

**Business Case Addendum**

**Local authority name – NPT**

**Project name – Swansea Valley Primary**

**Business case stage – SOC/OBC**

**BCSG meeting date – 15 July 2020**

**Addendum date – 20 July 2020**

## Business Case Addendum

### Local Authority response to Welsh Government following queries raised at the Business Case Scrutiny Group meeting on 15 July 2020.

#### 1. School Admissions

The projected pupil numbers do not seem to support the need for a new school for 630 FT pupils and 140 PT pupils. On page 15 there is a table showing the capacities, NOR and pupil projections for the 3 schools.

	Capacity	NOR 2020	NOR 2024
Altwen	239	231	224
Godre'rgraig	161	144	136
Llangiwg	147	127	98
Total	547	502	458

This would suggest a new school with 490 to 510 FT places. Can the LA provide evidence of increasing demand for places in the future such approval for significant house building in the area?

The LA offers a number of options but these are limited to do minimum rebuild Godre'r Graig with a capacity of 150 and do nothing to the other 2 schools and variations close all 3 schools on build a new school with 630 capacity. Did the LA consider other options like close 2 schools, build one new school and refurbish the 3rd or close all 3 schools and build 2 new schools? Could we see why these options were dismissed?

#### LA Response:

In the last 10 years pupil numbers have increased significantly in the Swansea Valley, with over 160 extra pupils attending schools in the area, and no obvious signs that numbers are likely to decrease. However the pupil population is fairly transient across the Pontardawe schools, with data indicating that numbers rise and fall often depending on the circumstances of particular schools in the area.

Additionally data indicates that there are approx.100 pupils who reside in the Swansea Valley area who currently attend EM schools in neighbouring authorities, and a further 88 who attend other EM NPT schools. Should these pupils choose to attend the new school they would need to be accommodated as they live within the catchment area.

Experience has shown that new build schools often attract local families who would otherwise have chosen a school further away. In recent years new build schools in NPT have seen an increase in pupils within the first two years of opening of between 5% -31%, with the largest increases seen in the primary sector.

Furthermore there are a significant number of new build developments planned and included in the LDP for the Swansea Valley which may further impact on pupil numbers. If all developments proceed it is estimated that approx.149 extra primary pupils could be added to the area by 2026.

All of the following options for the schools were considered and, with the exception of Option 6, were dismissed due to the disadvantages highlighted below

## **Business Case Addendum**

### **Option 1 – Maintain three separate schools on three sites. New Build 150 School in Godre'rgraig, conduct backlog maintenance to Alltwen and Llangiwg Primary Schools**

- Does not address the Health and Safety risks of the Godre'rgraig site, to become viable therefore a new build alternative would be required somewhere within the existing village;
- Potential alternative site availability within Godre'rgraig is limited to accommodate replacing the existing school within the community;
- Does not create 21st Century School Provision for pupils of Alltwen and Llangiwg;
- Does not optimise property costs;
- Does not create opportunities for revenue savings;
- Does not enhance the school estate;
- Does not enable any environmental benefits to be achieved through improved energy efficiency;

### **Option 2 – Establish a federation of Alltwen, Godre'rgraig and Llangiwg Primary schools. New build 150 Primary in Godre'rgraig, remodel Alltwen and Llangiwg Primary Schools**

- Does not address the Health and Safety risks of the Godre'rgraig site.
- Due to existing layout of infrastructure and the size constraints of the existing sites it is unlikely that it will be possible to create 21st Century School type provision for pupils of Alltwen, Godre'rgraig and Llangiwg;
- As separate legal entities each school would still require separate inspections by Estyn and there would be separate expenditure trails to manage and audit;

### **Option 3 – Close two of the schools and transfer all pupils to the remaining remodelled and extended school**

- Due to existing layout of infrastructure and the size constraints of the existing sites it is unlikely that it will be possible to create 21st Century School type provision for pupils of Alltwen, Godre'rgraig and Llangiwg;
- There is insufficient space at either Llangiwg or Alltwen sites to accommodate all the pupils from the in-scope schools;
- Design complexities of this nature make the scheme undeliverable;

### **Option 4 –Close one of the three schools and transfer pupils to the remodelled and extended remaining two schools**

- Due to existing layout of infrastructure and the size constraints of the existing sites it is unlikely that it will be possible to create 21st Century School type provision for pupils of Alltwen, Godre'rgraig and Llangiwg;
- There is insufficient space at either Llangiwg or Alltwen sites to accommodate pupils from Godre'rgraig;
- Design complexities of this nature make the scheme undeliverable;

## **Business Case Addendum**

### **Option 5 – Close Alltwen, Godre’rgraig and Llangiwg Primary schools and build a new replacement primary school on one of the existing school sites**

- All three existing sites are constrained with the Godre’rgraig site considered completely unsuitable for any school scheme;
- Substantial design complications due to constrained nature of the site will increase cost and may limit the potential educational benefits achievable through a new build school;
- A requirement for temporary accommodation during the construction phase would incur additional costs for the project;
- The negative impact of additional traffic at any of these sites would be substantial due to existing road layouts and limited space to accommodate the additional volume of traffic and parking required at the site;

### **Option 6 - Close Alltwen, Llangiwg and Godre’rgraig Primary schools and build a new school in Parc Ynysderw to accommodate 630 pupils (plus 140 nursery pupils) from the catchment areas of Alltwen, Llangiwg and Godre’rgraig, with a new 14 place ASD Unit**

- High cost of capital of the scheme

### **Option 7 - Close Alltwen, Llangiwg and Godre’rgraig Primary schools and build a new school on another site to accommodate 630 pupils (plus 140 nursery pupils) from the catchment areas of Alltwen, Llangiwg and Godre’rgraig, with a new 14 place ASD Unit;**

- No suitable alternative site of a comparable size exists within reasonable travelling distance;
- High cost of capital of the scheme

### **Option 8 - Build three new, replacement primary schools on the existing sites of Alltwen, Llangiwg and Godre’rgraig Primary schools**

- Very high cost of capital expenditure to build three new Primary schools;
- Due to the size constraints of the existing sites it is unlikely that it will be possible to create 21st Century School type provision for pupils of Alltwen and Llangiwg;
- Alternative site for Godre’rgraig Primary would still be required due the unsuitability of the existing site;
- Would not enable any structural reorganisation of the schools and therefore offers no ongoing revenue savings;
- There would be a requirement for temporary accommodation during the construction phase at all sites and this would incur substantial additional costs for the project;

## **2. Childcare**

The application states that early years and childcare facilities are already available within walking distance of the new school, and it is expected that wrap around care will be easier to facilitate due to the location. What are there childcare facilities and how many childcare places do they offer?

## Business Case Addendum

Please provide further details regarding the proposed 160 nursery places. Is there a risk that some of the local provision above could be displaced, or are there plans for existing provision to be relocated to the new school?

What is the current demand for the 160 nursery places proposed at the school?

What childcare service is being proposed, for example breakfast and after school club, full day care, delivery under the Childcare Offer, early education, Flying Start and so on.

Will this be an English/bilingual/Welsh medium childcare facility?

### LA Response:

There are a number of childcare facilities within a short distance of the proposed location of the new school.

These are as follows

<b>Name</b>	<b>Service Type</b>	<b>Capacity</b>
Hoots	Full day care	19
Little Steps	Full day care	46
Lullabys	Full day care	44
Cylch Pontardawe	Sessional care Ages 2-8 years , 8am -5pm	14
GP Rhydyfro	Sessional care 2 – 11 years, 11.30am – 5.30pm	30
	Child Minder	10
	Child Minder	6
	Child Minder	10
	Child Minder	10
	Child Minder	6
	Child Minder	6
	Child Minder	7
	Child Minder	10

All Neath Port Talbot all nursery provision is available in schools. The proposed new school would provide part time nursery places for 140 children. This number allows for both 3 year old and 4 year old children from the catchment areas of the 3 current schools, and also allows for extra pupils in anticipation of the expected growth of the number of pupils in the catchment area.

There are both English and Welsh medium childcare facilities in the area. Due to the number of places already available, it is not proposed to create any additional childcare places within the school.

