

EDUCATION, YOUTH & CULTURE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Thursday 30 th November 2023
Report Subject	Sustainable Communities for Learning Update
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Education, Welsh Language, Culture and Leisure
Report Author	Chief Officer (Education and Youth)
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The School Modernisation Team have made significant progress in the School Modernisation Programme since the last report to Education, Youth and Culture Overview and Scrutiny Committee (February 2022), despite the ongoing challenges due to various global issues which have been impacting prices in the construction market. In the main, the Programme has been maintained and delivered within anticipated timelines.

The report informs the Education, Youth and Culture Overview and Scrutiny Committee of progress of the School Modernisation Programme across a wide number of projects.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That Education, Youth and Culture Overview and Scrutiny Committee notes the contents of the report and progress of the Sustainable Communities for Learning programme.
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REPORT DETAILS

1.00	BACKGROUND AND CONSIDERATIONS
1.01	<p><u>Childcare programme</u></p> <p>As reported previously, the Welsh Government made capital grants available to councils for the purposes of childcare provision between 2019-2022. The primary purpose of the capital programme is to facilitate and support the co-location of the Foundation Phase and Childcare provision wherever possible. Cabinet approved the following projects for a first wave of investment into childcare facilities and progress is as follows: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Westwood CP School, Buckley – Completed• Ysgol Derwen, Kinnerton - Completed• Ysgol Maes Y Felin, Holywell – Completed• Ysgol Sychdyn – Completed• Ysgol Merllyn, Bagillt – Completed• Aston Family Centre (WG, Flying Start Grant) – Completed• Ysgol Bro Carmel, Carmel - Completed• Ysgol Yr Esgob, Caerwys. – Completed• Ysgol Y Llan, Whitford - Site works commenced October 2023, anticipated to complete by March 2024• Ysgol Glan Aber, Bagillt. – Project not progressed due to significant planning challenges which could not be overcome
1.02	<p><u>Childcare programme</u></p> <p>Cabinet and Welsh Government have also already approved £1.2m as part of a second wave of Childcare Grant investment to include a new Welsh medium childcare facility for the Ysgol Croes Atti new school. This project was brought forward to coincide with the new school development to ensure the Council capitalised on the opportunity to have a wraparound childcare facility on the same site as the new school. The objective is to improve provision for Welsh medium education in the Flint area – a key strand of the Council's Welsh in Education Strategy Plan. Construction is expected to be complete by September 2025.</p>
1.03	<p><u>Ysgol Castell Alun, Hope</u></p> <p>The £7.6m project to construct a new build three storey Art and Design Technology (DT) & classroom block was completed and occupied at the start September 2021 as planned. The refurbishment and resurfacing of existing All Weather Pitch was completed in August 2023.</p>
1.04	<p><u>Ysgol Croes Atti, Glannau Dyfrdwy site</u></p> <p>The project funded through the Welsh Government Childcare Grant and Welsh Government Sustainable Communities for Learning investment programme forms part of an extended work package which will see an investment of circa £1.1m in the Glannau Dyfrdwy site was completed and occupied in December 2022. The objective of this investment improves</p>

