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| Meeting of: | Cabinet |
| Date of Meeting: | Thursday, 22 June 2023 |
| Relevant Scrutiny Committee: | Learning and Culture |
| Report Title: | Early Years & Childcare Capital Programme Report |
| Purpose of Report: | To request permission from Cabinet to submit a Business Justification Case to Welsh Government in respect of their commitment to support and strengthen the childcare sector and delegate specific powers relating to the local delivery of the projects |
| Report Owner: | Cllr Rhiannon Birch, Cabinet Member for Education, Arts and the Welsh Language / Cllr Eddie Williams, Cabinet Member for Social Care and Health |
| Responsible Officer: | Director of Learning and Skills |
| Elected Member and Officer Consultation: | Operational Manager - Accountancy Operational Manager – Strategy and Resources Head of Service Social Services Flying Start Manager |
| Policy Framework: | This is a matter for Executive decision by Cabinet. |
| Executive Summary: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Early Years and Childcare Capital programme is part of Welsh Government’s commitment to maintain and improve the existing childcare and Flying Start infrastructure. The main objectives for the capital programme are to ensure that the childcare sector in Wales is strengthened and supports the Programme for Government’s commitments to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Fund childcare for more families where parents are in education and training or on the edge of work. ➤ Deliver a phased expansion of early years provision, to include all 2 year olds, with a particular emphasis on strengthening Welsh medium provision. ➤ Continue to support the flagship Flying Start Programme. ● The purpose of this report is to request permission from Cabinet to submit a Business Justification Case to Welsh Government which highlights the necessity to develop new childcare |

provision along with supporting the expansion and / or improvements to existing childcare provision in the Vale of Glamorgan.

- Should approval be given, the business case will be submitted to Welsh Government and will follow a rigorous assessment prior to a decision being made.
- As funding is only confirmed once the Capital programme has been agreed by Welsh Government, the report recommends delegating specified powers to named officers in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder relating to the local delivery of the projects specified.

Recommendations

- 1.** That Cabinet provides permission to submit a Business Justification Case to Welsh Government which highlights the necessity to develop new childcare provision along with supporting the expansion and / or improvements to existing childcare provision in the Vale of Glamorgan.
- 2.** That delegated authority be granted to the Director of Learning & Skills (in consultation with the Executive Leader and Cabinet Member for Education, Arts and the Welsh language, Cabinet Member for Social Care and Health, Chief Executive, Head of Finance/Section 151 Officer and Monitoring Officer/Head of Legal and Democratic Services) to approve the use of the Capital Programme Fund allocation for Early Years and Childcare led projects.
- 3.** That the Director of Learning and Skills (in consultation with the Head of Finance/Section 151 Officer and the Monitoring Officer/Head of Legal and Democratic Services) be authorised to negotiate terms and conditions for the appointment of third-party suppliers/providers for Early Years and Childcare led projects.
- 4.** That the Monitoring Officer/Head of Legal and Democratic Services be authorised to prepare, complete and execute the required legal documentation to enable third-party suppliers/providers to be appointed for Early Years and Childcare led projects.
- 5.** That delegated authority be granted to the Monitoring Officer/ Head of Legal and Democratic Services to prepare, complete and execute the required legal documentation with third parties.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 1.** To progress the Business Justification Case process with Welsh Government.
- 2.** To obtain authority to approve the use of the Early Years & Childcare Capital programme funding for Early Years & Childcare led projects.
- 3.** To obtain authority to appoint third-party suppliers/providers to be appointed for Early Years & Childcare led projects where required.
- 4.** To obtain authority to prepare, complete and execute the required legal documentation to enable third-party suppliers/providers to be appointed for Early Years & Childcare led projects where required.
- 5.** To obtain authority to prepare, complete and execute the required legal documentation with third parties.

