

## Risk Assessment

### **STRATEGIC SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME: PROPOSED PROJECTS FOR THE COUNCIL'S 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY SCHOOLS CAPITAL FUNDING PROGRAMME - BAND B (2019-2024)**

#### **Context**

1. This risk assessment<sup>1</sup> has been carried out in line with the Council's Risk Management Policy 2015.
2. Implementing the proposed programme of projects will result in improvements to the Council's school estate by delivering 21<sup>st</sup> Century teaching and learning environments leading to improved pupil performance.

#### **The reasons for the proposal**

3. The Council is responsible for promoting high educational standards and for delivering efficient primary and secondary education.
4. Having the right schools in the right place and ensuring that they are fit for the 21<sup>st</sup> century learner is the challenge facing the Council.
5. The Council established a Strategic School Improvement Programme (SSIP) in 2008; a programme that has brought about significant change to the school estate during the ensuing period, including new build schools supported by Band A of the Welsh Government's 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools programme of capital funding.
6. Continuing to implement the Council's school reorganisation programme will involve an ongoing review of existing provision to determine the optimum number and type of schools needed to deliver education effectively and efficiently across the County Borough.
7. The Council continues to review its provision on the basis of:
  - educational standards
  - the need for places and the accessibility of schools

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<sup>1</sup> First iteration: 060917

- the quality and suitability of school accommodation
- effective financial management

### **Managing risks associated with the Programme**

8. The potential risks associated with the proposal comprise the Council's reputation, educational standards, service delivery, financial management of public money, business continuity, and procurement and contractual procedures.
9. The Council will work to manage the risks and associated dependencies and constraints through strong programme/project management and robust governance arrangements.
10. A risk mitigation strategy will be employed to lower the likelihood of the risk occurring and/or to minimise the impact on the programme if the risk did occur.
11. Effective risk management will be fundamental to the successful delivery of the programme and as such, the programme risk register will be reviewed regularly throughout and identified risks arising from the projects will be scrutinised, evaluated and mitigated.
12. The Council has demonstrated through its delivery of c.£122m of Band A projects that it has the experience, expertise and capability to successfully deliver complex, high value projects. This capacity will carry forward into the Band B programme.

### **Risks and Benefits**

13. The key benefits and risks associated with the Band B programme of projects are described below.

#### **Benefits**

14. Implementing the proposal will result in a range of teaching/learning and financial benefits, particularly in relation to:
  - replacing existing poor quality school buildings with 21<sup>st</sup> Century schools which provide stimulating teaching and learning environments that impact positively on pupils self-esteem and well-being and improve learning outcomes across the ability range

- addressing potential building condition issues that could adversely impact upon business continuity
- broadening curriculum delivery through increased use of I.T.
- more fulfilling teaching environments that improve morale
- delivering more sustainable school buildings (BREEAM standard)
- providing cost effective solutions to reducing backlog maintenance and repair costs
- utilising Welsh Government grant funding to support the enhancement of the Council's school estate
- educational forward planning through identification of need
- the effective use of resources and achieving efficiencies through economies of scale
- enhancing Welsh language development
- enhancing provision for additional learning needs and inclusion
- reducing the number of surplus pupil places
- ensuring that new builds are fully integrated community focussed schools, providing additional benefits to the community including community use of school facilities
- regenerating the local and national economy through community benefits such as the sourcing of labour, works and services, and goods procurement
- actively contributing to the Well-being and Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

## **Risks**

15. Potential risk areas in implementing the proposal include:

- educational standards not maintained
- less effective support for pupil well-being in larger schools
- increased home to school travel time for some pupils
- staff anxiety about job security and new management arrangements
- loss of school identity from closure of existing establishments
- resistance to change leading to lack of pupil, parent, staff and governing body support
- lack of political/public support for the programme of projects or individual schemes
- forecasted pupil numbers do not materialise/surplus places are not reduced
- budget allocation insufficient to meet needs

- loss of community facilities
- increased governance and staff responsibilities
- affordability of programme of projects and the availability of Welsh Government 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Programme funding
- prioritised schemes do not positively impact on reducing backlog maintenance and repair costs
- projects not delivered on time
- project specifications change during build phase with consequent penalty costs
- ability of supply side (contractors) to respond to demands of the authority
- relevant statutory approvals/planning permissions not secured
- insufficient land available for individual projects
- unexpected ‘abnormals’, demolitions and land purchase costs
- community benefits not realised

## **Risk assessment**

16. Realising the benefits of reorganisation, as set out above, together with the planned actions/measures in the table below will mitigate the effects of identified risks. New school builds provide greater prospects for improving educational attainment for pupils. Estyn (Jan 2007) reported on the performance of schools before and after moving into new buildings, stating that ageing school buildings which are in a poor state of repair cannot meet modern teaching and learning needs. The report also states that inadequate buildings make improvements in standards more challenging and that in nearly all schools with new or refurbished buildings, pupils attainment and achievement have improved and in some cases the improvement has been significant.
17. With effective leadership and pastoral support structures, pupil well-being can be effectively supported in large schools. Similarly, leadership and governance structures will reflect the management responsibilities of larger organisations.
18. Some schools in the programme are new build replacements for existing schools involving no school closure and consequent staff disruption. Where a project involves establishing a new school, to address staff anxiety about their employment situation, a temporary governing body will be established and a head teacher appointed before the opening of the new school. The head teacher together

with the temporary governing body will determine the staffing structure for the new primary school.

