

Report to Modernising Education Programme Board

Report by Principal Manager – School Support

Date Wednesday 27th April

Report Title Review of Band B priorities

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Council considered a notice of motion at its meeting on 22nd February 2022 as follows: -

“This Council tasks officers to seek additional Welsh Government funding in order to fund a complete re-build of Prestatyn High School based on earlier designs drawn up for the 21st Century Schools programme that modernised to meet the current needs of secondary pupils of Prestatyn and our climate change and ecological emergency declaration”.

During the debate at the meeting the minutes’ record that

“Councillor Hilditch-Roberts PROPOSED an amendment in light of the Notice of Motion that the Modernising Education Board be asked to review the condition surveys of all schools to see whether those had been significantly changed to the condition of the school estate which would call into question that the current priority order of schools is still current and correct. The outcome of this review could be reported to Cabinet together with any recommendations the Modernising Education Board may have as a result.”

1.2 Based on this the following report has been produced to enable the Modernising Education Programme Board to consider the position and to consider whether recommendations may be required for Cabinet.

1.3 The report seeks to outline how the prioritisation process developed and evolved and also the actual condition data for all schools and those considered as part of the review area.

2.0 Background

2.1 The Council were informed during 2016 of the overall timescales for the progression of what was then known as Band B of 21st Century Schools. To assist in the preparation discussions between officers in Education and Property enabled a review of a number of schools which were considered likely to feature in any long list of projects. This enabled Assets to review the data regarding the condition of the schools in question to assist in informing debate. To support this officers from Education also visited the schools in question to assess the suitability of the schools for the delivery of provision.

- 2.2 In October 2016 the Council were advised of the opportunity for local authorities to submit their intentions for Band B. The letter stated that at this stage “guidance on the grant intervention rate and criteria for Band B has not yet been issued, so for the purpose of this exercise we would ask that you indicate:
- (a) what projects you would like to take forward, together with their estimated cost; and
- (b) which of those are affordable should we use the same intervention rate as for Band A (i.e. a 50/50 split)”
- 2.3 Based on this officers commissioned desktop work to review the long list of schemes to inform a session with elected members in December 2016. The presentation to which all Councillors were invited provided the context of what was being achieved via Band A and then future areas for development across the County. These priorities were based on reviewing the 7 geographical areas from an education perspective looking at progress made in recent years and identifying where the next priorities areas would be. Again this looked at condition and suitability of buildings, issues around surplus and deficit places etc.
- 2.4 After the initial 4 areas (Prestatyn, Dee Valley East, Dee Valley West and Ruthin) had seen targeted investment, the next two areas Denbigh and Rhyl were chosen for consideration for primary school investment. From the secondary perspective again this examined the condition and suitability of buildings. This session enabled Councillors to consider the school estate from both a school pupil planning perspective and condition basis and then discussions enabled the long list to be submitted to Welsh Government in December 2016.
- 2.5 During the first months of 2017 local authorities were advised by the Welsh Government that the initial expressions of interest outweighed likely resources and a narrowing of priority projects was required. Internal discussions took place on priority projects which enabled a report to be presented to Cabinet in July 2017 on the Strategic Outline Programme for future investment in Denbigh. This document focussed on the following outline projects.

Name of Project	Condition of School (2017 submission)	Outline Cost
Denbigh High School / Ysgol Plas Brondyffryn	D / B	£21,817,881
St Brigid's Denbigh	C	£14,398,215
Llangollen Provision	C	£23,781,617
Rhyl Primary	n/a	£7,906,696
Ysgol Dewi Sant	C	£2,376.853
EBD Support	n/a	£7,906,696
Ysgol y Faenol	C	£1,789,256

- 2.6 During 2018 it was agreed by the Children and Young Peoples Programme Board to focus the scoping of what was to be delivered based on three themes, the Denbigh Area, the Rhyl area and Support for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties. This work involved a review of schools in the Rhyl and Denbigh area together with how best Denbighshire could meet pressures identified to support the Additional Learning Needs requirements.
- 2.7 Over the next 12 months' site visits took place to the schools in these areas and Design and Construction were commissioned to look at potential options for development. This led to a revised area of projects coming forward based on identified need in these areas but also changing situations elsewhere. Following discussion at the Programme Board, the revised options considered by Cabinet in December 2019 focussed on the following projects

