to part fund the two projects identified in this report needs to commence from the 2014/15 financial year to ensure that the 21st Century Schools Programme progresses in a timely manner and that monies secured from Welsh Government under the 21st Century Programme are appropriately match funded, as is a requirement of the grant.

