

THE VALE OF GLAMORGAN COUNCIL

CABINET: 18TH FEBRUARY 2019

REFERENCE FROM LEARNING AND CULTURE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE:
15TH JANUARY, 2019

“664 21ST CENTURY SCHOOLS PROGRAMME – BAND B UPDATE AND
CURRENT POSITION (REF) –

Cabinet had referred the report on 7th January, 2019 for the Committee’s consideration. The Chairman thanked the Cabinet Member for agreeing to her request for the report to be referred to the Scrutiny Committee and also took the opportunity to congratulate Jane O’Leary on returning to the Council in the position of Operational Manager for 21st Century Schools.

The report outlined that Cabinet approval had been sought to amend the proposed Band B phase of the 21st Century Schools Programme following the recently announced changes affecting Welsh Government’s intervention rate for funding.

The report highlighted that on 21st November, 2018, Welsh Government and the WLGA had issued a joint statement announcing a change to the Welsh Government intervention rate for the 21st Century Schools Programme. Welsh Government funding for non-Faith school schemes would increase from 50% to 65%. A new intervention rate was introduced for facilities for those pupils with Additional Learning Needs (ALN) and those in Pupil Referral Units (PRU) at 75% Welsh Government funding.

The Council had also issued an e-mail to Welsh Government for further clarification on the changes with the responses received as follows:

The intervention rates were confirmed at:

- 65/35 (Mainstream)
- 75/25 (ALN and PRU provision)
- Faith schemes remained at 85/15
- Mutual Investment Model (MIM) schemes remained at 75/25 for non-Faith schools and 85/15 for Faith schools.

All existing projects in the Schools Organisation Programme would receive the new intervention rate, however there was no additional funding. Welsh Government had confirmed the ability to mix and match intervention rates between projects, as long as they all fell within the existing envelope. The Council was able to request an increase to the funding envelope although approval would be subject to Welsh Government's availability of capital funding.

The impact of the changes was outlined in paragraph 11 to the report, with Committee being informed that as a result of the intervention rate change Welsh Government funding would increase from £84.567m to £101.074m whilst the Council's funding would reduce from £59.337m to £42.830m. This would release £16.507m within the Band B Capital Programme.

The report noted that there was currently a new build for Whitmore High School planned and amending the programme to include a new build for Pencoedtre High School would have the following benefits:

- equality across the two English-medium community schools serving Barry;
- reduced ongoing revenue costs for Pencoedtre High School;
- reduced reliance on the Council's capital asset renewal programme;
- BREEAM excellent achieved at Pencoedtre High School;
- less disruption to teaching and learning during the build process as the full refurbishment would be in a live school environment. The new build would be completed separate to the existing school building;
- 21st Century Learning environments throughout Pencoedtre High School;
- all areas of the new building would be compliant with Building Bulletin;
- improved facilities available for community use.

There was also additional investment and relocation for a new Centre of Learning and Wellbeing. The Centre for Behavioural Excellence had been originally included as part of the Whitmore High School scheme and would be built adjacent to the new school. The Centre for Behavioural Excellence was intended to replace the Pupil Referral Unit based at Amelia Trust Farm.

Discussions had been ongoing regarding the provision and of the need to ensure that it was able to provide a therapeutic approach. The Whitmore High School site was no longer deemed suitable for this form of therapeutic provision due to the limited outside space. A number of options were currently being explored and the name had been changed to the Centre for Learning and Wellbeing. It was proposed that additional funding be also allocated to the Centre for Learning and Wellbeing scheme to ensure sufficient funding was available to meet the proposed provision. The Council would conduct a programme of engagement with all stakeholders regarding the development of this provision, should this investment be agreed.

The revised Programme which reflected the proposed changes was outlined in paragraph 25 of the report.

In considering the report, all Members accepted that it now made sense for parity to the schools i.e. Pencoedtre and Whitmore High, with the changes in the intervention rate affording the Council more opportunities.

Following a query as to whether the department had figures of demographic pupil need for the two schools, Members were advised that these figures were available and that it had been evident that although pupils had a choice more and more pupils were staying in the school in their area. In referring to the increase in places at

Ysgol y Deri, Members enquired whether all places were taken up by Vale residents. The Head of Achievement for All advised that currently there were still a number of pupils from out of county assessing placements but these were reducing and, in the main, the Head of Service advised that the growth was from the Vale of Glamorgan itself and the rise in children and young people who could not be catered for in mainstream schools. Although of note was also the fact that there had been a provision in the original contract of an agreement with Cardiff Council to provide a set number of places. It was noted that the criteria for admitting to Ysgol y Deri had changed over the years and was more stringent than it had previously been. The rise in numbers was due to the increase in complexity of need. It was also agreed that in future reports the decimal point not be included in the figures.

In commenting on the funding profile, the Chairman advised that a recent press release had quoted figures of £59.3m (Local Authority funding) and £84.5m (Welsh Government) as opposed to £47,950m for Local Authority and £95,841m for Welsh Government as outlined in paragraph 25 of the report. The Cabinet Member for Learning and Culture agreed to look into the query with the Communications Team and report back to Members accordingly. The Committee were also mindful of the Council's contribution to the programme reducing by £11.37m with the Chairman suggesting that this be utilised for older primary school refurbishment.

In querying where the site for the Centre for Behavioural Excellence was likely to be, Members were informed that this was currently being considered and that the officer was unable to provide any detailed information at this stage.

Having considered the report, it was subsequently

RECOMMENDED –

- (1) T H A T the contents of the report be noted.
- (2) T H A T the Committee urges the Cabinet to consider that the £11.387m being the reduction in the Council's contribution for the 21st Century schools be utilised for older primary schools that required attention and / or refurbishment.

Reasons for recommendations

- (1) Having regard to the contents and terms in the report.
- (2) In order that other primary schools within the Vale of Glamorgan that needed attention could receive funding for refurbishment and that the money be ring fenced for such works.”