1. Background

- 1.1** The Early Years and Childcare Capital programme is part of Welsh Government's commitment to maintain and improve the existing childcare and Flying Start infrastructure. The main objectives for the capital programme are to ensure that the childcare sector in Wales is strengthened and supports the Programme for Government's commitments to:

- Fund childcare for more families where parents are in education and training or on the edge of work.
 - Deliver a phased expansion of early years provision, to include all 2 year olds, with a particular emphasis on strengthening Welsh medium provision.
 - Continue to support the flagship Flying Start Programme
- 1.2** This a partnership project being delivered across the Learning and Skills and Social Services Directorates with significant input from officers within property management, buildings & architect and Sustainable Communities for Learning team.
- 1.3** Local Authorities are invited to submit a Business Justification Case which lists proposals against the funding criteria, in order of priority order of what projects can realistically be completed by end of 2024/25. This can include projects that have already been scoped and / or new projects identified from childcare Sufficiency Assessments/reviews, Flying Start childcare expansion and Welsh Medium expansion plans. Projects will be assessed based on the following criteria:
- Supports the development of Welsh Medium Provision.
 - Co-location – where childcare is situated on school sites, at Community or Health hubs.
 - Expansion of Childcare Offer for Wales, Flying Start or Foundation learning in a childcare setting.
 - Expansion of places to support increased capacity of the provision.

2. Key Issues for Consideration

- 2.1** To support Welsh Government’s plans to develop, maintain and improve childcare and the Flying Start infrastructure, seven capital projects have been identified by utilising existing Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) data to obtain the highest Lower Super Output Areas (LSOA) areas and PARIS (National Health Service database) data that provides the most up to date record of children’s ages, the 2022 Childcare Sufficiency Assessment and information from the Family Information Service regarding parent enquiries for childcare.
- 2.2** The seven projects include:
1. Childcare unit on Dinas Powys Primary School Murch site. This is a joint project which will deliver, whilst within separate rooms, education and childcare from a new demountable building. Section 106 has already been secured to develop the classrooms. This unit will support those children within the expansion area for Flying Start and / or eligible for the 2 year old offer. There will be an opportunity for up to 10 places for children aged 3 + not eligible for the Childcare Offer.

2. Childcare unit on St Athan Primary School site. Discussions are currently taking place regarding whether a standalone unit or an extension to the existing school nursery is most suitable to support Phase 1 expansion of Flying Start and those children eligible under the 2 year old offer initiative who come under LSOA St Athan 1.
3. Childcare unit on Cadoxton Primary school site, Barry. This is a renovation project to an existing building. This focuses on increasing childcare places to support Flying Start expansion, 2 year old offer and Childcare Offer for Wales (3 & 4 yr olds).
4. Extension to the existing Bumblebees provision on Colcot Primary School, Barry to increase childcare places. The project focuses on increasing the childcare places linked to expansion of Flying Start, the 2 year old offer and Childcare offer for Wales (3 & 4 year olds).
5. Develop new childcare through the medium of Welsh on the site of Pen-Y-Garth, Penarth. Relocation of an existing Welsh medium childcare provision from Dinas Powys to this site to allow for growth in terms of indoor and outdoor play space and expansion of places to support expansion of Flying Start, 2 year old offer and Childcare Offer for Wales (3 & 4 yr olds).
6. Extension to the existing Cylch Meithrin Y Bontfaen, Cowbridge provision to increase childcare places. This project will support a new baby area to enable those parents wishing for their child to play, learn and grow through the medium of Welsh.
7. Refurbishment to an existing childcare provision, Passport to Play provision in Rhoose. The provision currently offers 85 childcare places and is located in Rhoose 2 LSOA area to support 2 year old offer and Childcare Offer for Wales (3 & 4 yr olds). The building requires a maintenance upgrade to improve and maintain the infrastructure.

3. How do proposals evidence the Five Ways of Working and contribute to our Well-being Objectives?

- 3.1** The Early Years and Childcare Capital programme aligns with the five ways of working as follows:
- Involvement – The Early Years & Childcare Capital programme has and will continue to be subject to discussions and engagement with key stakeholders, third sector partners as well as the wider childcare providers. Updates on progress will be delivered via Family Information Service bulletins at Early Years Development & Childcare Partnership meetings and as part of the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment Action Plan.
 - Collaboration – The Early Years & Childcare Capital programme has and will continue to involve collaborations with internal Officers across Directorates of the Council, third sector organisations and childcare providers.