### **3. Digital Inclusion**

Given the key focus of the business case is on community and community cohesion officials would of anticipated consideration and outlined planning for consideration as to whether the school internet provision can be opened up to allow for public access (e.g. community Wi-Fi) and for ICT equipment to be made available for community use. This

## Business Case Addendum

would ideally be in the context of adult learning such as courses or sessions to help improve basic digital skills within the local community – with a focus on supporting the aim of improved health and wellbeing for the children and adults.

In addition, is the school aware of, and if not we would encourage them to do so, of our Welsh Government Digital Heroes initiative, which is part of our wider 'Digital Communities Wales: Digital Confidence, Health and Well-being' programme. Digital Heroes is a volunteering initiative whereby primary and secondary school pupils receive training from our programme on how to help someone get online and then go out into the community (or invite community members into the School) to help them with basic digital skills. This initiative can support the development and understanding of online safety for children which is critical in an increasingly digital world.

<https://www.digitalcommunities.gov.wales/digital-heroes/>

### LA Response:

Within NPT schools children are given the opportunity to work on their own during Computing and ICT skills work and co-operatively when applying ICT to other subjects, and ICT is also used to motivate pupils and to provide access to additional activities to enhance learning, in and out of the school environment.

NPT Policy to enable this to occur in a safe environment means that, currently, there is no public Wi-Fi available in schools, but a 'guest' facility can be set up if required. Any community use of ICT is usually accessed via the school system which has the necessary firewalls in place.

At this point in the process it is not evident whether there is a requirement for digital skills lessons for the community, however it is anticipated that as the proposal develops should a need for this be identified then the planned ICT facilities would enable this to take place, and the school would be actively encouraged to provide a full range of learning opportunities for all members of their community.

## 4. Environment and Communities

It is good to read that the proposal intends to reduce energy use and carbon emissions with specific targets of (p.11):

- Reduction in combined gas and electricity consumption to 190kwh/m<sup>2</sup> by September 2025
- Reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions to 50.5kg/m<sup>2</sup> by September 2025

No detail has yet been provided about how this would be achieved, hopefully this can be further explained.

How will the applicant address the requirements of Section 6 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 which requires public authorities to maintain and enhance biodiversity and the resilience of ecosystems in the exercise of its functions?

Proper consideration should be given to the following:

## Business Case Addendum

- Development of renewable energy generation, considerate water and waste management use and creation of ecologically resilient habitats on the new site should be included within the business case.
- Plans on creation of areas of biodiversity, any provision that would contribute to improving air quality and decarbonisation.
- Ensuring no net loss of playing fields and green spaces.
- Recognition of the role that renewables play in effective long term cost, environment and wellbeing solutions.
- How will future Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) and green spaces be maintained? Please refer to

### LA Response:

Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council (NPTCBC) recognises that it has a legal duty to maintain and enhance biodiversity, and in so doing, promote the resilience of ecosystems under the Environment (Wales) Act 2016. The Council's Biodiversity Duty plan demonstrates how we will fulfil that duty and will act as a driver for conservation activities throughout Neath Port Talbot (NPT).

The Biodiversity Duty Plan not only delivers our statutory duties with regards to biodiversity but also explains how, through meeting the Biodiversity Duty, we are delivering well-being objectives and the ways of working under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

As part of the consultation process for this proposal a detailed assessment of the possible impact of the new build on biodiversity will be undertaken, and actions taken to maintain or enhance it where necessary.

In line with the Council's recently adopted Decarbonisation and Renewable Energy Strategy, the 21<sup>st</sup> Century schools improvement programme will not only provide safe and healthy buildings for effective educational delivery they will be designed and operated as close to zero energy/carbon as practically possible.

The proposed community focussed learning campus will be designed and built on the core principles of sustainable development that will encourage the following embedded principles for many generations of future pupils within NPT:

- Care for oneself - our health and well-being
- Care for each other - across cultures, distances and generations
- Care for the environment – local and far

The Council understands that through the sustainable school philosophy that an energy efficient / low carbon, sustainable school puts a high value and focus on the well-being and educational delivery of its pupils and the school environment. Ensuring that its classrooms are comfortable, safe, welcoming, clean and reassuring places to learn, having a zero-tolerance approach to litter, graffiti and bullying, reinforced by staff demonstrating positive, caring, responsible behaviours delivered within a healthy low carbon educational environment.