	<p>provision for Welsh medium education in the Shotton area - a key strand of the Council's Welsh in Education Strategy Plan.</p>
1.05	<p><u>Ysgol Croes Atti, Flint</u></p> <p>The proposed new Welsh medium school will replace the existing Ysgol Croes Atti, located on Chester Road, in Flint and is a significant project supporting the Welsh Education Strategic Plan, as this will be the first new Welsh medium school build by the Council since its inception in 1996. The Project will also be a Net Zero Carbon (NZC) school.</p> <p>Also included in the Project is a standalone facility that will provide a wraparound childcare provision, a space for adult community learning and an immersion resource to aid transition from primary school to Welsh medium secondary school.</p> <p>Progress is as follows.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning permission granted January 2022 • A Design and Build contractor has been engaged • Full Business Case (FBC) approved in August 2023 • Construction activities due to commence in 2023 • School Occupation - September 2025
1.06	<p><u>Drury C.P.</u></p> <p>In November 2021, Cabinet approved to consult through 'The School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013, School Organisation Code' for an enlargement of the premises at Drury C.P. School. Delivery of enlargement of Ysgol Drury C.P. could not proceed until such time that statutory proposals to increase the capacity of the schools have been published, consulted upon and agreed by Cabinet. The process commenced in March 2022 and approved by Cabinet in December 2022. Progress relating to the building expansion is as follows.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Design and Build contractor has been engaged • Submission of SOC/OBC planned in January 2024, and Full Business Case (FBC) planned to be submitted to Welsh Government in April 2024 • Planning permission to be submitted November 2023 • Anticipated that a paper will be presented to Cabinet in spring 2024, requesting approval to enter into construction phase. <p>Thereafter, subject to approval</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anticipated commencement of construction works July 2024 • School Occupation - September 2025
1.07	<p><u>Mynydd Isa – 3-16 Campus, Mynydd Isa</u></p> <p>The proposed project replaces Mynydd Isa Argoed High School and Mynydd Isa C.P. which is the last remaining primary provision operating on splits sites (separate infants and junior provision). This is Wales's first Mutual Investment Model (MIM) and a WG pathfinder project. The Project will also be the Council's first Net Zero Carbon (NZC) school. Progress is as follows.</p>

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1.08	<p><u>Penyffordd C.P.</u></p> <p>A new primary school was constructed to replace the former infant and junior school with the school taking occupation of the new facility in September 2019. The original planning approval for the new school at Penyffordd included a planned two classroom extension which would increase the capacity of the school to 375 FT pupils.</p> <p>This project was brought forward due to local demand and funded in the main from a combination of Section 106 developer contributions to education and financially topped up the Council's own capital programme.</p> <p>Delivery of the scheme could not proceed until such time that statutory proposals to increase the capacity of the schools have been published, consulted upon and agreed by Cabinet. The process commenced in March 2022 and approved by Cabinet in December 2022.</p> <p>Progress relating to the building expansion is as follows.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Design and Build contractor has been engaged • Construction commenced July 2023 • School Occupation - April 2024
1.09	<p><u>Saltney/Broughton Area Review</u></p> <p>Officers are currently working with the Headteachers in the Broughton and Saltney area have collaboratively developed documents which have been used to consult with their communities on the future of Primary and Secondary school provision in the area.</p> <p>An early engagement process seeking community views took place in spring 2023. Outcomes of early engagement are to be presented to Cabinet.</p>
1.10	<p><u>Welsh Medium Provision - Buckley/Mynydd Isa Area</u></p> <p>The Council submitted an expression of interest for additional Welsh Government Welsh Medium (WM) funding. The submission highlights the need for new WM start up provision within Buckley/Mynydd Isa Area, as identified within the Welsh Education Strategic Plan (WESP) and was approved by Welsh Government. Welsh Government have approved through their Welsh Medium grant £5m in Capital and £606,950 revenue for two years for a Welsh Medium 3-11 start up in the area, as identified in the Councils (WESP). Work is underway to review site options for this new start up provision.</p>