19. Where a project involves school closure, as part of the process all school based staff will be supported by the relevant school policies and procedures which will include full consultation. Previous experience has shown that some staff will wish to secure employment in the new school but others will take the opportunity to take on new challenges elsewhere. Employees identified at risk of redundancy will be given access to the Council's prior consideration register. The Council is committed to supporting staff at risk of compulsory redundancy and has secured the support and goodwill of the teacher associations/trade unions and governing bodies across the Council, via an employers' pledge. The Council has a good track record for supporting staff in such situations.
20. The head teacher and the governors together with consultation with stakeholders will provide forums that will allow concerns to be considered particularly in relation to the areas of school identity and resistance to change. In new schools, the temporary governing body will have members with an interest in the areas served by the two existing schools and who will be well placed to ensure concerns are addressed and the new school becomes the school of choice of pupils and parents. The Council's home to school travel policy supports access to schools within the Band B programme.
21. Community and Welsh language impact assessments will be undertaken in relation to each scheme. It is intended that community facilities and activities will be enhanced as part of each project and the Welsh language education supported.
22. The Council annually reviews its arrangements for funding schools. The funding process recognises the changing balance between larger and smaller schools which is reflected in the allocation of the Individual Schools Budget and the level of funding individual schools receive, the Schools Budget Share.
23. The capital grant funding process is ongoing with the Council's submission for Band B currently being considered by the Welsh Government. This process will be subject to approval of business cases on a project by project basis. Officers will be working closely with Welsh Government officials to secure capital grant funding for the Band B Programme of projects and to ensure the Council's own

resources are sufficient to meet its contribution towards capital costs.

24. A number of risks to the build programme are identified as high. The Council has a sound track record at managing complex and high value projects and a risk mitigation strategy will be employed to lower the likelihood of the risk occurring and/or to minimise the impact on the programme if the risk did occur. The programme risk register will be reviewed regularly throughout and identified risks arising from the projects will be scrutinised, evaluated and mitigated.

Table 1

| No | Risk description  | A            | B            | Overall Risk (LxI) | Proximity | C  |   |   | Update | Trend<br>- Up<br>- Down<br>- No change |
|----|---|--------------|--------------|--------------------|-----------|--|---|---|--------|--|
|    |   | L'hood score | Impact score |                    |           | Planned action to mitigate   | Target Date                                       | Owner   |        |  |
| 1  | Educational standards not maintained  | 1            | 4            | Low                | 4         | Implementation of proposal together with lead direction from. governing body (inc Temp.GB.) and suitable head teacher, and appropriate support and challenge to ensure entitlements are met and provision delivered                        | 2yrs. post completion date of individual projects | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- SSIP team</li> <li>- ELLLS</li> <li>- Governing Body</li> <li>- Head Teacher</li> <li>- Support for inclusion</li> <li>- School governance team</li> </ul> |        |  |
| 2  | Less effective support for pupil well-being in larger schools                     | 1            | 4            | Low                | 4         | Implementation of proposal together with lead direction from. governing body (inc Temp.GB.) and suitable head teacher, and appropriate support and challenge to ensure provision is at least equal to provision in previous school setting | 1yr. from completion date of individual projects  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- SSIP team</li> <li>- ELLLS</li> <li>- Governing Body</li> <li>- Head Teacher</li> <li>- Support for inclusion</li> <li>- School governance team</li> </ul> |        |  |
| 3  | Increased home to school travel time for some pupils leading to poorer attendance | 3            | 2            | Low                | 4         | Thorough and detailed preliminary planning   | From completion date of individual projects       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- SSIP team</li> <li>- Governing Body</li> <li>- Head Teacher</li> <li>- Support for inclusion</li> <li>-</li> </ul>   |        |  |

