



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

20TH SEPTEMBER 2018

**CONTINUING TO IMPROVE PRIMARY EDUCATION PROVISION IN
RHONDDA CYNON TAF**

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND INCLUSION
SERVICES IN DISCUSSION WITH THE CABINET MEMBER FOR
EDUCATION, COUNCILLOR J ROSSER.**

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1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to seek Members approval to utilise Welsh Government and Council funding to:
- Invest £2.595m in improving the school buildings of 4 primary schools;
 - Invest £1.6m to reduce infant class sizes by employing additional staff in 6 primary schools.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Cabinet:

- 2.1 Note the information contained within this report in relation to the grant to reduce infant class sizes.
- 2.2 Note the receipt of £1.6 million of capital funding from Welsh Government for this initiative.
- 2.3 Note the additional receipt of £1.384 million of revenue funding from Welsh Government for this initiative.
- 2.4 Agree to include the 3 grant funded schemes outlined in paragraph 4.5 in the capital programme.
- 2.5 Agree to include the £995,000 investment in Ffynnon Taf Primary School in the capital programme.

- 2.6 Approve the release of £395,000 of CIL monies to contribute to the £995,000 cost of the school improvements works in Ffynnon Taf Primary School.

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To inform Members of the receipt of grant monies from Welsh Government and CIL receipts and to appraise them of the future expenditure plans and proposals for these monies.

4. BACKGROUND

Reduction of Infant Class Sizes

- 4.1 In May 2017, the Council was invited by Welsh Government to submit a grant bid and business case to apply for monies to reduce infant class sizes across the County Borough. There were two elements to this funding; revenue monies to employ additional staff and capital monies to construct classroom accommodation at schools with little, or no spare capacity to allow for the opening of additional classes.

- 4.2 The criteria by which schools were assessed for eligibility for funding were as follows:

Classes of 29 or over (in the Foundation Phase) in schools, where schools demonstrate at least one or a combination of the following:

- Significant levels of free school meals;
- Below average outcomes and where a school is judged to be red or amber;
- Significant levels of special educational and additional learning needs;
- Significant levels of where Welsh/English is not the first language.

- 4.3 The grant submission was returned to Welsh Government by the prescribed deadline of 31st July 2017. In March 2018 (see Appendix1), we were advised that we had been successful in obtaining revenue grant funding for the purpose of employing additional teachers and support staff at the following schools:

- Gelli Primary School
- Llanharan Primary School
- Parclewis Primary School
- Pontygwaith Primary School
- Penywaun Primary School
- YGG, Llyn y Forwyn

All of the aforementioned schools met at least two of the criteria listed overleaf; some met three.

- 4.4 The schools made arrangements to appoint staff, on a temporary basis from April, 2018 and subsequently re-organised classes in their Foundation Phase to reduce numbers to under 29 pupils in each class. Due to the short notice given, some of the schools employed agency staff, but have since made temporary appointments to commence in September 2018. The posts are funded until March 2019 in the first instance, with the grant being considered for renewal by Welsh Government on an annual basis until March 2021.
- 4.5 In addition to the revenue funding for staff, a bid for capital monies to increase teaching space at three of the above schools was made. We have recently been advised that we have been successful in this bid, which totalled £1.6 million and is fully funded by Welsh Government (see Appendix 2 for Grant approval letter). The schools that will benefit, with details of the work to be undertaken are as follows:
- Gelli Primary School – 2 classroom extension block and external play area improvements - £800,000
 - Llanharan Primary School – 2 classroom extension block and external play area improvements - £600,000
 - Parclewis Primary School – Internal remodelling and refurbishment to create an additional teaching space, external play area improvements and other upgrades to improve safeguarding arrangements – £200,000

Officers from the Corporate Estates and Education Departments have already visited each of the above schools to commence the scoping and planning of these works, which will commence in the Spring Term of 2019.

5.0 Ffynnon Taf Primary School

- 5.1 Members will be aware that the previous system of requesting monies from housing developers to provide for additional school places changed, for certain areas of the County Borough, from Section 106 payments to the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) in January 2015. This applies in the main to areas in the south of the County Borough; areas in the north, such as the Cynon Valley and Rhondda Valleys are 'zero rated' for CIL and, should payments be requested to provide for any school places that may be required in these areas, the Section 106 process still applies.
- 5.2 Prior to the introduction of CIL, several Section 106 payments were received in respect of new housing developments in the Taffs Well area, and these were utilised to undertake remodelling and

refurbishment works at Ffynnon Taf Primary School, to create some additional capacity to cater for children living in the new houses.

- 5.3 Ffynnon Taf Primary School is a traditional, Victorian style school built in 1878. It consists of two separate Infant and Junior blocks that are located at either side of a large yard area. In addition to the work outlined above to increase capacity, the Council has also committed considerable capital funds to the school in recent years (£300k), to improve the school and also to improve safeguarding arrangements. A double mobile classroom was also added to the site three years ago to help to cater for the growing number of children from within the catchment area who require places at the school.
- 5.4 However, further modernisation works are required to improve the school further as part of the Council School Modernisation Programme. Therefore, in line with procedures for the allocation and spending of CIL monies as agreed by Cabinet on the 23rd July 2015, officers of the Council have followed due process outlined in the report.
- 5.5 The proposal therefore for Ffynnon Taf Primary School is to invest £995,000, of which £395,000 is funded from the central CIL fund to undertake further improvements at Ffynnon Taf, and to replace the temporary mobile classrooms with a permanent build extension. Design and survey work will progress this Autumn together with an application to Development Control with an anticipated start on start in Spring 2019 with a view that work will be completed by the Autumn term in the 2019/20 academic year. The additional capital funding required of £600,000 would be from existing resources within the Education Capital Programme or from any other capital funding that can be secured from Welsh Government or other sources.

6 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Equality and Community Impact Assessments are not required in respect of these proposals, but all work undertaken at the schools detailed will ensure that the schools are fully accessible and compliant with the Equality Act 2010.

7 CONSULTATION

- 7.1 As the capacities of the schools listed will not increase by 25% of total current capacity, no statutory consultation is required under the School Organisation Code. We will however undertake informal consultation with the schools concerned, including with pupils, school staff, governors and parents where possible.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 The total amount of indicative grant funding to be received from Welsh Government in respect of the Infant Class size Grant is:

- Revenue funding for staff costs - £1,384,904
- Capital funding for building improvements - £1,600,000

Receipt of this funding will be up to March 2021 for the revenue costs, we expect the capital funds to be received once the planned building works are due to commence. This grant is funded 100% by Welsh Government.

8.2 The money to be expended on Ffynnon Taf Primary is £995,000 utilising funds of £395,000 from the CIL budget and £600,000 from existing resources within the Education Capital Programme.

9 LINKS TO THE COUNCILS CORPORATE PLAN / OTHER CORPORATE PRIORITIES AND THE WELL BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT

9.1 The Council's Corporate Plan commits to "Continue to invest in improving school buildings, to ensure the County Borough's pupils have the learning environment fit for the 21st Century." The proposals considered in the report have taken into account the seven well-being goals and the five ways of working.

10 CONCLUSION

10.1 Members are asked to note the additional planned investment of over £2.5 million on our school buildings, which is in addition to the sums being invested through our annual capital programme and the £160M 21st Century Schools Programme. The additional revenue funding of almost £1.385 million for school staff should also be noted.

Other Information:-

Relevant Scrutiny Committee: Children and Young People

Contact Officers

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LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

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Background Papers

None.

Officer to contact:

