

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 – 31 July 2020 (2)

Business Case Addendum

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

1. Welsh in Education

The proposal notes one of the factors affecting the original proposal included “Possible displacement effects on the local Welsh Medium schools in the area and the effect this could have on the growth of Welsh Language as a whole within the area” – could the LA provide details of the Welsh language assessment undertaken for this proposal in a language sensitive area please?

Could the LA provide details on the impact on pupils accessing Welsh-medium education at nearby Welsh-medium primary schools and the long term impact on numbers at YG Ystalyfera Bro Dur.

Could the LA state how this proposal could impact on their targets in the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan and the aim of the Welsh Government’s million speakers strategy.

The proposal also includes providing localised access to ALN provision – could the LA provide details of ALN provision available in Welsh-medium ensuring equity of access available to all learners.

LA Response:

If successful this proposal will be subject to full consultation and a detailed Welsh Language Impact assessment will be carried out at that time, which will seek to gather and consider the views of a range of stakeholders.

The Welsh Language Impact Assessment will involve looking in detail at the following –

What effects the initiative would have on:

- people’s opportunities to use the Welsh language
- treating the Welsh and English languages equally

How the initiative could be developed or revised so that it would have positive effects or increased positive effects on:

- people’s opportunities to use the Welsh language
- treating the Welsh and English languages equally

How the initiative could be developed or revised so that it would not have negative effects or decreased negative effects on:

- people’s opportunities to use the Welsh language
- treating the Welsh and English languages equally

At this point in time a first stage impact assessment has been prepared which recognises the potential for an impact on the Welsh language in the area and advises a more detailed assessment to follow during the consultation period.

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The Swansea Valley area is a linguistically significant area as it contains the highest number and percentages of Welsh speakers in NPT, and is amongst the highest in Wales as a whole. There are concerns however that the number of Welsh speakers is declining and work has been ongoing to ensure the language is promoted and grows.

Alltwn, Godre'rgraig and Llangiwg primaries teach Welsh as a second language and this will also be the case for the new school. Currently 25% of staff across the three schools are fluent or fairly fluent Welsh speakers. By combining the three schools Welsh language provision could be improved as there could be greater impact on having a more concentrated group of Welsh speakers able to support pupil and staff language development skills through the medium of Welsh. This aspect will need to be explored in more detail as part of the full assessment to better understand possible impacts.

This scheme seeks to create one EM school to replace 3 existing EM schools, one of which is housed in temporary accommodation, and it is not intended that pupils currently in WM schools would move from their current school into the new EM one. Estimated pupil numbers have been based on current pupils at the three schools along with pupils at other EM schools in NPT and neighbouring authorities, and is not based on any numbers of pupils in WM schools.

Significant work is being undertaken in a number of the WM schools in the area which will improve provision for teaching and learning and provide extra pupil places, which may mitigate against the impact of a new school. At YGG Pontardawe, which is approx. 1 mile away from the proposed site of the new school, significant remodelling work is taking place to improve facilities for primary aged and preschool children at a cost of £1.62m, and when finished will increase the overall capacity of the school by 60 F/T pupils and the childcare setting by 12 part time places.

At YGG Cwmllynfell, which is approx. 8 miles away from the proposed new school, work is taking place to extend the school by providing 1 new classroom to accommodate 30 full time pupils, and one new childcare facility of approx. 100m² which could cater for up to 40 full day care places or up to 43 afterschool places depending on age, at a cost of £640k.

In terms of Ystalyfera Bro Dur the northern campus at Ystalyfera has greatly benefitted from over £26m of investment and has seen the school site transformed into a 3-19 campus by increasing capacity and ensuring that WM pupils have access to 21st century teaching, learning and sporting facilities. A further £19.5m has been invested in the south campus to provide a new build 21st century School for 11-16 year olds.

It is to be expected that the significant work being undertaken would impact positively on pupils attending these schools and prove attractive to parents making choices about future education for their children.

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Currently it is the case that demand for Welsh medium education is greater in the south of NPT than in the north. Despite the significant investment in WM schools in the area, outlined above, surplus places exist and transition rates from WM primary schools in the north need to improve.

In contrast transition rates in the south are consistently high with almost 100% of children moving from Y6 WM primaries into Y7 at the south campus. Greater capacity is needed in the southern areas of the county to ensure that growing pupil numbers can be accommodated now and for the future. This will be a key factor of the Councils strategy for increasing the number of Welsh speakers in the future.

Pupils with additional learning needs (ALN) in WM primary and secondary schools in NPT are provided with support at school level and from specialist staff.

Centrally based Welsh speaking specialist teachers provide assessment and support in the areas of:

- Learning difficulty
- Speech and language and communication
- Hearing Impairment
- Vision Impairment

An LSA, trained by the authorities additional learning needs support team (ALNST), has also been appointed to work with identified children and will work closely with them to ensure pupils receive appropriate support and provision.

2. Sports Wales

Has NPT consulted with Swim Wales around the design and layout of the replacement 25m pool? If not, does NPT plan to work with Swim Wales?

LA Response:

NPT architectural team have experience on the design and management of several pools in the county and recently completed the designs of the new pool for Neath Town centre and Afan Lido Fitness Centre.

Should this project gain approval to proceed then it will undergo full consultation and it is at this point that we would be seeking to liaise with relevant groups, including Swim Wales, as appropriate.