

EDUCATION & CHILDREN SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

23rd MAY 2016

Modernising Education Programme (MEP) Biennial Review

To consider and comment on the following issues:

- That the Committee considers the Biennial Review of the MEP and an updated prioritised programme for school rationalisation and investment.

Reasons:

- To endorse the Modernising Education Programme and the revision of a clear strategy for bids for capital funding to the Welsh Government's 21st Century Schools Programme.
- To enable members to formulate views for submission to Executive Board for consideration.

To be referred to the Executive Board for decision: YES

Executive Board Member Portfolio Holder: Cllr. Gareth Jones (Education & Children)

Directorate: Education & Children	Designation:	Tel No. / E-Mail Address:
Name of Director: Robert Sully	Director of Education & Children's Services	01267 224888 rasully@cararthenshire.gov.uk
Report Author: Robert Sully		

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

EDUCATION & CHILDREN SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 23rd MAY 2016

Modernising Education Programme (MEP) Biennial Review

Introduction

The Executive Board most recently approved an updated Modernising Education Programme (MEP) on the 1st December 2014 as part of an annual review of progress.

The County Council resolved in 2010 that the MEP “be reviewed and revised in the future every two years or otherwise as required to ensure consistency with the timeframe of the national 21st Century Schools Programme”. Furthermore, it has been a central feature of the MEP since its inception that it needs to retain flexibility at its core to ensure that the programme remains current and responsive to changes in the education policy framework and the needs of constantly developing society and communities.

This report provides a further update on the status of the MEP and an opportunity to review the forward programme in line with the decision to do this strategically every two years or so.

DETAILED REPORT ATTACHED?

YES

Report

Appendix 1 – Summary of the Viability Assessment

Appendix 2 – Refreshed future investment programme

Appendix 3 – Revised five year capital programme

IMPLICATIONS

I confirm that other than those implications which have been agreed with the appropriate Directors / Heads of Service and are referred to in detail below, there are no other implications associated with this report.

Signed: Robert Sully Director of Education & Children’s Services

Policy, Crime & Disorder and Equalities	Legal	Finance	ICT	Risk Management Issues	Staffing Implications	Physical Assets
YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES

1. Policy, Crime & Disorder and Equalities

The proposals set within the report are in line with published policy and strategic direction of the authority.

2. Legal

The County Council’s constitution provides that responsibility for the Modernising Education Programme is an executive function.

Statutory procedures will need to be completed to institute constitutional change in the structure of schools where the rationalisation of provision is proposed.

Planning permission will need to be secured for the development of the infrastructure projects proposed.

Building regulations approval will need to be secured for premises developments and modernisation.

3. Finance

The 21st Century Schools Programme has major financial implications for the County Council. The current estimate of the cost of the remaining investment to make all schools in Carmarthenshire to be retained for the long-term fit for purpose for the 21st Century is £290 million (from 2016/17). This is a planning figure and is certain to change over time as the detailed requirements of individual projects are developed. The planning figures do not include any allowance for inflation.

The delivery of the MEP to date has been made possible by the establishment of an innovative funding strategy for capital investment which has drawn upon and integrated a variety of funding sources:

- Welsh Government Grants.
- Capital Receipts – generated through the disposal of operationally redundant school assets. County Council has resolved that all receipts generated through the sale of former school premises are ring-fenced for reinvestment in the school modernisation programme.
- Prudential Borrowing – serviced by contributions from revenue generated through efficiency gains arising from the rationalisation of the schools network and through an adjustment in the delegated schools budget.
- General Capital – contributions from the Council's general capital allocation.
- S106 Agreements – contributions from developers of residential properties.

The Council has effectively exhausted its capacity to generate any further prudential borrowing from the operational schools budget as it has already done much in this area and there is now little scope for further revenue contributions. For example, education spend is by now slightly below the Indicative Budget Assessment (IBA) and with the prognosis for revenue budgets in future years there is unlikely to be further potential in this area. Further revenue gain to be secured by the continuing rationalisation of the schools network may be required to offset the effects of expected budget reductions in future years.

