

Report to	Cabinet
Date of meeting	23 rd April 2024
Lead Member / Officer	Councillor Gill German – Lead member for Education, Children and Families
Head of Service	Geraint Davies – Head of Education
Report author	James Curran – Principal Manager – School Support
Title	Sustainable Communities for Learning – Rolling Programme

1. What is the report about?

1.1. The Welsh Government has changed its approach to how it plans to deliver its Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme (formerly known as 21st Century Schools). The report explains the new process and seeks agreement on how to outline our intentions for phasing our proposed school investment over the next 9 years.

2. What is the reason for making this report?

2.1. A decision is required on the submission to Welsh Government of our Strategic Outline Programme for investment in the Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme.

3. What are the Recommendations?

3.1 That the draft Strategic Outline Programme (SOP) for the Sustainable Communities for Learning programme as contained in Appendix 1 be submitted to the Welsh Government for their consideration.

3.2. That the Cabinet confirms that it has read, understood and taken account of the Well-being Impact Assessment (Appendix 3) as part of its consideration.

4. Report details

- 4.1. For the next stage of investment in the school estate the Welsh Government have moved away from 5 year bands of investment (Band A and Band B of the 21st Century Schools Programme) to a more flexible approach over a longer 9-year time period with the 9 years divided into 3 blocks of 3 years each. All local authorities have been requested to update their vision to Welsh Government via the Strategic Outline Programme for investment by March 2024. For this revised Strategic Outline Programme local authorities have been asked to identify projects which are essentially ready for Business cases to be brought forward in the first three years, projects being developed and going through statutory consultation in the second three years and then pipeline projects for the final/third three years. These programmes will then be reviewed every three years.
- 4.2. The delivery of the formally committed 4 Band B projects (Ysgol Plas Brondyffryn, Denbigh; Ysgol Pendref, Denbigh, Ysgol Bryn Collen / Ysgol Gwernant, Llangollen and Denbigh High School) have been impacted by various delays. This effectively means that these projects are not going to be delivered within the original Band B timescales. It is therefore recommended that they be incorporated into the new Strategic Outline Programme.
- 4.3. Given the current financial pressures faced by the Council we need to reconsider what is affordable over what time period, given the Council's capital contribution to any project will have to be funded by prudential borrowing, which adds to the annual budget pressures on our revenue account.
- 4.4. It is recommended we retain our commitment to developing all 4 Band B projects, but that the development timescales are reprofiled to spread out the revenue pressures over a longer period.
- 4.5. There is also scope to include an additional project within the Programme. Discussions have taken place regarding a small extension at Ysgol y Castell in Rhuddlan originally to be funded from Section 106 funds from a local housing development in Rhuddlan. The costs of the project have increased and the option of inclusion in the Programme would allow the project to proceed. With the 65% /35 % intervention rate the £384k of Section 106 funding could draw in an additional £713k from Welsh Government to provide a potential budget of

£1.1m. There would be no borrowing requirement from this project as the Council contribution would come entirely from S106 developer contributions that (i) have already been received from the developer and (ii) need to be spent by 2029 otherwise the risk is they are returned to the developer. It is recommended that Ysgol y Castell be added to the Programme to join the existing commitment to the 4 former Band B Projects.

- 4.6. In addition, beyond these identified projects there remains a need for further investment in the wider school estate. The SOP (see Appendix 1) describes where potentially this investment may be needed from 2030 onwards. In the primary sector there remains a need to meet areas where there is a current deficit of provision, responding to demographic changes particularly in the North of the county and ensuring that the demand for Welsh Medium education can be met. In the secondary sector there remains a need for investment in those sites which have not benefited from large scale investment, namely, Prestatyn High School, St Brigid's, Ysgol Brynhyfryd and Ysgol Dinas Bran. It is suggested that targeted investment be made to replace or refurbish the poorer areas of the secondary school estate as part of this phase of the Programme. Further work is also needed to identify potential work to school buildings to enable support to be provided for pupils where alternative provision beyond mainstream provision will be required.
- 4.7. These areas are currently high level considerations and further work is required in advance of the next submission of the Strategic Outline Programme in the spring of 2027 to identify where this investment could be made during the 2030/2033 period. It is important to note that this latter part of the programme is seen as a potential marker for ambitions and not as clear commitments. The ambition shown could be scaled up or down dependent on our financial position at the time.
- 4.8. The approach outlined seeks to retain the Council's ambition to invest in our school estate as per the corporate plan pledge to provide quality buildings and facilities that support learning but through an approach which assists affordability. The approach to staggering these projects, which have already experienced delays during the Band B period, will see a delay in respect of commencing construction on sites. Importantly this approach will also spread the revenue pressure over a longer period during a challenging time for the