## Business Case Addendum

### Delivery of Energy Efficient /Low Carbon

As outlined, the Council has made a clear aim of embracing energy and water efficiency and moving towards a low carbon way of learning and future through its service delivery. The new school and leisure complex will demonstrate the aims of integrating the ethos of energy efficiency and low/zero carbon design principles. The design intent will provide an energy/carbon efficient and sustainable school that prepares young people for a lifetime of sustainable living, through their teaching, their learning environment and through the example of their day-to-day practices demonstrated by their school building.

To deliver a sustainable energy efficient /low carbon - community focussed learning campus and attain the project's energy and carbon performance targets of:

- Reduction in combined gas and electricity consumption to 190 kWh/m<sup>2</sup> by September 2025
- Reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions to 50.5 kg/m<sup>2</sup> by September 2025

The following key design and operational considerations will be evaluated/implemented:

- Undertake feasibility to formulate an energy positive design solution (focused on regulated and unregulated energy consumption) for the school aligned to practicality and viability.
- From an energy/carbon perspective the design will consider the proposed campus site & built form; orientation, layout thermal mass, green walls/roofs, site access, surrounding elements, thermal response, insulation levels, minimising overheating, adaptability of windows and glazing
- Particular emphasis will be placed on the integration of the campus site into the surrounding external environment and topography, ensuring where practicable that green spaces are very much a key focus and central to the final design solution
- Implement **passive** design strategy with specific focus on natural daylight, ventilation, thermal mass and solar engineering
- Adoption of an energy/carbon & water hierarchy:
  - a) Establish base energy & water demand
  - b) Reduce energy & water demand by effective and passive design processes
  - c) Provision of low/zero and renewable technologies
  - d) Enablement of the design for effective energy/carbon & water management by building management and occupant/users
  - e) Assess the energy balance of the school optimising the design solution through:
    - Minimise - Energy Demand
    - Maximise - Energy Generation
    - Balance - Energy Storage (Electricity and Heat)
- Undertake energy/carbon computer modelling to determine performance providing informed decisions to enable refinement and enhance the design process
- Carryout detailed feasibility assessment of low & zero energy/carbon technologies
- Due to the heat demand of the pool facility within the Low & Zero energy/carbon technology assessment carryout detailed focus on Combined Heat and Power (CHP) assessing cost, carbon and energy benefits of this solution



## Business Case Addendum

- Formulate a strategy for effectively managing unregulated energy, determine within the conceptual design stage determining how the school will achieve effective management of unregulated energy (catering, ICT & Office Equipment etc.)
- Review ICT within the proposed campus in relation to energy efficiency
- Controls & Building Management System Strategy
- Sub-metering strategy, automated energy & water sub monitoring system measuring 100% of the buildings energy usage and generation through sub-metering
- Incorporate water efficient services to ensure the school achieves highest levels of water efficiency performance
- Management Issues: Effective handover period: Training, commissioning (6 & 12 months after handover), provision of a log book and succinct instruction for building management and occupants how the building is supposed to operate and function
- In addition to the educational teaching resource, the contractor will be required to provide guidance documentation on how the overall design and operation of the community focussed learning campus delivers and embraces the principles, aims and objectives of the Future Generation Act over the design, construction and operational lifetime of the facility
- The wellbeing of pupils, staff, users and visitors is of paramount importance to the end delivery of the community focussed learning campus with clear design consideration focused on internal comfort conditions and air quality

To summarise the design and construction of the proposed new school will embrace energy efficiency and low/zero carbon principles delivering a zero/low carbon state of the art school and leisure facility for future generations of NPTCBC.

### Water Efficiency/Management

Highest levels of water efficiency design solutions have been embedded into the NPT design procedures as standard for many years and are reviewed periodically to ensure they consider the most efficient and latest technological advancements in water efficiency.

## **5. Economic Advice**

The benefits template should be filled in to show the condition and suitability of the relevant buildings after completion of each option, not prior to work being done. Please can this be corrected?