1.11	<p><u>Universal Primary Free School Meals</u></p> <p>Welsh Government and Plaid Cymru have made a commitment to ensure all primary school aged children can access a free school meal by 2024.</p> <p>Implementation of universal primary free school meals (UPFSM) has been phased, the first phase of rollout in Flintshire commenced in September 2022 to Reception aged children, a further phasing commenced in April 2023 to Year 1 and 2 aged children and by September 2023 to Year 3 and 4. The final phase of roll out to Year 5 and Year 6 will be completed by April 2024.</p> <p>The Council has been allocated capital grant funding, totalling £3.029m to support the procurement of equipment and works to enable UPFSM rollout. A significant amount of work has been completed and will continue into 2024 to ensure the infrastructure, equipment, resource and processes are in place to enable full implementation of UPFSM.</p>
1.12	<p><u>Additional Learning Needs (ALN)</u></p> <p>The Council has been allocated capital grant funding by Welsh Government, totalling £2.019m. The aim of the grant is to optimise pre-16 learning environments for those with additional learning needs (ALN) and increase accessibility to promote inclusive practice, support learning and pupil wellbeing.</p> <p>Ysgol Pen Coch</p> <p>Some of the ALN capital grant has been already identified and used to benefit the learners using the Ysgol Pen Coch hydro pool. Most of the capital funding has been identified to increase capacity at Ysgol Pen Coch. Options for the site and use of the grant are currently under review.</p> <p>To increase capacity requires statutory proposals under The School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013. The Authority in due course will seek a mandate to consult from Cabinet.</p>
1.13	<p><u>Community Facility Grant and Sports Wales Projects</u></p> <p>The Council has been allocated capital grant funding by Welsh Government, totalling £1.05m. The objectives of the grant are to address ministerial priorities (namely raising attainment of disadvantaged learners and tackling the aspiration gap; learners and staff wellbeing; being a second chance nation; winning the technology race and supporting the Welsh language). Using the grant criteria community demand on school sites had been assessed to develop/increase community access/facilities. Work is underway to deliver a range of projects meeting the grant criteria across the school network.</p> <p>The following projects have been delivered.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Castell Alun All Weather Pitch lighting replacement/upgrade • Hawarden High School Male Sports Changing Room refurbishment • Hawarden High School Sports Hall refurbishment

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	Decisions to commit to capital expenditure investing in assets to deliver high quality services efficiently have long term implications for future revenue budgets. Consideration must be given to schemes to ensure that they are affordable, sustainable and therefore prudent.
2.02	The estimated capital and associated debt revenue costs arising from the schemes within this report are set out on a scheme by scheme basis.
2.03	The estimated associated debt revenue costs arising from the project are included in the Council Medium Term Financial strategy.
2.04	The following Welsh Government Grants are fully funded (100%); Childcare, Welsh Medium, Flying Start, Community Learning, Universal Primary Free School Meals and Additional Learning Needs.
2.05	The Welsh Government 21st Century schools programme is funded as follows:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capital – Schools : 65% WG / 35% LA • Capital – PRU / ALN Schools : 75% WG / 25% LA • MIM is funded at an intervention rate of 81% Welsh Government and 19% Council (through revenue budgets of both organisations).