Council's finances to ensure that we can both deliver on our overall ambition whilst reducing the wider financial pressures arising from this investment. This will limit revenue pressures on front line services such as schools over the coming years. The addition of the project at Rhuddlan funded from a commuted sum and the proposals for significant new projects beyond 2030 will demonstrate our clear ambition to build on previous investment in the school estate.

5. How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Plan 2022 to 2027: The Denbighshire We Want?

- 5.1. A prosperous Denbighshire – the progression of the programme could see significant investment in the County during the construction phases of the projects which will bring economic benefits to Denbighshire through local spend. The programme will be required to demonstrate community benefits.
- 5.2. A learning and growing Denbighshire - the progression of the programme will ensure that we provide high quality buildings and facilities that meet the needs of pupils, their families and the wider community, including working in partnership with Welsh Government's Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme.
- 5.3. A greener Denbighshire - The proposed programme will have a positive contribution to the Council becoming Net Carbon Zero by 2030. Welsh Government announced that from 1st January 2022 all new build projects will be required to demonstrate delivery of Net Zero Carbon in operation. Welsh Government have stated that they will fund 100% of this in line with current benchmarks that they have detailed.
- 5.4. The proposed programme will play a part in achieving one million Welsh speakers in Wales by 2050, by delivering the Welsh Language Strategy with partners and communities. The development of Welsh Medium provision during the programme will support children and families during their early years to develop confidence in using the Welsh Language.

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

- 6.1. The currently identified projects from Band B, plus the additional project at Ysgol y Castell, have a current provisional cost of £67.7m (see Appendix 2).

Based on current intervention rates the contribution from Denbighshire would be £20.6m with the Welsh Government requested to fund £47.1m. This would equate to an overall revenue pressure for borrowing of £1.3m per annum. The Welsh Government contribution would include an additional cost of £5.5m to meet net carbon zero requirements.

- 6.2. The costs included in the Strategic Outline Programme for Years 7 to 9 at this stage are high level estimates and will include an allowance for optimism bias. This level of investment of the region of £88m would see a potential contribution from Denbighshire of £26.6m which would equate to a prudential borrowing cost of £1.75m per annum.
- 6.3. Clearly these are significant costs within a challenging financial environment for local authorities. There will need to be a constant review of the affordability of the programme and the opportunity to resubmit the rolling programme in 2026/27 may see a change in the appetite for investment. However, at this stage a realistic programme has been developed for consideration.
- 6.4. The progression and delivery of the Programme would have an impact on a range of Council Services. Services such as Performance, Digital and Assets, Finance and Audit, People and Planning, Public Protection and Countryside Services will play key roles in the development of proposals, procurement of contractors, change management and the delivery of the required digital infrastructure within the school building. A key aim of the programme is to deliver net carbon zero buildings and this will play a key role in meeting wider Council ambitions.

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

- 7.1. The progression of the programme for investment for Sustainable Communities for Learning should have a positive impact on Denbighshire (see Appendix 3). 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. The impact on Welsh Language will be guided by where investment is made.

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

8.1. The projects listed as those carried over from Band B have been subject to previous Cabinet and Scrutiny discussions. This suggested approach has been recommended by the Council's Corporate Executive Team to ensure that the delivery of the programme remains affordable. The proposals to emerge for future years from 2027 to 2033 will be subject to full discussions with relevant Member Area Groups and Schools prior to any decisions regarding further projects to be confirmed in the programme.