The overall expenditure for the 21st Century Schools programme Band A has been agreed at £86.7m with 50% of the funding provided by WG. WG has extended the Local Government Borrowing Initiative to the programme, allowing it to bring forward additional funding for its element of the programme and bringing forward the timeframe for completion of Band A to 2019.

The County Council's capital programme spans a period of five years, from 2016/2017 to 2020/2021. The programme, therefore, already makes provision for the delivery of the early stages of the Band B of the national 21st Century School programme within a continuous strategic investment plan. At this time the future expenditure profile assumes similar funding conditions for Band B as for Band A, i.e. projects joint funded equally by the Welsh Government and the County Council.

The level of County Council funding will need to be formalised each year through the annual budget setting process. It is inevitable that estimate of capital need will change in the future as the detailed requirements for individual projects are progressed through the stages of development.

4. ICT

The use of ICT is of critical importance to the management and delivery of education in order to facilitate and implement the breadth of curricular choice necessary for all learners. The provision of new, adapted, or refurbished buildings will provide the opportunity for ICT to be integrated into modern infrastructure which is extremely reliable and easy to use. The aspirations are to develop real and virtual workspaces which help to make effective, personalised learning a reality for all students; enable teachers and other professionals to focus on their core tasks and be more effective; and provide parents and carers with easy access to information about learners' achievements and progress. Also it will facilitate access to high quality learning materials in a wide range of settings through as wide a range of end-user devices as possible.

5. Risk Management Issues

Risk management will be fundamental to the effective delivery of the school modernisation programme and its individual projects. Projects will be managed in line with recognised best practice for the construction sector, including the use of risk registers at all stages of planning and delivery.

6. Staffing Implications

Proposals for the transformation of school structures will inevitably have significant staffing implications requiring workforce re-modelling. Specific issues cannot be forecast with accuracy at this early stage and issues will be dealt with and reported as individual projects or groups of projects develop in accordance with established human resource policies.

7. Physical Assets

Proposals for the transformation and modernisation of the schools network will have significant implications for the schools estate. This will involve the creation of new school premises and the refurbishment of some existing school premises. It will also result in some existing operational assets becoming redundant. When this situation arises assets will be managed in accordance with established policies and in the context of the Council's match funding for the programme being partly met from anticipated capital receipts from the sale of surplus assets.

Investment in new facilities will have regard to partnership working and will foster the co-location of services, including those managed by partner organisations, where practical and beneficial.

CONSULTATIONS

I confirm that the appropriate consultations have taken in place and the outcomes are as detailed below:

Signed: Robert Sully Director of Education & Children's Services

1. Local Member(s)

A seminar on provisional proposals for the MEP Biennial Review was held for elected members on the 5th October 2015.

Local Members will be consulted on individual school reorganisation proposals as they are taken forward.

2. Community / Town Council

Town and Community Councils have not been consulted at this stage as this is a strategic matter for the County Council.

Town and Community Councils will be consulted on individual school reorganisation proposals as they are taken forward.

3. Relevant Partners

Key partner organisations, including the Church in Wales, Roman Catholic Church and Coleg Sir Gar, are consulted on proposals that affect them.

Head Teachers and Chairs of school governing bodies have been consulted through regional briefing sessions and seminars.

Schools affected will be fully consulted on individual school reorganisation proposals as they are taken forward.

4. Staff Side Representatives and other Organisations

Not applicable at this stage as this is a strategic matter.

**Section 100D Local Government Act, 1972 – Access to Information
List of Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:**

THESE ARE DETAILED BELOW:

Title of Document	File Ref No	Locations that the papers are available for public inspection
21 st Century Schools Website		www.21stcenturyschools.org
21 st Century Schools: Information Document (May 2010)	MEP	www.wales.gsi.gov.uk
21 st Century Schools: Information Document (May 2010) – Summary	MEP	www.wales.gsi.gov.uk
21 st Century Schools Strategic Outline Programme Template	MEP	www.wales.gsi.gov.uk
Modernising Education Programme (May 2005)	MEP	Department for Education and Children Building 2, Parc Dewi, Carmarthen.