

Meeting of:	Cabinet
Date of Meeting:	Thursday, 05 February 2026
Relevant Scrutiny Committee:	Start Well Scrutiny Committee
Report Title:	Update on Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme
Purpose of Report:	To seek Cabinet approval to formally include Sully Primary into the Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme and to proceed with submission of Strategic Outline Case.
Report Owner:	Cabinet Member for Education, Arts, and the Welsh Language
Responsible Officer:	Director of Learning and Skills
Elected Member and Officer Consultation:	<p>Officers Consulted:</p> <p>Head of Finance/Section 151 Officer</p> <p>Operational Manager, Accountancy</p> <p>Head of Strategy, Community Learning and Resources</p> <p>Operational Manager, Strategy and Resources</p> <p>Project Manager, Sustainable Communities for Learning</p>
Policy Framework:	This is a matter for Executive decision by the Cabinet
<p>Executive Summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Following Cabinet approval for the Rolling Programme on 7th March 2024 (Minute No. C270 refers) the Council submitted its Strategic Outline Programme (SOP) to Welsh Government, identifying the projects under the next wave of investment, one of which was Sully Primary School. The projects under the programme were anonymised within the report due to needing to seek capital funding before proceeding. These individual projects are approved as part of the programme but are subject to individual business case approval. The Council submitted their rolling programme to Welsh Government by the March deadline. The list of projects within the document were also anonymised. The Council received an approval of their Rolling Programme on 12th August 2024. 	

- This Cabinet report requires approval to formally add Sully Primary school into the Sustainable Communities for Learning, Capital Programme as an identified project and approval to submit the Strategic Outline Case (SOC) for Sully Primary School.
- The key information is highlighted within this report.

Recommendations

1. To seek Cabinet approval to formally add Sully Primary school into the Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme, increasing the Programme envelope by £9,350,000.
2. To seek Cabinet approval to submit the Strategic Outline Case (SOC) for Sully Primary School.
3. To seek Cabinet approval to increase and reprofile this scheme in the Capital Programme as set out in paragraph 5.4 of this report.

Reasons for Recommendations

1. To formally include Sully Primary School as a scheme under the Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme and increase envelope by £9.350m taking total envelope to £99.189m.
2. To allow the Sully Primary School Scheme to proceed to next stages of project delivery, undertake market testing and proceed with invitation to tender to appoint relevant partners.
3. To allow the scheme to proceed and approve the budget on the Capital Programme.

1. Background

- 1.1** The Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme (SCfL) is a long-term strategic investment in the educational estate throughout Wales. It is a unique collaboration between Welsh Government, the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA), Local Authorities, colleges and diocesan authorities.
- 1.2** The Sustainable Communities for Learning Rolling Programme requires the Council to meet the following investment objectives:
 - addressing growth in demand for Welsh medium education;
 - elimination of surplus capacity and inefficiency in the system;
 - expansion of schools in areas of increased demand for educational services;
 - address condition of educational assets; and
 - making assets available for community use where demand exists.
- 1.3** Following Cabinet approval for the Rolling Programme on 7th March 2024 (Minute No. C270 refers) the Council submitted its Strategic Outline Programme (SOP) to Welsh Government, identifying the projects under the next wave of investment, within the short-term plan, one of which was Sully Primary School (Project 3).

- 1.4** The list of projects under the programme were anonymised within the report due the need to seek capital funding before proceeding. These individual projects are approved as part of the programme but are subject to individual business case approval.
- 1.5** The Council submitted their rolling programme, including anonymised projects to Welsh Government by the March 2024. The Council received an approval of their Rolling Programme on 12th August 2024. Sully Primary School proposed to be delivered within years 1-3 of the rolling programme. It is a requirement to submit a SOC including relevant information to proceed with the scheme.
- 1.6** On 27th November 2025, it was agreed for Section 106 contributions to be spent on Sully Primary School, following consultation with the education and planning, Cabinet Members and the Director of Education, further information on funding is provided in Section 5 of this report.
- 1.7** The current school is a classroom short of a 2FE entry school and has multiple demountables which are over 20 years old, with overall condition and suitability rated as 'C'. Surveys indicate over £800k in backlog maintenance.
- 1.8** The school site faces significant challenges, including severe space deficiencies, with the hall and kitchen falling between 30% and 40% below Building Bulletin recommendations.
- 1.9** Any development must comply with Welsh Government Net Zero Carbon (NZC) standards for new builds, alongside upgrades to existing structures to demonstrate low carbon improvement.
- 1.10** Cabinet approval is required to formally include Sully Primary school into the programme, increase the envelope and to proceed with the submission of the Strategic Outline Case (SOC) to Welsh Government by February 2026.
- 1.11** Further Cabinet approval will be required, concluding the tender and appointment of the successful contractor.