9. Chief Finance Officer Statement

9.1. Given the financial pressure the Council is under in the medium term it is appropriate the revenue consequences of capital decisions are considered as has been set out and recommended within this report. It is important to note that the recommendation is to widen the length of time taken to complete the Band B projects spreading out the impact of the borrowing costs over a longer period of time on our revenue budget. This does not reduce the council's ambition or commitments to those communities affected. The concern is that if we continue to progress all projects further cuts to service budgets will have to be made to afford the borrowing costs which of course includes delegated schools budgets.

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

10.1. 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 main risk associated with the revised Strategic Outline Programme will be around finance affordability. At this stage there will be a need for an element of caution around expectations for the programme moving forward.

11. Power to make the decision

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

Appendix 1 Rolling Programme Projects

Projects should be identified in the nine-year capital programme with:

- Years 1, 2 and 3 projects expected to reach full business case within the 3 years.
- Years 4, 5 and 6 projects being developed and going through statutory consultation.
- Years 7, 8 and 9 being pipeline projects.

How many projects do you intend to deliver in each segment of your rolling programme?

Years 1-3	2
Years 4-6	3
Years 7-9	Tbc

What are they? (Please note that details of the projects should also be included in the Project Data Collection spreadsheet and attached). The projects should be ranked in both documents in order of priority.

Years 1-3
500 words maximum

The following project was part of Denbighshire's Band B proposals and is intended to be taken over into the rolling programme.

Ysgol Plas Brondyffryn, Denbigh – This project will deliver a new build 3-18 school for pupils with Autism. The school operates over three sites during school hours and the project will allow the school to be based on a single site. The project will allow demand for this provision to be met via the increase in capacity from the current 133 pupils to an overall capacity of 220. This will enable the recognised need for a larger school specialising in autism provision for pupils across the County and will have a positive impact on other schools where pupils currently supported in mainstream provision may be able to be admitted to Ysgol Plas Brondyffryn.

The need for this school has been supported by Cabinet, including the submission of a planning application for the preferred site and the proposals are advanced. The School Organisation proposals were determined in February 2023 and the Outline Business Case was approved by Welsh Government in 2022.

The project is currently at RIBA Stage 3 with the planning submission expected in early summer of 2024. The current programme would see construction taking place between Spring 2025 and Summer 2026. There are risks associated with the planning submission and failure to secure approval would see a need for a re-think of the proposals. This would delay the project with an alternative project coming forward in this first element of the rolling programme.

This is a new project for inclusion within the Programme

Ysgol y Castell, Rhuddlan – This project will allow a small extension to 4 classrooms and improvements to general areas of the school. The project will increase the capacity of the school in response to the recent completion of new housing in the village. The secured section 106 contribution is proposed to be used as match funding to enable this project to progress. The scheme has been developed to RIBA Stage 3 with planning permission obtained for the project in September 2023. The Outline Business Justification for the project will be submitted during 2024 with a view to construction commencing shortly afterwards.

Years 4-6

500 words maximum

The following projects were part of Denbighshire's Band B proposals and are intended to be taken over into the rolling programme.

Ysgol Pendref, Denbigh – This project will consolidate provision for the existing 3-11 primary school which is based on two adjoining sites. Both buildings are considered to be in grade C condition and have issues around accessibility and flexibility. The project is currently at RIBA Stage 1. The progression of the current project has involved lengthy discussions around site selection. The conclusion of this has seen a focus now on the existing school site with the options of remodelling and extensions or new build the focus of the current feasibility studies. The current programme would see construction taking place during 2027 to 2028.

Ysgol Bryn Collen / Ysgol Gwernant, Llangollen – This project will provide an upgrade to the existing accommodation for the two primary schools in Llangollen and to ensure future need can be met, particularly for Welsh medium education. Ysgol Gwernant was established as a Welsh medium school in the Ysgol Bryn

Collen site in 2005 and has grown in size. The present arrangements provide limited demarcation between the two schools and the restrictions in provision are impacting delivery in the schools. This project was considered as part of the Sustainable Schools Challenge in late 2022. A revised approach has now been adopted. The project is currently at RIBA Stage 1. Upon completion of this stage the project will be on hold pending design work being resumed in 2026. The current programme would see construction taking place between 2027 and 2029.