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|---|---|---|---|--------|----|---|--|--|--|--|
| 4 | Staff anxiety about job security and new management arrangements                        | 4 | 3 | High   | 1+ | Implementation of proposal together with consultation meetings with staff and teacher associations/trade unions. Ongoing support from HR and clear staff plans agreed with teacher associations/trade unions. Appointment of temp governing body and head teacher as appropriate. | Autumn term 2017 and lead in period to completion of individual projects | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- SSIP team</li> <li>- ELLLS</li> <li>- Governing Body</li> <li>- Head Teacher</li> <li>- School governance team</li> </ul> |  |  |
| 5 | Loss of school identity from closure of existing establishments                         | 4 | 1 | Low    | 4  | Implementation of proposal together with consultation meetings with parents and governors. Appointment of temp governing body and head teacher as appropriate.  | 1yr. from completion date of individual projects                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Temp Governing Body</li> <li>- Head Teacher</li> <li>- School governance team</li> </ul>                                  |  |  |
| 6 | Resistance to change leading to lack of pupil, parent, staff and governing body support | 4 | 2 | Medium | 1+ | Consultation meetings. Effective communication with parents and staff   | Autumn term 2017 and lead in period to completion of individual projects | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- SSIP team</li> <li>- Governing Body</li> <li>- Head Teacher</li> </ul>  |  |  |
| 7 | Lack of political/public support for the programme of projects or individual schemes    | 3 | 3 | Medium | 1+ | Member briefings and consultation meetings with key stakeholders. Positive message from an effective communications strategy  | Autumn term 2017 and lead in period to completion of individual projects | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Political Leadership</li> <li>- SSIP team</li> <li>- Governing Body</li> <li>- Head Teacher</li> </ul>                    |  |  |
| 8 | Forecasted pupil numbers do not materialise/surplus places are not reduced              | 1 | 4 | Low    | 1  | Thorough and detail planning resulting in informed predications   | From completion date of individual projects                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- SSIP team</li> <li>- Support for inclusion</li> </ul>   |  |  |

|    |  |   |   |        |    |   |   |   |  |  |
|----|--|---|---|--------|----|---|---|---|--|--|
| 9  | Budget allocation insufficient to meet needs   | 2 | 5 | Medium | 3  | Thorough and detailed preliminary planning                  | From completion date of individual projects               | - SSIP team<br>- ELLLS SMT<br>- Political Leadership                      |  |  |
| 10 | Commitment to promoting Welsh Language education not supported   | 1 | 4 | Low    | 1+ | Selection of Band B schemes                                 | Onwards from Autumn term 2017                             | - SSIP team<br>- ELLLS SMT<br>- Political Leadership                      |  |  |
| 11 | Loss of community facilities, including child care provision (Flying Start)  | 2 | 3 | Medium | 3  | Thorough and detailed preliminary planning                  | Onwards from start of construction of individual projects | - SSIP team<br>- Governing Body<br>- Head Teacher<br>- Participation team |  |  |
| 12 | Increased governance and staff responsibilities  | 1 | 3 | Low    | 4  | Thorough and detailed preliminary planning                  | 1yr. prior to completion date of individual projects      | - SSIP team<br>- Governing Body<br>- Head Teacher                         |  |  |
| 13 | Affordability of programme of projects and the availability of Welsh Government 21 <sup>st</sup> Century Schools Programme funding at risk | 2 | 5 | Medium | 1  | Thorough and detailed preliminary planning and negotiations | Onwards from Autumn term 2017                             | - SSIP team<br>- ELLLS SMT<br>- Political Leadership                      |  |  |
| 14 | Prioritised schemes do not positively impact on reducing backlog maintenance and repair costs  | 2 | 5 | Medium | 4  | Thorough and detailed preliminary planning                  | From completion date of individual projects               | - SSIP team<br>- ELLLS SMT  |  |  |

|    |  |   |   |        |   |   |  |                                       |  |  |
|----|--|---|---|--------|---|---|--|---------------------------------------|--|--|
| 15 | Projects not delivered on time   | 2 | 4 | Medium | 4 | Effective risk management   | From completion date of individual projects                              | - SSIP team<br>- Environment Services |  |  |
| 16 | Project specifications change during build phase with consequent penalty costs | 3 | 5 | High   | 3 | Thorough and detailed preliminary planning  | Onwards from start of individual projects                                | - SSIP team<br>- Environment Services |  |  |
| 17 | Supply side (contractors) not responding to demands of the authority           | 2 | 4 | Medium | 3 | Appropriate decision making and selection at procurement and contract completion stages | Onwards from start of individual projects                                | - SSIP team<br>- Environment Services |  |  |
| 18 | Relevant statutory approvals/planning permissions not secured                  | 3 | 5 | High   | 2 | Thorough and detailed consultation with relevant stakeholders.                          | From Autumn to start date of applicable projects                         | - SSIP team<br>- Environment Services |  |  |
| 19 | Insufficient land available for individual projects                            | 3 | 5 | High   | 1 | Thorough and detailed preliminary planning & site appraisal                             | Autumn term 2017 and lead in period to completion of individual projects | - SSIP team<br>- Environment Services |  |  |
| 20 | Unexpected abnormals, demolitions and land purchase costs                      | 3 | 4 | High   | 3 | Thorough and detailed site surveys and contingency planning                             | Onwards from start date of individual project                            | - SSIP team<br>- Environment Services |  |  |
| 21 | Community benefits not realised  | 2 | 3 | Medium | 4 | Detailed specifications at procurement and contract completion stages                   | On completion individual projects  | - SSIP team<br>- Environment Services |  |  |