

ISLE OF ANGLESEY COUNTY COUNCIL

Report to	Executive Committee
Date	December 16, 2013
Subject	Strategic Outline Programme and Modernisation Strategy
Portfolio Holder(s)	Councillor Ieuan Williams
Lead Officer(s)	Programme Manager – School Modernisation
Contact Officer	Programme Manager – School Modernisation
Nature and reason for reporting To gain the approval of the Executive Committee regarding the underlying principles of the School Modernisation strategy and the associated Strategic Outline Programme.	

A – Introduction

School Modernisation Strategy

The Modernisation Strategy describes the aspirations of the County Council to provide the very best educational provision for all the children and young people of the island.

Strategic Outline Programme [SOP]

The SOP is a Welsh Government [WG] document and is the technical term for an outline business case for school infrastructure modernisation and is closely linked to the school modernisation strategy. A template has been provided by WG which must be followed. All local authorities in Wales were requested to submit their SOPs to the Welsh Government in December 2010. However, Anglesey Council's SOP was criticised in some quarters for not being sufficiently ambitious. Hence, after intervention by WG, the Council is being given a chance to resubmit its SOP. It is an outline of the programme for investment to improve the school estate on Anglesey over a 15 year period. This 15 year period is split into 4 bands:-

Band A – 6 years

Band B – 3 years

Band C – 3 years

Band D – 3 years

If the SOP is approved WG would agree, in principle, to contribute a maximum of 50% towards each project with the other 50% coming from Anglesey Council.

Following approval of the SOP by the Executive the SOP needs to be submitted to WG for scrutiny and discussion by the WG Capital Group in January.

B - Considerations

Anglesey County Council is committed to providing the very best educational provision

for all the children and young people of the island. As part of this commitment, the Council recognises that modernising education and ensuring that our school buildings create an attractive learning environment that motivates children and young people to become effective learners and achieve life skills is a major priority. In this context, the Council wants to modernise our school infrastructure which will

- further improve standards of leadership and the quality of teaching and learning,
- improve educational outcomes for children and young people and break the link between deprivation and low educational attainment, and
- be responsive to our socio-economic and community improvement programme
- and deliver sector leading schools and sector leading standards for every community.

This major modernisation programme, which will involve existing new build plans, merging of existing schools through a combination of school federations and merging on one preferred site, extensive catchment area reorganisation based on the remodelling of existing school buildings or the building of new area schools and the closure of schools that are not fit for purpose will require substantial capital investment. To achieve this, the Council will need to work with Welsh Government [WG] to invest in our school infrastructure and ensure that school buildings are suitable and provide an effective legacy for future generations.

C – Implications and effects		
1	Finance / Section 151	
2	Legal/Monitoring Officer	
3	Human Resources	
4	The Property Service	The Property Service has been working with Education Service to review requirements for various buildings together with the provision of cost estimates and to assist in determining options, including potential programmes for the disposal of surplus property in due course.
5	Information and Communication Technology (ICT)	
6	Equality	
7	Anti-poverty and Social	
8	Communication	
9	Consultation	
10	Economic	

C – Implications and effects	
11	Environmental
12	Crime and Disorder
13	Outcome Agreements

CH - Summary
<p>2. Drivers for Change and Modernisation</p> <p><i>2.1 Ensuring that school buildings create an attractive learning environment</i></p> <p>Improving the quality of school buildings and ensuring the very best learning environments [that reflect those in our more recent school build – Ysgol y Graig – which will be used as a benchmark] for our children is of paramount importance to meet the needs of learning and teaching in the 21st century. Estyn note that “Improvements in the quality of buildings have a very beneficial effect on the quality of teaching and morale of staff which has a positive effect on pupil performance.”</p> <p>The Council is committed to ensuring that school buildings will meet twenty-first century expectations, are fit for purpose, in the correct location, meet learners’ needs and are a resource that communities can use.</p> <p>An examination of the Council’s Authority’s portfolio of school buildings [backlog of £7.5million maintenance in primary schools and £5.2m in secondary schools] indicates that there are serious shortcomings in the suitability of a number of current sites and buildings, including pressing health and safety issues that question the long term viability of some of our existing primary schools.</p> <p>The need to maintain a large number of ageing school buildings and the supporting infrastructure is unsustainable. The Council needs to establish a long term and sustainable basis for schools on the island.</p> <p><i>2.2 Raising educational standards</i></p> <p>The Council is committed to raising standards significantly if we are to reach our goal of being in the top 5 LAs in Wales.</p> <p>Schools and the Council are working effectively in partnership to improve outcomes. In order to continue to progress, we need to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ensure all school leaders have high expectations and a clear focus on improving teaching, learning, and attainment. ○ Ensure that all resources available to schools are focused on improving outcomes for children and young people in a context of annual budget pressures. ○ Implement an agreed consistent approach to the collection, analysis and use of information i.e. knowing where every child is in terms of their learning. ○ Use consistent and effective tracking systems so that support and intervention is effective. ○ Continuing commitment to the professional development of school staff.