Denbigh High School, Denbigh – This project will see the refurbishment / remodelling of the 11-18 English medium secondary school in the town of Denbigh. The project is heavily linked to the Ysgol Plas Brondyffryn project as the secondary provision of Ysgol Plas Brondyffryn is delivered from the Denbigh High School and the proposed location of the new Ysgol Plas Brondyffryn is one of the High School playing fields. The proposal would see the High School utilising the accommodation vacated by Ysgol Plas Brondyffryn and the current accommodation being evaluated for areas which can be demolished, remodelled or rebuilt. The project is at the design brief stage pending the planning determination of the Ysgol Plas Brondyffryn project. The current programme would see construction taking place between 2027 and 2029.

Years 7-9

500 words maximum

Primary School Provision

The focus during 2026 – 2027 will be to identify areas for investment in the primary school estate between 2030 to 2033. At present demand for places sees 5 of Denbighshire's 45 primary schools having a deficit of spaces in excess of 10%. Particularly pressures exist in the North of the County and the focus will be on the areas around Rhyl, Bodelwyddan, St Asaph and Denbigh. This will be reviewed in greater detail to reflect where intervention may be needed via extension of provision. This will need to reflect expectations around reductions in pupil numbers over the next ten years which will create challenges for individual schools.

Secondary School Provision

The investment taken place as part of Band A together with the project to be delivered in Years 1 to 6 at Denbigh will have seen 50% of secondary schools benefiting from significant investment. The work between 2026-2027 in advance of the next SOP will be to identify specific investment in the remaining Secondary

Schools, namely Prestatyn High School, St Brigid's School, Ysgol Brynhyfryd and Ysgol Dinas Bran to enhance the poorest areas of accommodation in Denbighshire's secondary schools. This will allow detailed consideration of projects for potential delivery across years 2030 – 33.

Additional Support for Pupils

Over recent years it has become clear that further consideration is needed to support provision for pupils who need additional support beyond what can be provided in mainstream provision but whose needs may not be appropriate for our special schools. The work during 2024-2026 will be to identify the best approach to alternative provision with clearer recommendations emerging in the next SOP.

The pace of progress will be dependent on available resources and affordability.

Appendix 2 - Strategic Outline Programme

Phase	Project	Total Capital Costs Estimate	WG Capital Contribution	Other Sources	DCC Capital Contribution	DCC annual prudential borrowing cost	Period of annual borrowing cost
2024 - 2027	Ysgol Plas Brondyffryn	£30,751,452	£23,063,589		£7,687,863	£506,246	2027-52
	Ysgol y Castell *	£1,097,143	£713,143		£384,000		
	Total	£31,848,595	£23,776,732		£8,071,863	£506,246	
2027 - 2030	Ysgol Pendref	£11,744,051	£7,633,633		£4,110,418	£270,671	2030-55
	Ysgol Bryn Collen / Ysgol Gwernant	£6,528,686	£4,243,646		£2,285,040	£150,470	2030-55
	Denbigh High School	£17,632,511	£11,461,132		£6,171,379	£406,385	2030-55
	Total	£35,905,249	£23,338,412		£12,566,837	£827,526	
2030 - 2033	Primary School Investment	£30,904,789	£20,088,113		£10,816,676	£712,279	2033-58
	Secondary School Investment	£43,466,595	£29,924,190	£1,253,177	£12,289,228	£809,246	2033-58
	Alternative Support Provision	£14,000,000	£10,500,000		£3,500,000	£230,475	2033-58
	Total	£88,371,384	£60,512,303	£1,253,177	£26,605,904	£1,752,000	
	Overall Total	£156,125,227	£107,627,446	£1,253,177	£47,244,604	£3,085,772	

* DCC Contribution via Section 106 agreements

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Sustainable Communities for Learning - Rolling Programme: Well-being Impact Assessment Report

This report summarises the likely impact of the proposal on the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Denbighshire, Wales and the world.