2. Key Issues for Consideration

- 2.1** An options analysis was undertaken on how to proceed with the scheme. These options were presented to Strategic Investment Board and Insight Board, including risks, advantages and disadvantages.
- 2.2** The four options present different approaches to meeting future school capacity needs and addressing the condition of the existing building.

Option 1, maintaining the status quo, avoids any capital cost or borrowing but leaves the school's condition and suitability issues unresolved. It increases long-term maintenance pressures, fails to meet projected demand for places, and risks losing Section 106 funding if it expires.

Option 2, Do minimum, proposes replacing existing modular buildings only. This option would replace existing modular buildings on the site with improvements. Although this option would be affordable within the budget, it also leaves the

school's condition and suitability issues unresolved. It does not either consider increase in places in line with the demand. It would also be a challenge to achieve Net Zero Carbon on the overall scheme.

Option 3, Do intermediate, proposes refurbishing the current school building and expanding the current school to create a 420-place facility using £2.972m of Section 106 funding within a £9.350m scheme. This option improves the learning environment, reduces backlog maintenance, aligns better with Building Bulletin and BREAAAM requirements and provides additional capacity without requiring borrowing. The newbuild extension aims to achieve Net Zero Carbon standards, with the ambition to achieve low carbon delivery in areas of refurbishment. This scheme requires complex phased construction on an active school site, and some refurbishment elements may need revisiting within 10–20 years.

Option 4 involves full redevelopment into a modern 420-place school with nursery provision at a cost of £16m. It offers the most sustainable, long-term solution, addressing all condition and suitability issues while meeting future demand and providing high-quality facilities. It maximises value from Section 106 funding and supports Net Zero Carbon ambitions, but it is the most expensive option and requires borrowing with associated repayments.

- 2.3** It was agreed for **Option 3** to be taken forward as the preferred option to ensure that the project is delivered within an affordable budget. This option would provide the additional places in line with demand within the budget the Council has available, reduces backlog maintenance, aligns with BREEAM and Building Bulletin requirements and strives to achieve low carbon delivery.
- 2.4** It should be noted that with the increase in school places being under 25%, there would be no need for a formal consultation. The Council would still undertake an informal consultation with the schools, pupils and the wider community (prescribed consultees as required by the relevant sections of the School Organisation Code 2018).

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

- 3.1** The Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 ("the 2015 Act") requires the Council to think about the long-term impact of their decisions, to work better with people, communities and each other and to prevent persistent problems such as poverty, health inequalities and climate change.
- 3.2** To make sure we are all working towards the same purpose, the 2015 Act puts in place seven well-being goals on the Council. The 2015 Act makes it clear the listed public bodies must work to achieve all of the goals.
- 3.3** These listed projects contribute to achieving the wellbeing goals by:
- Improving sustainability of school buildings through the creation of BREEAM accommodation.