Current research suggests that it is difficult to correlate standards with school size. However, experience suggests that in larger primary schools it is possible for;

- leadership teams to have greater capacity to bring about improvement;
- teachers to develop expertise in specific areas which can then have a positive effect on standards;
- pupils of the same age to work together on specific tasks which can raise individual pupil performance;
- teachers to work together and share good practice which can then have a positive effect on the quality of teaching;

All of the above can make an important contribution to raising standards.

In a small primary school it is possible for a pupil to be taught by a very effective teacher for two or three years which has a positive effect on standards. It is also possible for the converse to be true which has a detrimental effect on standards. The school modernisation strategy will create the conditions for Headteachers, teachers and pupils to succeed.

2.3 Creating the conditions for Headteachers to succeed – increasing Leadership and management capacity

Effective schools are well led. We know that our successful schools have strong leadership at all levels including governors.

The challenges associated with leading and managing a school have increased substantially during recent years and the expectations are continuing to increase. The leadership expectations on Headteachers in ensuring teaching and learning is of the highest quality, evaluating and raising standards, developing robust self-evaluation procedures and ensuring the continuous professional development of staff, are substantial.

Headteachers need adequate non-contact time to address leadership and management responsibilities. Schools need to be restructured so that they are large enough for each school or federation of schools to have one substantive non-teaching headteacher. This would give the headteacher the necessary time to undertake the key leadership role within the school or federation.

2.4 Ensuring sufficient Headteachers for the future

In the next five years it is likely that nearly 50% of our headteachers will be retiring. As many of these Headteachers are leading small schools, the Council needs to consider the most effective and sustainable leadership models for the future.

The number of applicants for headship posts is declining and a cause of some concern. One of the underlying reasons for this is the fact that there is no deputy headship post in a substantial number of schools. As a result, the authority is currently facing recruitment challenges for headteacher posts and is likely to do so in the future. The school modernisation programme needs to address this by ensuring suitable leadership development opportunities in individual schools.

We need outstanding leaders for our schools to ensure every pupil has the best opportunity to succeed. The modernisation programme will address succession planning issues and secure the leadership talent that we have in our schools.

2.5 Reducing the number of surplus places and the variation in cost per head

Declining pupil numbers on Anglesey has led to an increase in the number of surplus places within primary and secondary schools – around 22% in both primary and secondary schools in comparison with WG's target of no more than 10% surplus places. The Council therefore needs to reduce the number of surplus places in order to not only respond to WG expectations but to also address one of Estyn's recommendations, namely to reduce surplus places.

The current consultation exercise underway in the primary sector has been undertaken to address surplus places in specific areas; the modernisation strategy will need to give priority to areas where the % of surplus places is highest.

The Council's expenditure on primary schools in 2012-13 [£5282/pupil] is the highest in Wales whilst the corresponding figure for the secondary sector [£5113/pupil] is 6 out of 22. This reinforces the argument that the primary sector should be given priority in the modernisation programme.

The cost per pupil for individual schools varies substantially across individual schools from £2,842 to £10,188 in primary schools and £3,918 to £4,313 in secondary schools. The modernisation programme will aim to normalise the cost per pupil across the authority and align it with the average for Wales.