Name of Project	Condition of School (2017 submission)	Outline Cost
Ysgol Bryn Collen / Ysgol Gwernant, Llangollen	C	£5.4m
Ysgol Dinas Bran, Llangollen	C	£4.8m
Ysgol Pendref, Denbigh	C	£7.7m
Denbigh High School	D	£15.4m
Rhyl Primary Provision	n/a	£10.3m
Ysgol Plas Brondyffryn	B	£23.5m
St Brigid's School, Denbigh	C	£16.8m

- 2.8 The change in focus was based on the issues arising from the feasibility studies. The overall costs would be £83.8m but importantly would now be based on the changes to the intervention rates as follows: -

Community Schools – change from 50/50 to 65% WG / 35% LA

Special Schools – change from 50/50 to 75% WG / 25% LA

Voluntary Schools – remain at 85% WG / 15% Diocese

This outline would require an increase from the initial £45m from WG to £60.2m

- 2.9 Confirmation was received in 2020 that WG would not initially consider changing their overall contribution of £45m and as a consequence Cabinet were asked to consider a phased approach to the delivery of Band B with the first 4 projects to be delivered including Ysgol Plas Brondyffryn, Denbigh; Ysgol Pendref, Denbigh; Denbigh High School and Ysgol Bryn Collen / Ysgol Gwernant, Llangollen.

3. Condition of Schools

- 3.1 The condition of schools is assessed via the survey works undertaken periodically to assess the condition of school buildings. Typically, the condition surveys will assess

the Roofs, Floors and stairs, Ceilings, External walls, Windows and doors, Sanitary services, Redecorations, Fixed furniture and fittings, External areas, Playing fields Mechanical services and Electrical services of a school. Based on the findings a grade between A to D will be applied, namely A – Good, B – Satisfactory, C – Poor and D – Bad.

- 3.2 Local authorities on an annual basis have been asked by Welsh Government to complete a return of the school estate which includes the condition, suitability and sufficiency of the school estate. This data informs their understanding of the overall state of schools within Wales.
- 3.3 This compares the findings at the start of the programme and when initial consideration was given to priorities in 2017 and the latest return to Welsh Government in 2021.
- 3.4 The priority areas for primary schools were in the Denbigh and Rhyl area whilst the focus for investment in Secondary remained in respect of condition data.

Denbigh Area – Primary Schools

- 3.5 Of the 9 schools considered in the Denbigh area, 8 of them remain at the same condition ranking as 2017. Bodfari, Henllan and Twm o’r Nant remain considered as Good and Frongoch, Bryn Clwyd, Ysgol y Parc, Pendref and Trefnant remain as Poor. The main change was Ysgol Bro Cinmeirch which changed from Poor to Satisfactory.

Rhyl Area – Primary Schools

- 3.6 Of the 6 schools considered in the Rhyl area, the 6 schools remained at the same category as they were in 2017. Ysgol Emmanuel was considered Satisfactory and Ysgol y Castell, Christchurch, Llywelyn, Dewi Sant and Bryn Hedydd as Poor. With the faith project progressing Ysgol Mair was not considered as part of the review. Ysgol Mair was considered as a C category with the new Christ the Word facility ranked as A, good.

Secondary Schools

- 3.7 For the 8 schools hosting secondary education (including the middle schools) the rankings overall remain similar to the 2017 return. The new investment at Rhyl High School and Ysgol Glan Clwyd saw the schools ranked as Good, Ysgol Brynhyfryd as Satisfactory and then Prestatyn High, Ysgol Dinas Bran and St Brigid’s as Poor. The condition survey for Denbigh was deemed Unsatisfactory. Again the main change reflects the faith project with again Blessed Edward Jones ranked as poor with the new Christ the Word being ranked as Good.
- 3.8 This assessment would suggest that based on the 2021 return there appears no material change to the condition of the school’s in the remit of the original review that would warrant a significant change.