

CORPORATE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 24 October 2018

PRESENT: Councillor Aled Morris Jones (Chair)
Councillor Dylan Rees (Vice-Chair)

Councillors Lewis Davies, Richard Griffiths, Alun Roberts, J. Arwel Roberts, Nicola Roberts

Co-opted Members: Mr Keith Roberts (The Catholic Church), Mrs Anest Frazer (The Church in Wales)

Portfolio Members

Councillor R. Meirion Jones (Portfolio Member for Education, Libraries, Youth and Culture)

IN ATTENDANCE: Chief Executive
Assistant Chief Executive (Partnerships, Community and Service Improvement)
Head of Function (Resources) and Section 151 Officer
Head of Learning
Interim Head of Highways, Waste and Property
Scrutiny Manager (AGD)
Committee Officer (ATH)

APOLOGIES: Councillors Richard Owain Jones, Bryan Owen

ALSO PRESENT: Councillors Llinos Medi Huws (Leader) R.G. Parry OBE, FRAGS (Portfolio Member for Highways, Waste and Property), Robin Williams (Portfolio Member for Finance)

1 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Councillor Dylan Rees declared a personal but not prejudicial interest in item 4 on the agenda as the Chair of the Governing Body of Ysgol Bodffordd.

Councillor Nicola Roberts declared a personal but not prejudicial interest in item 4 on the agenda as a governor of Ysgol Talwrn and Ysgol y Graig, Llangefni and the parent of a daughter attending Ysgol y Graig.

2 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS

The minutes of the previous meetings of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee held on the following dates were presented and were confirmed as correct –

- 12 September, 2018
- 20 September, 2018 (call-in meeting)

3 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

It was resolved under Section 100 (A) (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, to exclude the press and public from the meeting during the discussion on the following item as it involved the disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 14 of Schedule 12A to the said Act and outlined in the Public Interest Test as presented.

4 SCHOOLS' MODERNISATION - STRATEGIC OUTLINE CASE/OUTLINE BUSINESS CASE FOR NEW PRIMARY SCHOOL TO REPLACE YSGOL BODFFORDD AND YSGOL CORN HIR

The report of the Head of Learning incorporating the combined Strategic Outline Case and Outline Business Case (SOC/OBC) for a new primary school instead of Ysgol Bodffordd and Ysgol Corn Hir was presented for the Committee's consideration and comment.

The Portfolio Member for Education, Libraries, Culture and Youth referred to the SOC/OBC's links to the Council Plan and other corporate priorities. The report sets out the strategic, economic, commercial, financial and management grounds for the new school in line with the 21st Century Schools Business case process for capital funding for the project.

The Head of Learning summarised the specifications for the new school which will have a capacity of 360 and will be a community school and as such will have community areas; its location which was determined after a detailed site evaluation process, the procurement process and the project delivery timetable.

The Committee considered the information presented and raised the following points –

- The Committee noted that the new school site on land to the north of the B5109 immediately after the right turning to the Bryn Meurig estate in Llangefnï is a sloping site and that due to the site conditions highways works have been identified as necessary. The Committee sought clarification of what the works are likely to entail.

The Committee was advised by the Interim Head of Highways, Waste and Property Service that the selected site has been assessed and there are no issues that make it unsuitable from a highways' perspective as long as certain aspects are undertaken by the developer as part of the scheme's overall costs to alleviate Highways concerns. The Officer confirmed that detailed discussions with the scheme's Highways Design consultant have taken place and a number of options have been considered. He referred to the Highways Plan included as part of the committee papers which details a proposed mini roundabout and access off the B5109 to the new school site. The roundabout is recommended in order to manage and safeguard traffic flow and movement to the school site from the B5109 in the Bodffordd direction during peak times in the morning and afternoon. The roundabout will also function as a traffic calming measure. The Officer highlighted a pedestrian crossing to the right of the roundabout on the plan which will serve children crossing to the new school from the Corn Hir area. A combined footway and cycle path of specified width alongside the crossing is also proposed which will meet Active Travel objectives. A footpath will also serve the school side of the B5109 extending as far as the Rhostrehwfa Road junction serving children accessing the school from this area. The aim is to undertake all highways works to the estimated value specified in the report which costs form part of the overall site development costs.

- The Committee noted the clarification provided and suggested that consideration be given to implementing one or some of the measures below to further mitigate what it

considered to be risks relating to the road layout in the area of the new school and in order to improve safety–

- Constructing an additional roundabout to slow the traffic flow along the Cildwrn Road (which is likely to increase in the wake of the new school) to the proposed roundabout especially as the Rhostrehwfa junction can be difficult to exit.
- Imposing a 20 mph speed limit in the vicinity of the new school.
- Constructing a normal standard roundabout instead of the proposed mini roundabout to ensure that vehicles go around the roundabout and do not have to manoeuvre to negotiate it given that the school site is likely to be busy.
- Putting double yellow lines on the approach to the new school to prohibit on road parking – the Committee noted and welcomed the on-site parking provision proposed for the new school but wished to ensure that in the event this proves insufficient, it is made clear that parking on the highway is not acceptable.
- Reducing or levelling the bank in the road down to the new school site
- Installing traffic lights at the crossroads from Rhostrehwfa.