Assessment Number: 268

Brief description: The proposals for Sustainable Communities for Learning which would be delivered in partnership with the Welsh Government

Date Completed: 01/09/2020 11:51:54 Version: 5

Completed by: James Curran

Responsible Service: Education and Children's Services

Localities affected by the proposal: Whole County,

Who will be affected by the proposal? The proposals will impact on the school communities of Denbighshire directly and indirectly through the investment applied will have an impact on the economic community of Denbighshire and beyond.

Was this impact assessment completed as a group? Yes

Summary and Conclusion

Before we look in detail at the contribution and impact of the proposal, it is important to consider how the proposal is applying the sustainable development principle. This means that we must act "in a manner which seeks to ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."

Score for the sustainability of the approach

3 out of 4 stars

Actual score : 33 / 36.

Summary for each Sustainable Development principle

Long term

The Programme is looking at future investment and requires a long term approach to be considered. Future buildings will need to consider community use and achieve Net Carbon Zero.

Prevention

The proposals will impact on schools based in areas of socio economic disadvantage. The approach for greater community use and links could encourage additional community provision to develop in their communities.

Integration

The proposals will reflect areas of demographic change and likely changes around population, particularly arising from housing development from the Local Development Plan.

Collaboration

Individual projects will be developed with the school community and where appropriate active external stakeholders will be encouraged to contribute to the progression of projects.

Involvement

Sustainable Communities for Learning - Rolling Programme

The extent of consultation will be impacted by whether there is a need for formal consultation for any proposals from a school organisation perspective. This process is prescriptive and includes a number of stages which are mandated. Consultation will also take place with communities as part of the planning process including pre-planning consultation on medium / large sized projects.

Summary of impact

Well-being Goals	Overall Impact
A prosperous Denbighshire	Positive
A resilient Denbighshire	Neutral
A healthier Denbighshire	Positive
A more equal Denbighshire	Positive
A Denbighshire of cohesive communities	Positive
A Denbighshire of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language	Neutral
A globally responsible Denbighshire	Positive

Main conclusions

The progression of the programme for investment for Sustainable Communities for Learning should have a positive impact on Denbighshire. 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. The impact on Welsh Language will be guided by where investment is made.

The likely impact on Denbighshire, Wales and the world.

A prosperous Denbighshire

Overall Impact

Positive

Justification for impact

The investment in Sustainable Communities for Learning will provide school buildings which may be more energy efficient, provide economic regeneration during the construction phase and should increase the skill base of the local labour market. Lessons learnt from previous projects will need to be applied to the future approach to energy management.

Further actions required

The short term nature of construction projects may lead to jobs being available for a limited period. By working with the framework across North Wales to plan projects some of these issues may be overcome.

Positive impacts identified:

A low carbon society

Any projects progressed for new or refurbished buildings are likely to see significant improvements towards energy efficiency in those buildings. Through learning lessons from previous projects and by developing, delivering and managing-in-use zero/low carbon buildings the Sustainable Communities for Learning projects could reduce the running costs for the Authority from both a financial and carbon point of view alongside creating exemplar learning environments.

Quality communications, infrastructure and transport

In many instances we will seek to redevelop existing sites thus minimising change and seeking to take advantage of existing infrastructure. The development of new sites may encourage neighbouring sites to become active assisting development opportunities. The provision of new sites could act as a catalyst for investment in super fast broadband etc.

Economic development

The projects will contribute towards economic regeneration via the indicators to secure local spend and employment as part of the contract. The securement of contracts for local suppliers and trades will boost economic conditions in the short term.

Quality skills for the long term

An emphasis will be placed on employment of apprentices and work experience opportunities. The application of framework requirements should assist to enhance the skill base of the local labour market and allow such apprentices to be seen to be more skilled for the future.

Quality jobs for the long term

The main boost for quality jobs will be during the construction phase which will generally be between 12 - 24 months.

Childcare

The projects will seek to examine options for pre-school provision to be located with schools. This will be developed based on existing provision to ensure that a balance is achieved to ensure that existing providers remain viable.