### **LA Response:**

## Business Case Addendum

<b>Option (Please provide brief description)</b>	<b>Do Minimum: Option 1: Maintain three separate schools on four sites. New Build 150 School in Godre'rgraig, conduct backlog maintenance to Alltwen and Llangiwg Primary Schools and Pontardawe Pool;</b>	<b>Preferred: Option 6 - Close Alltwen, Llangiwg and Godre'rgraig Primary schools and build a new school in Parc Ynysderw to accommodate 630 pupils (plus 140 nursery pupils) from the catchment areas of Alltwen, Llangiwg and Godre'rgraig, with a new 14 place ASD Unit and 25m Pool;</b>	<b>Alternative: Option 7 - Close Alltwen, Llangiwg and Godre'rgraig Primary schools and build a new school on another site to accommodate 630 pupils (plus 140 nursery pupils) from the catchment areas of Alltwen, Llangiwg and Godre'rgraig, with a new 14 place ASD Unit and 25m Pool;</b>																								
<b>Capital Cost (£m)</b>	£5,672,857 (Inc. backlog maintenance below)	£22,705,000	£24,294,350																								
<b>Affected schools by Condition (number)</b>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>A</td> <td>B</td> <td>C</td> <td>D</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>3</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	A	B	C	D			3		<table border="1"> <tr> <td>A</td> <td>B</td> <td>C</td> <td>D</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	A	B	C	D	1				<table border="1"> <tr> <td>A</td> <td>B</td> <td>C</td> <td>D</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	A	B	C	D	1			
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<b>Change to capacity (more detail on next page)</b>	Decrease by 11 places from 547 to 536	Increase by 153 from 547 to 700	Increase by 153 from 547 to 700																								
<b>Backlog maintenance costs (£m)</b>	£2,534,333	£0	£0																								
<b>Reduction in revenue costs (£)</b>	£0	Premises £24,472 first year, £48,945 recurring Salaries £269,110 first year, £538,220 Recurring	Premises £24,472 first year, £48,945 recurring Salaries £269,110 first year, £538,220 Recurring																								
<b>Community benefits</b>	Facilities available : Backlog maintenance on existing 36 year old pool	Facilities available : New build 25m Community Pool New build school facilities	Facilities available : New build 25m Community Pool New build school facilities																								

## Business Case Addendum

<b>Do Minimum</b>	Welsh	Mixed	English
<b>Nursery</b>			
Capacity	0	0	98
NOR	0	0	69
% surplus	0%	0%	30%
<b>Primary</b>			
Capacity	0	0	438
NOR	0	0	392
% surplus	0%	0%	11%
<b>11-16</b>			
Capacity	N/A	N/A	N/A
NOR	N/A	N/A	N/A
% surplus	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Post 16</b>			
Capacity	N/A	N/A	N/A
NOR	N/A	N/A	N/A
% surplus	N/A	N/A	N/A

<b>Preferred</b>	Welsh	Mixed	English
<b>Nursery</b>			
Capacity	0	0	140
NOR	0	0	138
% surplus	0%	0%	1%
<b>Primary</b>			
Capacity	0	0	630
NOR	0	0	587
% surplus	0%	0%	7%
<b>11-16</b>			
Capacity	N/A	N/A	N/A
NOR	N/A	N/A	N/A
% surplus	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Post 16</b>			
Capacity	N/A	N/A	N/A
NOR	N/A	N/A	N/A
% surplus	N/A	N/A	N/A

<b>Alternative</b>	Welsh	Mixed	English
<b>Nursery</b>			
Capacity	0	0	140
NOR	0	0	138
% surplus	0%	0%	1%
<b>Primary</b>			
Capacity	0	0	630
NOR	0	0	587
% surplus	0%	0%	7%
<b>11-16</b>			
Capacity	N/A	N/A	N/A
NOR	N/A	N/A	N/A
% surplus	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Post 16</b>			
Capacity	N/A	N/A	N/A
NOR	N/A	N/A	N/A
% surplus	N/A	N/A	N/A

NOR are based on the forecast number of pupils on role at the school (or school for the do minimum) during the first year of new operation (January 2025)