In response the Interim Head of Highways, Waste and Property said that although consideration can be given to the suggestions made above, implementing all or some will drive costs upwards. He explained that the Highways Authority would deal with any planning application consistently and in the same way as for an external application. He further advised that any works would have to be justified from a planning perspective as follows –

- With regard to the speed of traffic along Cildwrn Road to the new school site, the construction of a pathway from Rhostrehwfa to the new school will mean purchasing a small parcel of land which will improve visibility to the left at the Rhostrehwfa junction. It is unreasonable to expect the developer to fund additional improvements to this junction as current traffic movement between the turn into Rhostrehwfa and the proposed site would not be substantially increased.
- With regard to introducing a 20 mph speed limit, such a measure needs to be considered in the context of all the Island's schools. Moreover, as the restriction would be relevant all day every day how much observance would be paid to it at weekends and during school holidays is questionable which in turn raises the question of the value of the restriction during school days. The proposed roundabout will force traffic to slow down at that point and will operate as an effective traffic calming measure.
- That the access point to the new school has been moved towards the direction of Bodffordd to put it at a greater distance from the brow in the road thereby making the roundabout more visible. The visibility to the right exiting the school onto the proposed roundabout conforms to national standards. The cost of dropping the road level to that of Ffordd Rhostrehwfa would be prohibitive.
- That the number of parking spaces provided as part of the new school build is the highest possible without contravening planning rules. Should parking issues arise, then putting down double yellow lines on the highway is an option.
- The proposed mini roundabout has been carefully and thoughtfully located to facilitate traffic movement. Larger vehicles turning in from Bodffordd or exiting the school site in the direction of Llangefni will have to overrun the roundabout which can be accommodated. Whilst its size can be looked at, enlarging it will have cost and possibly land implications.
- With regard to the installation of traffic lights, this can be looked at but a differentiation needs to be made between the works that are necessary as part of this specific development and works that are desirable in terms of the highways network generally. The development should not be conditioned to fund any works unless it can be proven that the developments makes the situation worse.

- The Committee sought clarification of whether the contract for the new school build will include a penalty clause for late completion. It highlighted the need to protect the Council from having to shoulder additional costs if the build overruns the schedule.

The Committee was advised that standard contracts contain such provisions as a matter of course. However, external factors beyond the control of the contractor/ developer e.g. poor weather conditions, can sometimes cause delay. The experiences gained from the construction of the new Cybi and Rhyd y Llan schools will help avoid over-expenditure on the project under consideration.

- The Committee emphasised the need to establish a shadow governing body well in advance in order to ensure that the community has a voice on the new school.

The Committee was advised that in the case of the two previous new schools in Holyhead and Llanfaethlu, the aim has been to have a shadow governing body in place around 18 months in advance of the school opening.

In response to a question, the Committee was also advised that discussions with the community of Bodffordd are continuing with regard to the community resource in Ysgol Bodffordd in accordance with the Executive's decision.

- The Committee noted the financial case for the new school, and in light of the challenging savings programme which the Council expects to implement over the course of the next 3 years, it sought assurances about the project's affordability.

The Head of Function (Resources)/Section 151 Officer said that the project falls within Band A of the 21st Century Schools' Programme for which the Welsh Government has agreed funding with the Council. The total cost of Band A in Anglesey is over £33m with the Welsh Government contributing £16m. Therefore, if the Welsh Government approves the SCO/OBC for this project the funding is in place to be able to complete it. The funding arrangements for the 21st Century Schools Programme mean that Welsh Government contributes 50% of the costs with $\frac{2}{3}$ being in the form of a grant and the other $\frac{1}{3}$ in the form of supported borrowing whereby the Council does the borrowing and the Welsh Government funds the costs of borrowing i. e. the Minimum Revenue Provision and interest which are included in the settlement. The remaining 50% of the costs falls to the Council with the capital receipts from the sale of the redundant schools being used to reduce the amount which has to be borrowed. The details of the Authority's funding requirements for the project are set out in the SOC/BOC; the expected revenue savings from the project along with the annual borrowing costs are also noted. Borrowing will be arranged at a fixed interest rate over the 50 year borrowing term. Whilst implementing the projects in Band A overall will entail additional costs for the Council, it will also generate savings as schools are closed and the number of school buildings are reduced. The Officer said although funding the Council's portion of the 21st Century Schools Programme has always been recognised as a challenge, the prospect of a 50% contribution towards new schools is too good an opportunity to miss and is not likely to recur so the costs will have to be met. In any case, the Council would have to find a way of funding the cost of the schools' maintenance backlog in full which is significant. Modernising schools addresses this issue.

Having scrutinised the SOC/OBC, the Corporate Scrutiny Committee resolved to recommend to the Executive that it approves –

- **The combined Strategic Outline Case and Outline Business Case (SOC/OBC) for a new primary school instead of Ysgol Bodffordd and Ysgol Corn Hir.**
- **Forwarding the combined Strategic Outline Case and Outline Business Case (SOC/OBC) for a new primary school instead of Ysgol Bodffordd and Ysgol Corn Hir**

to the Welsh Government. (Councillors Lewis Davies and Aled Morris Jones abstained from voting on the matter)

NO ADDITIONAL ACTION WAS PROPOSED

**Councillor Aled Morris Jones
Chair**