Negative impacts identified:

A low carbon society

Projects which involve refurbishment will provide greater challenges in achieving net carbon zero within existing buildings.

The overall number of journeys within an area will be increased via the construction project. This will include delivery of materials and the travel of site workers. The re-location of schools may create additional journeys for pupils.

Quality communications, infrastructure and transport

No negative impacts identified.

Economic development

No negative impacts identified.

Quality skills for the long term

The need for increased training opportunities through the community benefits requirements may lead to a number of skilled operatives unable to secure long term jobs.

Quality jobs for the long term

The short term nature of the construction industry may lead to scenarios where trained up apprentices are unable to secure long term employment.

Childcare

No negative impacts identified.

A resilient Denbighshire

Overall Impact

Neutral

Justification for impact

The development of new sites or significant refurbishments could have an unintended negative consequence on the landscape of Denbighshire as the period of construction will lead to a disturbance of the natural environment. Any proposals will seek to mitigate these impacts.

Further actions required

Where possible design site layouts to ensure disruption is kept to a minimum and areas such as hedgerows be retained where possible. All projects will be required to consider diversity issues and undertake environmental impact assessments as part of the statutory planning process. Consideration will need to be given to the future use of redundant sites which may arise from these proposals and how these may be used to assist targets re becoming net carbon zero by 2030.

Positive impacts identified:

Biodiversity and the natural environment

Within the external layout of school sites opportunities to preserve or enhance natural habitats will be maximised to allow such areas to be used to deliver the curriculum.

Biodiversity in the built environment

Options will be explored for new buildings to have nesting / roosting areas elsewhere on the site should existing habitat's be disturbed in the provision of a new / refurbished building.

Reducing waste, reusing and recycling

Projects are encouraged to meet stringent recycling targets and minimise waste being taken off site. Where demolition takes place unused rubble is sought to be kept onsite for use as base materials for car parks etc.

Reduced energy/fuel consumption

The improvement to buildings will lead to energy efficiency. Any rationalisation of buildings in poor condition will also have a positive impact on energy consumption.

People's awareness of the environment and biodiversity

The development of projects will give the opportunity for pupils and the local community to become more aware of the existing habitat where a project is taking place. Scope for contractors supporting biodiversity projects will be actively pursued.

Flood risk management

The selection of any site will consider land use policies and relevant WG guidance. Where any risk does arise the need to engineer a solution could lead to an overall reduction in flood risk.

Negative impacts identified:

Biodiversity and the natural environment

Development of new school buildings on green spaces is likely to have a greater impact on the

natural environment which will need to be mitigated with supportive measures.

Biodiversity in the built environment

The refurbishment or demolition of existing properties is likely to lead to the disturbance of wildlife who may occupy such properties.

Reducing waste, reusing and recycling

In many instances the buildings may be in a condition where they need replacing rather than refurbishment. This will require careful consideration to the treatment of the waste arising from the disused building.

Reduced energy/fuel consumption

Should the number of school sites be reduced there is a risk that traffic patterns for parents / pupils may be amended with longer journeys required. Refurbishment of buildings may present greater challenges to ensure that optimum energy management processes can be achieved.

People's awareness of the environment and biodiversity

Concerns may arise from the amendments to the local habitat leading to resistance to any individual project.

Flood risk management

There is a risk that the development of sites will reduce the extent of permeable land and increase risk of flood in extreme weather.

A healthier Denbighshire

Overall Impact

Positive

Justification for impact

The development of improved school buildings can have a positive impact on health by providing safer transport links with pedestrian and cycle access considered as part of the design. Improved learning environments can have a positive impact on the mental well-being of pupils and staff through better planned facilities which seek to maximise natural light etc.

Further actions required

Such buildings are likely to be utilised more by the community and this needs to be considered very carefully in the design process. The change process can have a detrimental impact on people's emotional and mental well-being and the planning for transition needs to be considered sympathetically, and where appropriate individual plans may be required for pupils.