- Integration – The delivery of the Early Years & Childcare Capital Programme creates the opportunity for teams across the Council to work closely and in an integrated manner to achieve the delivery of Welsh Government’s commitment to expand Flying Start provision, introduction of the 2 year old offer and expansion of Childcare Offer in the Vale of Glamorgan.
- Prevention – The five ways of working are equally supportive to assist with the infrastructure of childcare to ensure a good quality, accessible environment which provides the opportunity for children and their families to benefit from good quality childcare. There is evidence to show a good start in life leads to better outcomes in later life.
- Long Term – The delivery of the Early Years & Childcare Capital programme contributes to the long term plan to support the infrastructure of childcare to accommodate additional children through Welsh Government’s commitment to provide childcare to enable more parents to access education or training or who are on the edge of work, to deliver childcare for all 2 year olds and continue to with the Flying Start flagship programme.

4. Climate Change and Nature Implications

- 4.1** In December 2020, the Climate Change Committee published its progress report “Reducing Carbon Emissions in Wales”. This is the first report on Wales’ progress towards meeting its emission reduction targets, as required under Article 45 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016.
- 4.2** The progress report and advice recognise the actions taken in Wales to reduce greenhouse gas emissions - including achieving some of the highest national recycling rates in the world, taking a proactive role in supporting the large-scale deployment of renewable energy generation, and integrating responses to the climate and nature emergency throughout its priorities for the reconstruction of the economy following the Covid-19 pandemic.
- 4.3** The implications of the proposed development will encourage those who use the facility to commute via active travel being a local childcare provision for local people. The facility will engage with staff, parents and care givers to use alternative modes of transport, to reduce the environmental impact of the new facility.

5. Resources and Legal Considerations

Financial

- 5.1** The Council’s total request for Capital funding from Welsh Government in 2023/24 – 2024/25 (inclusive) is £1,495,000 where costs are shown in the table below - these are currently a guide cost whilst we await more formal plans and costings. We also await costs for two projects which will be included once they have been prepared.

| Vale of Glamorgan request for Capital funding – 2023/24 – 2024/5 | | | |
|---|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| | 2023/24 | 2024/25 | Total |
| Childcare unit – Dinas Powys Junior School site, Joint project. | £550,000 | £0 | £550,000 |
| St Athan childcare – childcare unit on school site | Awaiting costs | | Awaiting Costs |
| Renovation project – Cadoxton Primary School site | £500,000 | £0 | £500,000 |
| Extension to Bumblebees – Colcot Primary School site | £250,000 | £0 | £250,000 |
| New Build childcare unit on Ysgol Pen Y Garth site | Awaiting Costs | | Awaiting Costs |
| Extension to Cylch Meithrin Y Bontfaen | £150,000 | £0 | £150,000 |
| Refurbishment to Passport to Play childcare in Rhoose | £45,000 | £0 | £45,000 |

5.2 Childcare Unit on Dinas Powys Murch school site – this is a joint project with the school to develop 2 classrooms and a separate area for childcare. Section 106 funding of £500k has already been secured to develop the 2 classroom modular building at the Dinas Powys Junior School site. The £550k referenced in the table above is separate for the childcare element.

Employment

5.3 Funding for an Early Years and Childcare Capital Projects co-ordinator role has already been secured for 2023-24 to help deliver the Capital programme. The co-ordinator will be responsible for supporting existing planned projects and / or new projects that have been identified from Childcare Sufficiency Assessments / review and / or part of the Flying Start childcare expansion plans to improve premises for the provision of childcare services.

Legal (Including Equalities)

- 5.4 The Council will be required to accept the award by agreeing to the terms and conditions of the grant, the purpose of the grant and statement of expenditure.
- 5.5 The Council will be required to enter into contracts and lease Agreements with childcare providers to deliver childcare services under the common seal.
- 5.6 Under the Council's Constitutional requirements separate and specific legal advice will be sought in relation to procurement, building regulations and financial implications on a case-by-case basis.

6. Background Papers

[Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2022](#)

[Childcare sufficiency Assessment Executive Summary 2022](#)

[Childcare Sufficiency Assessment Action Plan 2022](#)