



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

24TH JUNE 2021

ADDITIONAL REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE INVESTMENT IN SCHOOLS

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND INCLUSION SERVICES IN DISCUSSIONS WITH THE CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION (COUNCILLOR MRS J ROSSER)

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1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide Members with details of further repairs and maintenance works for approval for 2021/22 as a result of additional funding awarded by Welsh Government in March 2021 and supplemented by the Council's earmarked reserves.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Cabinet:

- 2.1 Agree the additional schemes for 2021/22 as outlined in Appendix 1 and to approve scheme commencement.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To continue to deliver the Council's long term school modernisation improvement programme supporting one of the Council's Corporate Plan Priorities: 'Prosperity – Creating the opportunity for people and businesses to: be innovative; be entrepreneurial; and fulfil their potential and prosper'.
- 3.2 These works will continue to support schools, improve our building stock and address essential condition and health and safety issues across the school estate. It will also continue to ensure school buildings are able to comply with Welsh Government operational guidance as we continue to work with the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic.

4. **BACKGROUND**

- 4.1 Members will be aware that additional funding of £3.580M has been allocated to the Council for the repairs and maintenance of our schools. This investment has been allocated by the Welsh Government and generously topped up with Council Investment funding, providing support to continue to deliver the Council's long-term strategic investment programme of modernisation. This additional funding, approved by Cabinet on the 29th April 2021, will build upon the success already realised through our school modernisation programme and will create more 21st Century School environments to provide the best learning provision, supporting successful outcomes for our young people and the wider community.
- 4.2 The Council, over the last year, has supported schools to meet Welsh Government's Covid-19 operational guidance. This has proved challenging given the diverse nature of our school sites and buildings. Some of our schools are better placed to accommodate the required safety protocols than others due to the age, design and the type of buildings we have in our portfolio, and as a result we have faced challenges in terms of providing flexible spaces, adequate circulation areas, well-ventilated areas and fit for purpose spaces to support outside learning.
- 4.3 This additional investment will deliver improvements to the learning environment, as well as ensuring we provide well-ventilated spaces and enhanced outdoor areas, that allow pupils to move around the school premises safely whilst adhering to the safety guidance. One of the Council's most successful interventions in schools over the last difficult year has been the provision of outdoor canopies. These have been well utilised for both teaching and learning and provide that all important additional, useable, external space, taking the pressure off the indoor environment. The Council is keen to replicate this success and deliver even more provision in our schools.
- 4.4 The proposed investment in schools will have an immediate impact and the table below provides details of the focus on ventilation, outdoor teaching spaces, hygiene and essential repairs to the school buildings, allowing maximum use of spaces whilst continuing to improve the learning environment.

Schools	£M
External canopies to create outdoor teaching areas	0.700
Improved ventilation	0.300
New toilet and hygiene areas	0.600
Roofing works	0.500
General repairs to the fabric of buildings	0.680
Upgrade classrooms to 21 st Century Schools Standard	0.500
New external doors and windows	0.300
Total	3.580

4.5 Appendix 1 provides more details of the proposed schemes across our school sites, broken down by each of the funding categories.

4.6 Given the already busy programme for the summer period, these works will be carried out as soon as practicable, in full consultation and collaboration with the individual schools, to mitigate any disruption and ensure continued operation of all schools at this challenging time.

5. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS/SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY

5.1 The proposed schemes have given due consideration to equality issues particularly in relation to access to our school premises. Schools are a key part of our communities and as such it is important that they are well maintained, accessible and 'fit for purpose'.

5.2 As this report isn't seeking permission to implement a proposal in respect of a change of function, service, strategy or policy, it is deemed that an EqIA is not required in this instance. To clarify, the funding arrangements as detailed within this report were previously approved by Cabinet on the 29th April 2021.

6. WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS

6.1 As this report isn't seeking permission to implement a proposal in respect of a change of function, service, strategy or policy, it is deemed that a Welsh Language Impact Assessment is not required in this instance. The funding arrangements as detailed within this report were previously approved by Cabinet on the 29th April 2021.

7. CONSULTATION/INVOLVEMENT

7.1 There are no statutory consultation implications as a result of the recommendations set out in this report. Schools have been consulted with individually and have identified priority areas for consideration at their school sites, and these are reflected at Appendix 1. Subject to the decision of Cabinet, further collaboration will be undertaken with each school setting to deliver the agreed programme of works in a suitable and mutually agreed time period.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

8.1 The financial implications of the recommendations are set out in the report. The proposed investment priorities are fully funded from flexibility provided by WG grants and Council resources already set aside for this purpose.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

9.1 The legislation considered in compiling this report is the 'Keeping Learners Safe' - the role of local authorities, governing bodies and proprietors of independent schools under the Education Act 2002.

10. LINKS TO THE CORPORATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT

- 10.1 There are links to RCTCBC's Corporate Plan for the period between 2020 to 2024, specifically the priority:
- Prosperity
 - Creating the opportunity for people and businesses to be innovative, entrepreneurial and fulfil their potential and prosper;
 - Ensuring we have good schools, so all children have access to a great education.
- 10.2 Due regard has been made to all seven well-being goals and the Five Ways of Working, as contained within the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, which requires the Council to think about the long-term impact of decisions, on communities to prevent consistent issues such as poverty, health inequalities and climate change.

This proposal would contribute to achieving the wellbeing goals by:

- Planning for the 'long term', helping to 'prevent' problems occurring or getting worse in the future and delivering services in 'collaboration' with others.

This proposal would achieve the five ways of working by:

- Improving school environments that can deliver the new Curriculum for Wales.
- Improving sustainability of school buildings in the Council portfolio through a commitment to reducing our carbon emissions.
- Provide first class learning facilities for pupils and the wider community and contribute towards a healthier Wales by providing additional outdoor facilities for pupils.
- Contributing towards a prosperous Wales by committing to opportunities for local tradespeople and to use local resources, wherever possible to undertake the works to schools.

11. CONCLUSION

- 11.1 This report recommends opportunities to invest £3.580M of additional works at our schools, through funding supported by WG and the Council. The recommendations set out in the report will have an immediate impact on improving the fabric of the schools, enhancing the learning environments both internally and externally, and providing improved facilities for the schools' communities that they serve. The plan of improvement works will contribute to improvements in a wide range of physical environments benefiting pupils, staff, young people and members of the public.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

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Item:

Background Papers

Relevant Scrutiny Committee

Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee

Officer to contact:

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