Positive impacts identified:

A social and physical environment that encourage and support health and well-being

Any project will consider as a matter of course issues around access for the community both in terms of physical accessibility to the site and also how the building and site can be better utilised by the community outside of core school hours.

Access to good quality, healthy food

Any improvements to schools will see consideration to the catering experience for pupils attending schools. The investment in kitchen areas will enable improvements to the provision, and in recent projects there has been an increase in the number of pupils accessing school meals following the improvements in this area.

People's emotional and mental well-being

An improved learning environment will improve staff, pupil and community morale. The design of classrooms to modern standards will produce a better emotional environment for pupils i.e. noise reduction in classrooms, light levels. Consideration will be given to support areas within school buildings for pupils with greater requirements for designated support.

Access to healthcare

Options for community links for projects may have a positive impact via links with Health and the provision of support services from school sites.

Participation in leisure opportunities

The development of school facilities, particularly at secondary level may see consideration to the improvement in leisure facilities.

Negative impacts identified:

A social and physical environment that encourage and support health and well-being

No negative impacts identified.

Access to good quality, healthy food

No negative impacts identified.

People's emotional and mental well-being

Any change in provision can lead to resistance from staff, pupils, parents etc. Disruption may occur to local residents during the construction phase and we will work with contractors to minimise the impact of issues.

Access to healthcare

No negative impacts identified.

Participation in leisure opportunities

Improvements to school safeguarding may decrease access to school sites and informal play on school sites out of hours.

A more equal Denbighshire

Overall Impact

Positive

Justification for impact

The design of schools will be considered carefully to eliminate areas of concern which could be a barrier for people with protected characteristics.

Further actions required

Ongoing consultation with the schools to minimise the short term impact on pupils during any construction phases.

Positive impacts identified:

Improving the well-being of people with protected characteristics. The nine protected characteristics are: age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage or civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation

All projects will consider accessibility as a key theme during the design stage to ensure that pupils with a disability are not denied access to the full learning experience. Consideration has been given to the provision of unisex toilets or non designation of toilet areas to ensure that transgender users are not discriminated against.

People who suffer discrimination or disadvantage

The proposals will equally positively impact on all groups.

People affected by socio-economic disadvantage and unequal outcomes

By improving the educational offer through new school facilities the performance of pupils could improve increasing scope for gaining employment.

Areas affected by socio-economic disadvantage

The provision of improved facilities in areas of socio-economic deprivation can lead to an improvement to the sense of value of individuals. This could be via improved access to learning to provide the route for children to escape existing inequalities. The scope for improved community access will also be considered during this process.

Negative impacts identified:

Improving the well-being of people with protected characteristics. The nine protected characteristics are: age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage or civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation

Careful consideration will be needed to ensure that during any phasing of projects, particularly with refurbishments, that access to the learning environment is not reduced. The interim arrangements may impact the wellbeing of pupils and consideration will be given to how this may be mitigated.

People who suffer discrimination or disadvantage

No negative impacts identified.

People affected by socio-economic disadvantage and unequal outcomes

No negative impacts identified.

Areas affected by socio-economic disadvantage

No negative impacts identified.

A Denbighshire of cohesive communities

Overall Impact

Positive

Justification for impact

By careful and considered design improved facilities can provide a positive impact on cohesive communities by providing facilities which can draw together the local community.

Further actions required

The construction stage is likely to have a negative impact on the local community on a short term basis. The project team will need to work with the contractor and the local community to minimise risks and to ensure clear communication at key times.

Positive impacts identified:

Safe communities and individuals

The design of any projects will ensure that careful consideration is given to site safety both during the construction phase and then when the site is fully occupied. Where possible improved surveillance will be sought in the design of buildings with passive supervision encouraged. Safeguarding will be considered with a clear demarcation between public and private zones both within the building and the overall site.

Community participation and resilience

The design of the school with more community access could allow the scope for local groups to use the sites, particularly outside of school hours. Consideration should be given to the provision of other activities taking place at the site.

The attractiveness of the area

The design of the buildings should enhance any area and this will be considered at the planning stage and form part of the consultation.