3.00	IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT										
3.01	All projects are managed using a risk register. Risks are managed accordingly, and financial risks are managed through a project contingency. Any high-level risk which cannot be managed with the projects/programme will be incorporated into the risk register for the Education and Youth Portfolio.										
3.02	Ways of Working (Sustainable Development) Principles <table border="1" data-bbox="319 1433 1372 2060"> <thead> <tr> <th>Ways of Working Principle</th> <th>Impact</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Long-term</td> <td>Positive – ensures that high quality education places are available to communities to meet demand of specialist educational need.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Prevention</td> <td>Positive – preventing inappropriate placements for the most vulnerable learners.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Integration</td> <td>Positive – ensuring the appropriate education provision integrates children from varying backgrounds.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Collaboration</td> <td>Positive – partnership arrangements in-house and with external parties including school governing bodies.</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Ways of Working Principle	Impact	Long-term	Positive – ensures that high quality education places are available to communities to meet demand of specialist educational need.	Prevention	Positive – preventing inappropriate placements for the most vulnerable learners.	Integration	Positive – ensuring the appropriate education provision integrates children from varying backgrounds.	Collaboration	Positive – partnership arrangements in-house and with external parties including school governing bodies.
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	Involvement	Positive - The proposed projects involves a range of stakeholders to enable its delivery.														
3.03	<p data-bbox="320 282 727 315">Well-being Principle Impacts</p> <p data-bbox="320 349 1350 416">Against the seven well-being goals of the Act, the potential impact of the report and its recommendations would be evaluated as follows:-</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="320 461 1388 2074"> <tr> <td data-bbox="320 461 855 678">Prosperous Wales</td> <td data-bbox="855 461 1388 678">Positive impact Capital investment directly benefits local supply chain/economy. Ensuring our schools are in the right place and of the right type.</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="320 678 855 896">Resilient Wales</td> <td data-bbox="855 678 1388 896">Positive impact Use of sustainable and recycled materials during construction, more energy efficient, potential reduction in carbon emissions.</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="320 896 855 1120">Healthier Wales</td> <td data-bbox="855 896 1388 1120">Positive Impact Improved physical infrastructure and facilities which positively impact on the wellbeing of the school and its community.</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="320 1120 855 1379">More Equal Wales</td> <td data-bbox="855 1120 1388 1379">Positive Impact Equalities Impact Assessments are already embedded in school culture. Opening up more education places to those who need them.</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="320 1379 855 1639">Cohesive Wales</td> <td data-bbox="855 1379 1388 1639">Positive Impact School network widens/reduces its number of places for education provision through delivery of new and refurbished facilities of the right type in the right place.</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="320 1639 855 1863">Vibrant Wales</td> <td data-bbox="855 1639 1388 1863">Positive Impact Enables new and refurbished facilities to improve, both curricular, extra-curricular and community use of school buildings.</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="320 1863 855 2074">Globally Responsible Wales</td> <td data-bbox="855 1863 1388 2074">Positive Impact Capital investment, delivers a more sustainable product, local spend and added benefits for apprenticeships, work experience in construction.</td> </tr> </table>		Prosperous Wales	Positive impact Capital investment directly benefits local supply chain/economy. Ensuring our schools are in the right place and of the right type.	Resilient Wales	Positive impact Use of sustainable and recycled materials during construction, more energy efficient, potential reduction in carbon emissions.	Healthier Wales	Positive Impact Improved physical infrastructure and facilities which positively impact on the wellbeing of the school and its community.	More Equal Wales	Positive Impact Equalities Impact Assessments are already embedded in school culture. Opening up more education places to those who need them.	Cohesive Wales	Positive Impact School network widens/reduces its number of places for education provision through delivery of new and refurbished facilities of the right type in the right place.	Vibrant Wales	Positive Impact Enables new and refurbished facilities to improve, both curricular, extra-curricular and community use of school buildings.	Globally Responsible Wales	Positive Impact Capital investment, delivers a more sustainable product, local spend and added benefits for apprenticeships, work experience in construction.
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4.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED/CARRIED OUT
4.01	Reports on the Strategic Outline Plan for the Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme have previously been to Education & Youth Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet.
4.02	Some projects within the programme will require statutory proposals. These will be carried out based subject to Cabinet mandate and based on WG's School Organisation Code legal framework. Determination on statutory proposals are the responsibility of Cabinet.
4.03	For projects that have been delivered planning permission approval has been given. For projects not yet delivered, consultation will be required through the planning application process at the appropriate stage of development.
4.04	Meetings and conversations have taken place with Childcare Providers to provide information and guidance on the development of business cases which have formed an integral part of assessing the sustainability of proposals.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	None.

6.00	CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS
6.01	Contact Officer: Jennie Williams, Senior Manager, School Planning and Provision Telephone: 01352 704015 E-mail: jennie.williams@flintshire.gov.uk

7.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
7.01	Sustainable Communities for Learning - Is a collaboration between the Welsh Government (WG), the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) and local authorities. It is a major, long-term and strategic capital investment programme with the aim of creating a generation of 21st century schools in Wales.
7.02	MIM - The Mutual Investment Model is the Welsh Government's new form of Public Private Partnership.
7.03	Capital funding - Capital funding is usually linked to acquiring or improving a long-term asset such as equipment or buildings.

7.04	Revenue funding - Is linked to items that will be used within a year. Examples include salaries, heating, lighting, services and small items of equipment.
7.05	School Organisation Code – The new School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2018 makes Local Authorities responsible (rather than the Welsh Ministers prior to October 2018) for the determination of most statutory school organisation proposals that receive objections.