2.6 Maximising the use of the school building by the community

Research suggests that schools with additional provisions such as breakfast clubs, after-school clubs, child-minding provision, summer and weekend activities achieve higher standards and secure parental and community engagement. Schools are also expected to be a resource for the local community in order to promote community activities that include parents, members of the community and local groups. This type of activity is important in relation to developing the link between schools and the local community.

Schools developed as part of the modernisation programme will need to address the definition of an area school – an area school provides a range of services and activities often beyond the school day, to help satisfy the needs of pupils, their families and the wider community.

Area reviews will consider the use made of the school's buildings by the community and the school's wider effect in the community. However, the main consideration of any such review will be the effect on the standard of education and lifelong learning opportunities to be provided in the area.

2.7 Welsh medium and bilingual provision

The modernisation agenda will give priority to strengthening and safeguarding Welsh / bilingualism.

2.8 Nursery provision

Currently, 39 schools have a nursery class; in the case of the 9 other schools the pupils attend nearby settings until they receive full-time admission to the school [9 Mudiad / nursery settings and 2 WPPA settings].

As part of the modernisation agenda, the Authority will need to give due consideration to changing schools' admission age to admit pupils at the beginning of the term following their 3rd birthday. This would enable children to access 5 terms of part-time education before starting full-time in the September following their 4th birthday.

2.9 Post 16 provision

For the immediate future, the Council has entered into a post-16 Learning Partnership with Gwynedd and Grwp Llandrillo-Menai. The Learning Partnership will assume responsibility for commissioning post-16 provision to meet the demands of a locally agreed curriculum for education and training. The college, schools and respective LAs are aware that this model will need to succeed or other possibilities [e.g. rationalising post-16 provision] will need to be developed – all parties are aware of the importance of this initiative.

3.0 Models for primary and secondary school modernisation

The key underlying principle driving the school modernisation agenda is for Anglesey to be a top performing LA in Wales with sector leading schools and provision. It is therefore vital that any change to school provision will result in improved educational experience for pupils within that area.

The modernisation agenda programme will involve

- existing new build plans;
- merging of existing schools through a combination of school federations and merging on one preferred site;
- catchment area boundary reviews and amendments;
- building new area schools;
- co-locating primary and secondary schools on the same campus [or close together] as the first stage in the move to 3-18 catchment area provision;
- closure of schools that are not fit for purpose.

The options outlined are listed below,

- Option 1 Continue to deliver education in all the current primary schools – no change
- Option 1a Continue to deliver education in all the current secondary schools – no change
- Option 2 Modernise the primary school estate only
- Option 2a Modernise the primary school estate and remodel secondary schools, co-locating primary school(s) on the same campus where possible
- Option 2b Modernise the primary school estate, remodel secondary schools, closing one school.
- Option 2c Modernise the primary school estate, remodel secondary schools by forming federations.
- Option 3 A further development of option 2a by establishing one multi-site 3-18 school in each catchment area under the leadership of one Executive Headteacher in the 'central hub' with supporting Headteachers in 'satellite' locations.

Each of the above has a post-16 option – with or without post-16 provision..

A detailed options analysis, matched to the Drivers for Change and Modernisation, shows that options 2a [Modernise the primary school estate and remodel secondary schools, co-locating primary school(s) on the same campus where possible] and option 3 [A further development of option 2a by establishing one multi-site 3-18 school in each catchment area under the leadership of one Executive Headteacher in the 'central hub' with supporting Headteachers in 'satellite' locations] are the optimum solution for the Council. In this context, option 2a needs to be seen as the pre-cursor to moving to option 3.

4.0 Desired Outcomes

The following principles and desired outcomes will underpin the school modernisation agenda.