Connected communities

Issues around access to school will be considered as part of the planning process for any proposals / projects. Links to potential active travel routes to schools will be promoted as appropriate.

Rural resilience

Proposals will consider the impact on the rural community of any change in provision.

Negative impacts identified:

Safe communities and individuals

The construction phase will have an impact on the community via increased traffic and access to the site for employees and the delivery of building supplies. This could have an impact on individuals during this phase.

Community participation and resilience

In considering community facilities there is a need to ensure that the overall provision is not saturated leading to existing providers becoming unviable.

The attractiveness of the area

The construction phase is likely to have a short term detrimental impact on the local community. If any sites or buildings are no longer to be used a clear direction for the future use of the site should be considered at the business case stage of the project.

Connected communities

Proposals for change may require amendments to school locations and this may impact on existing patterns within the community.

Rural resilience

The loss of facilities in the rural community can have a negative impact on rural resilience and any proposal would need to consider options to negate any areas.

A Denbighshire of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language

Overall Impact

Neutral

Justification for impact

The impact will be dependent upon whether investment is made in schools / areas to promote Welsh Medium education. Without confirmation of projects it is difficult to confirm whether this is positive. As part of Band A of 21st Century Schools Programme the Council has invested significantly to increase access to Welsh Medium education. The Council has also recently received permission to submit business cases for investment in Welsh Medium Capital Projects by the Welsh Government. This investment to meet current need will need to be considered carefully in determining which projects move forward and whether they will impact on the Welsh Language.

Further actions required

Ensure that overall the benefits for Welsh Medium education are understood by parents when making decisions regarding school choices.

Positive impacts identified:

People using Welsh

An increase in capacity for Welsh Medium education will be a key theme nationally for the Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme and reflects the priorities in the Corporate Plan. An increase in the number of Welsh learners could increase the overall number of speakers within Denbighshire and Wales.

Promoting the Welsh language

The building should be encouraged to deliver bilingual signage within the school should it be an English medium school. All public areas will be required to have bilingual signage. Communication with residents and the local community will be bilingual.

Culture and heritage

Consideration will be given in the design stage to the local heritage of an area so that any building is sympathetic to its neighbourhood.

Negative impacts identified:

People using Welsh

The development of new facilities for English medium schools could see parents choose English medium schools rather than Welsh medium based on the quality of facilities rather than the offer available.

Promoting the Welsh language

No negative impacts identified

Culture and heritage

No negative impacts identified

A globally responsible Denbighshire

Overall Impact

Positive

Justification for impact

The procurement of contractors and the subsequent construction periods should have a positive impact. Adherence to procurement regulations and statutory responsibilities around Health and Safety will ensure that the projects address such areas. The requirement for Net Carbon Zero buildings as part of the Programme will support Denbighshire's position around reducing climate change.

Further actions required

Ensure that the requirements of the programme on a local and regional level are communicated to Framework providers so they are aware of future workstreams.

Positive impacts identified:

Local, national, international supply chains

The provision of new projects will include community benefits as a key part of the procurement process. This will ensure that the local supply chain can be involved in projects. Main contractors will be encouraged to hold meet the buyer events and provide opportunities for local suppliers to compete for work.

Human rights

All contractors will be expected to have first class health and safety procedures in place and these will be rigorously examined during the delivery of the project. Workers employed during the process will be expected to be treated equitably.

Broader service provision in the local area or the region

The scoping of projects for the Programme will consider co-location of services on school sites to improve the overall quality of service for the community.

Reducing climate change

The proposed programme will have a positive contribution to the Council becoming Net Carbon Zero by 2030. Welsh Government announced that from 1st January 2022 all new build projects will be required to demonstrate delivery of Net Zero Carbon in operation.

Negative impacts identified:

Local, national, international supply chains

Risk that an increase in work creates unintended issues for the capacity of the local supply chain.

Human rights

No negative impacts identified

Broader service provision in the local area or the region

No negative impacts identified

Reducing climate change

Projects which involve refurbishment will provide greater challenges in achieving net carbon zero within existing buildings.

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