
SCHOOL ORGANISATION PROGRAMME UPDATE REPORT

Purpose of Report

1. To provide Members with the opportunity to carry out pre-decision scrutiny of the report to Cabinet, attached at **Appendix A**, prior to its consideration by the Cabinet at its meeting on the 19th March 2020. The purpose of the attached report is to update Cabinet on progress in developing the Council's education estate in Cardiff, including the delivery of new provision under the 21st Century Schools programme in relation to the Local Development Plan (LDP), and the enhanced asset maintenance programme in relation to the existing estate.

Background

2. The report outlines the significant improvements that has been achieved as a result the investment in the development of the education estates in Cardiff. The Band A phase of the Welsh Government 21st Century Schools Programme, saw investment in circa £164 million to expand the number of both English and Welsh medium places between 2014 and 2019.
3. Further developments of the education estate in Cardiff is set out in the Council's proposed vision for its Band B 21st Century School strategy to address the most acute sufficiency and condition issues in Cardiff. The implementation of Band B has resulted in an additional £25million to education asset renewal in 2018 with £6million to be used to implement plans to ensure the suitability of existing provision to meet Additional Learning Needs (ALN). Combined with the existing £3 million each year, this brought together a total of £40million over a 5-year period invested in improving the condition and suitability of the school estate.

4. The report also cited that in July 2018, the Cabinet approved proposals relating to capacity and governance of the Council's school estate development programme and had authorised the establishment of the Post of Programme Director, School Organisation, on fixed-term for three years.
5. The range of school estate developments and improvements that were delivered between 2014-2019 as a result of the £164m investment from the 21st Century Schools Band A programme are also highlighted in the report. This includes the two large-scale investments that transformed education in each end of the southern arc, serving some of the most disadvantaged areas of the city. Significant investments and expansion were made in Welsh medium education, and a new English Medium primary school. The programme also saw the delivery and initial improvements of the ALN provision such as the extension of Ty Gwyn and expansion of places in other Specialist Resource Bases (SRBs) in mainstream schools for pupils with autism spectrum conditions.
6. The report further outlines progress made as a result of the 21st century Schools Band B programme. It also identifies the key challenges facing the city in relation to its Local Development Plan and the increasing demand for school places in the next 10 years and beyond. Other challenges such as the climate change implications for future development of education, the response and adaptation to demographic changes and demand for school places and the ALN provision in the city. Furthermore, the report also highlights the requirement to develop the uptake of Welsh medium education - which aims 40% places in other Specialist Resource Bases (SRBs) located in mainstream schools, particularly for pupils with autism spectrum conditions.
7. The report identifies and highlights issues including the risks and challenges facing the SOP in the next 10 years. Key to these, relates to how the development of school estates deliver carbon neutral investment, and a focus on the role schools in a more sustainable spatial strategy. The report also highlights the challenges posed by population growth in the city and its potential impact on school provision. The need for the Council to ensure that effective procurement delivers value for money as well as the effective monitoring and control of programme spend is cited, alongside well as ensuring that the programme delivers benefits to significant community interests.

Furthermore, the report also draws attention to the associated risks relating to the tenure of the senior officer i.e. Programme Director who is responsible for the oversight, direction and delivery of the programme

Financial Implications

8. The report outlines a number of significant financial implications arising from the current financial position of the programme that needs consideration in the future delivery of the programme. It highlights the significant risks associated with the funding and the potential for increased costs due to a change in scope, unforeseen cost or the general impact of inflation in relation to the affordability of the schemes. Also highlighted is the need to monitor the impact of the climate change considerations and the impact that sustainability requirements may have upon the scope and costs of schemes.
9. The specifics of the recommendations, financial and legal implications will be shared at the Committee meeting.

Scrutiny Legal Implication

10. The Scrutiny Committee is empowered to enquire, consider, review and recommend but not to make policy decisions. As the recommendations in this report are to consider and review matters, there are no direct legal implications. However, legal implications may arise when the matters under review are implemented with or without any modifications. Any report with recommendations for decision that goes to Cabinet/Council will set out any legal implications arising from those recommendations. All decisions taken by or on behalf of the Council must (a) be within the legal powers of the Council; (b) comply with any procedural requirement imposed by law; (c) be within the powers of the body or person exercising powers on behalf of the Council; (d) be undertaken in accordance with the procedural requirements imposed by the Council e.g. Scrutiny Procedure Rules; (e) be fully and properly informed; (f) be properly motivated; (g) be taken having regard to the Council's fiduciary duty to its taxpayers; and (h) be reasonable and proper in all the circumstances.

Scope of Scrutiny

11. The scope of this scrutiny is for Members to consider and provide comments on the draft report to Cabinet, prior to its consideration of the report on 19th of March 2020.

Way Forward

12. Councillor Sarah Merry (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Education Employment, Skills), Nick Batchelar (Director of Education and Lifelong learning), will present the report to the Committee, and be available to answer any questions Members may have.

13. This report will also enable Members to provide any comments, concerns or recommendations to the Cabinet Member prior to its consideration by Cabinet.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is recommended to:

- a) Review and assess the information contained in the draft Cabinet Report, attached at **Appendix A**, together with any information provided at the meeting;
- b) Provide any recommendations, comments or advice to the Cabinet Member and / or Director of Education and Lifelong Learning prior to the report's consideration by Cabinet.

Davina Fiore

Director of Governance and Legal Services

5 March 2020