- Develop a secure learning journey for all our children and young people from 3-19, ensuring that transition points are managed with the needs of the pupil in mind.
- All pupils are given the opportunity to attend their nearest appropriate school where they can access the full range of facilities.
- All children have access to suitable facilities that allow the delivery of a full range of educational experiences – to include high quality teaching and learning facilities, suitable play areas, appropriate staff and administration areas, security of school buildings, high quality ICT facilities.
- Reducing the number of unfilled places in our schools in accord with WG guidelines – individual schools to have more than 85% of their places filled and 90% of places filled across the primary and secondary sector as a whole.
- Consider the long term viability of schools where the number of pupils is 75 or less.
- Supporting the development of leadership skills within and across schools in order to develop a self-improving system where there is a shared commitment to excellence.
- The removal of mixed key stage classes, and a reduction in the number of classes with more than 2 age groups.
- The intention to co-locate primary and secondary schools and leisure facilities on the same campus.

5.0 Implementation timescale

Following adoption of the Strategy by the Executive Committee, formal consultation meetings will be undertaken within an area for review will take place to present the rationale and consider possible options. These formal consultation meetings will be staggered over a 3-year period.

Band A Consultation 2013-14 Implementation 2014-18	Band B Consultation 2014-15 Implementation d 2018-22	Band C Consultation 2015-16 Implementation 2022-	Band D Consultation 2016-17 Implementation period 2022-
Holy Island [North] Y Parc, Parchedig Thomas Ellis, Llaingoch	North East area Amlwch, Penysarn, Carreglefn, Llanfechell, Cemaes, Rhosybol	Llangefni area Y Graig, Talwrn, Corn Hir, Bodffordd, Henblas, Esgeifiog	Holy Island [South] Kingsland, Morswyn, Llanfawr, Santes Fair
South East Anglesey Llangoed, Llanddona, Beaumaris	Central West Bryngwran, Y Ffridd, Pencarnisiog, Rhosneigr	North West coast Rhoscolyn, Fali, Tywyn, Bodedern, Caergeiliog	East Coast Llanbedrgoch, Goronwy Owen, Moelfre, Pentraeth
Llannau Llanfachraeth, Ffrwd Win, Cylch y Garn.	Central North West Llannerchymedd	South East coast Llanfairpwll, Llandegfan, Porthaethwy	
South West Coast Dwyran, Bodorgan, Niwbwrch, Llangaffo, Brynsiencyn, Parc y Bont			

The responses from each formal consultation meeting will be presented to the Executive Committee who will then decide on the option to progress and implement for an area/individual school.

The Council will be consulting with parents, school governors and staff and other relevant stakeholders.

6.0 Outline cost of the Programme

The overall cost of the programme has been estimated to be £173,280,000 and the Council would be seeking £86,640,000 match funding from the Welsh Government. Of this, £33,550,000 will be spent on the projects outlined for 'Band A' of the programme.

The Authority will utilise capital receipts from its asset rationalisation programme to meet part of its matched contribution. There is no immediate expectation that any significant additional funding source will be available, but opportunities to identify and secure such funding will be actively sought in line with asset rationalisation. There will be a number of major developments taking place on the island over the next years such as the Energy Island Programme, and the possibility of securing funding related to one or more of these is something that will be looked at closely.

The Council's Section 151 officer has confirmed that the level of unsupported borrowing required for the completion of Band A is affordable. The principal risk is the possible non-realisation of capital receipts, but it is anticipated that any shortfall can be made good by use of the remaining headroom for prudential borrowing and by careful management of the rest of the Authority's Capital Programme. In addition, the Executive will continue to maintain an overview of the general affordability through the expectation to approve the detailed business case for each individual project.

Beyond the timeframe for Band A matters must inevitably be less certain, especially given the increasingly gloomy outlook for public expenditure, but at present there is no reason to suggest that the proposed funding profile cannot be sustained at least through to 2023 (i.e. part way through Band C). Beyond this, the lengthy timescales and the number of variable factors involved must inevitably mean that continued affordability will have to be reviewed as the Programme progresses.

D -Recommendation

The Executive Committee is asked to

- i. adopt the underlying principles of the Modernisation Strategy;
- ii. approve the submission of the SOP to Welsh Government;
- iii. authorise the Portfolio Leader for Lifelong Learning to develop a communication strategy to be implemented on approval of the SOP by Welsh Government.

Name of the report's author
Post title
Date

Emrys Bebb
Programme Manager –School Modernisation
November 29 2013

Appendices:

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Background papers

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