

<b>Report to</b>	Cabinet
<b>Date of meeting</b>	22nd September 2020
<b>Lead Member / Officer</b>	Councillor Huw Hilditch Roberts, Lead Member for Education, Children's Services and Public Engagement
<b>Report author</b>	Geraint Davies, Interim Head of Education
<b>Title</b>	21 <sup>st</sup> Century Schools Programme – Band B Proposals

## **1. What is the report about?**

The report provides an update on the progression of Denbighshire's proposals for Band B of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Programme to be delivered in partnership with the Welsh Government.

## **2. What is the reason for making this report?**

To enable Cabinet to approve the approach to the delivery of Band B of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Programme in Denbighshire.

## **3. What are the Recommendations?**

To approve the commencement of projects at Ysgol Plas Brondyffryn / Denbigh High School, Denbigh; Ysgol Bryn Collen / Ysgol Gwernant, Llangollen and Ysgol Pendref, Denbigh as part of the first phase of projects for Band B of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Programme.

To continue to seek additional funding for the second phase of projects of Band B and to review the position in 18 months to ascertain options for the delivery of some of these projects.

## 4. Report details

4.1 The Cabinet considered in December three options to progress the implementation of Band B of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Programme for Denbighshire. Members supported the option to seek additional funding from Welsh Government via a revised Strategic Outline Programme. Based on the indicative figures an increase of approximately £15m was required from the Welsh Government to deliver the programme of a value of £83m. This programme would have required an overall contribution in the programme to a figure closer to £21m for Denbighshire, as per the Corporate Plan funding. The revised SOP was considered by the Welsh Government in February 2020 and the following response was received from them in March 2020.

We have received a number of applications for Strategic Outline Programme revisions and are conscious of funding and affordability at this early stage of Band B. We therefore needed to define a process to treat such requests consistently. Following discussion at the recent Education Investment Panel meeting, the Minister for Education has now agreed the process detailed below:

- Where delivery partners wish to include and prioritise a new scheme that was not contemplated in their original Band B SOP they must revise their SOP to reflect the order of priority of schemes with any schemes that fall in excess of the original funding envelope sitting on a “reserve” list pending availability of funding above the original envelope.
- Delivery partners are not normally permitted to swap a MIM funded project to a Capital funded project;
- Delivery partners are permitted to swap a Capital funded project to a MIM funded project (subject to availability of revenue funding);
- Delivery partners may swap schemes in and out of Band B within their original funding envelope provided that their original SOP is amended to make the replacement scheme part of Band B. This change would be subject to approval through the Welsh Government business case process.

4.2 Effectively this has required the list of projects to be reviewed and the delivery of the programme to be considered as two phases. The first phase of projects (see Appendix 1) would see the commencement of detailed feasibility works to enable these projects to commence. For the second phase the Council will continue to discuss with Welsh Government the case for additional resources and this position will be reviewed in 18 months to ascertain options for the delivery for some of these projects.

4.3 For the projects in Phase 1, they will be progressed as individual projects. Individual Business Cases will be progressed utilising the 5 Case Business Model of the Welsh Government and at key milestones will be subject to detailed review by the Strategic Investment Group / Cabinet etc in addition to the approval mechanisms of the Welsh Government. Procurement will be via the North Wales Construction Framework. Band A had a positive impact on the economy of North Wales and Denbighshire will seek to maximise this again via the mechanisms of the framework.

## **5. How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Priorities?**

The proposals will assist the Council meet the priority for Young People that Denbighshire is a place where young people will want to live and work and have the skills to do. In particular this will see Denbighshire continue to modernise schools via the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Programme and if we are successful we expect to see modern school facilities that further enhance pupils' learning.

21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Band B projects and what we do with any potential redundant sites could make a significant contribution towards the Council's aim of becoming Net Carbon Zero and Ecologically Positive by 2030 and in doing so show a clear contribution to tackling the Climate Change and Ecological Emergency- which was declared by Full Council in July 2019. Welsh Government through their Prosperity for All: A Low Carbon Wales Plan (2019) has targeted for the public sector in Wales to be net carbon zero by 2030 and decarbonisation has the potential to be a key consideration in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Band B (and C) funding programme. Through learning lessons from 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Band A and by developing, delivering and managing-in-use zero/low carbon buildings the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Band B projects could reduce the running costs for the Authority from both a financial and carbon point of view alongside creating exemplar learning environments.

## **6. What will it cost and how will it affect other services?**

The overall programme for Band B, should additional resources be released by Welsh Government would cost Denbighshire £21m as illustrated in Appendix 1. The first phase of works to be approved have an overall value of £51.9m of which £15.8m will be funded by Denbighshire via the Council's Corporate Plan. Should the proposals be progressed the development of the Programme would continue to have workstreams for other teams within the Council in particularly Design, Construction and Maintenance. The costs of these teams are absorbed in the overall outline costs.

## **7. What are the main conclusions of the Well-being Impact Assessment?**

The development of a programme for investment for 21st Century Schools should have a positive impact on Denbighshire. (see Appendix 2) The construction phase will lead to increased investment in local companies and improve employment prospects. Site selection may have a negative impact on a resilient Denbighshire and this will need to be carefully considered. The provision of modern buildings should impact positively on a healthier and equal Denbighshire whilst providing an opportunity for a more cohesive community. Lessons learnt from Band A will need to be applied to the approach to energy management for Band B. The impact on Welsh Language will be guided by where investment is made.

## **8. What consultations have been carried out with Scrutiny and others?**

Consultation took place with Councillors at an informal meeting in December 2016. The identified priorities were then incorporated into the Strategic Outline Programme approved by Cabinet in 2017. Discussions took place with stakeholders in December 2019 and further discussions are scheduled with Headteachers in advance of this meeting.

## **9. Chief Finance Officer Statement**

Initial funding has been included in the Medium Term Financial Plan over the next 5 years, initially as part of the current Corporate Plan but continuing into future years due to the long term commitment. It is obviously a large financial commitment and it is welcome to see the careful and considered approach contained in this report. Further financial commitments will be included as appropriate.

## **10. What risks are there and is there anything we can do to reduce them?**

The current Modernising Education Programme includes clear procedures for the management and escalation of risks at both the Programme and Project level. Should the programme be progressed these procedures would continue. The risks associated with the reduction in the programme would mainly impact two areas. By accepting the risk around maintaining poor or life expired buildings the costs around maintenance are expected to increase over time. For pupils in such buildings their learning opportunities may be impacted upon.

## **11. Power to make the decision**

Section 14 of the Education Act 1996 places a duty on local authorities to secure sufficient schools for providing primary and secondary education.