- Ensuring an efficient supply and demand of school places across the Vale of Glamorgan through effective forecasting of future demand.
 - Ensuring schools are designed to better meet the needs of pupils. The new and remodelled building would provide modern education facilities.
 - A key objective of the Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme is to Increase the level of community access and interaction through the use of the school's educational facilities whilst meeting the needs of the school.
 - Supporting contractors to deliver a programme of community benefits that aims to reduce unemployment through increased apprenticeship opportunities.
- 3.4** The 2015 Act imposes a duty on all public bodies in Wales to carry out "sustainable development", defined as being, "The process of improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales by taking action, in accordance with the sustainable development principle, aimed at achieving the well-being goals." The action that a public body takes in carrying out sustainable development includes setting and publishing well-being objectives and taking all reasonable steps in exercising its functions to meet those objectives.
- 3.5** Band B has contributed to improving the economic and environmental wellbeing of Wales, with our additional aspiration to develop schools to become more community focused and Net Zero Carbon efficient by working on our standard building designs and focusing on the fabric first approach to ensure the building works smarter to allow for the inclusion of carbon reduced measures, all projects delivered will also align with BREEAM Excellent standards.
- 3.6** These are specifically linked to education with a number of objectives contributing to the Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme. We have prioritised the need to raise standards of achievement as one of our well-being objectives. We are proud of the Vale of Glamorgan and our place in Wales and that the use of the Welsh language is growing in the Vale of Glamorgan. We respect and value diversity within our communities and recognise the importance of promoting equality of opportunity. We also appreciate our unique heritage and culture and the importance for people of all ages to enjoy a range of activities and to have opportunities to be creative. We have therefore identified valuing culture and diversity as one of our eight well-being objectives.
- 3.7** Details of the objectives that the Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme supports and contributes the Vale of Glamorgan's Corporate Plan 2024 – 2030.
- 3.8** The Vale of Glamorgan Council's five well-being objectives are: Creating Great Places to Live, Work and Visit; Respecting and Celebrating the Environment; Giving Everyone a Good Start in Life; Supporting and Protecting Those Who Need Us; and Being the Best Council We Can Be.
- 3.9** This plan is reflective of Welsh Government's Well-being of Future Generations Act and is comprised of a number of Well-being objectives to deliver this vision.

4. Climate Change and Nature Implications

- 4.1** New build elements of the Sustainable Communities for Learning Rolling Programme will meet BREEAM excellent rating significantly reducing the running costs and carbon emissions arising from the building.
- 4.2** The Rolling Programme for the Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme would be required to meet net zero carbon or low carbon (in operation school buildings).
- 4.3** New build and refurbishment elements will adhere to this directive as a minimum; the programme will develop the model to achieve a fully compliant net zero carbon building.
- 4.4** The Council's objectives on climate change have been brought together into one Project Zero reserve that also help deliver the commitments in the Climate Change Challenge Plan.

5. Resources and Legal Considerations

Financial

- 5.1** The scheme will be funded jointly by the Council (35%) and Welsh Government (65%), through the Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme. The table below outlines the high level costs and breakdown of how this will project will be funded.

Table 1

	SOC (High level costs)
	£
Total Project Cost	9,350,000
NZC -Deduction 100% WG Funded	857,500
Total deducting NZC	8,492,500
WG 65% grant	5,520,125
Council Funding 35% (Section 106)	2,972,375
Total WG Funding (grant)	6,377,625
Total LA Funding (section 106 only)	2,972,375
Total Project Cost	9,350,000

- 5.2** The only funding sources for this project would be Section 106 funding and grant. The Council has received £4,197,914.88 in S106 funding from Phase 1 of Cog Road development. Of this, S106 funding of £2,783,122.72, has been allocated to Sully Development, the balance of £189,252.28 has also been allocated towards the scheme from the Bendricks pot to total the £2,972,375 council contribution.

- 5.3** It should be noted that the NZC element is 100% WG funded. These elements will support additional decarbonisation measures to contribute to Welsh Government's Local Carbon Delivery Plan.
- 5.4** Match funding of £2.779m for this scheme is already approved within the Capital Programme as a pipeline scheme. It is requested to increase this scheme budget by £6.571m (subject to approval of the Full Business Case) funded from £6.378m grant and £193k s106 funding, and reprofile as set out in the table below;

Table 2

	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Current Profile	600	2,179	0	0	2,779
Revised Profile	240	1,092	6,050	1,968	9,350

- 5.5** If Cabinet approved the inclusion of Sully Primary School as a scheme under the Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme, this would increase the Programme envelope by £9.350m, taking the total to £99.189m, the table below provides a further breakdown.

Table 3

Rolling Programme Envelope	LA contribution	WG Contribution	Total
	£000	£000	£000
St Richard Gwyn Catholic High School	9,664	57,863	67,527
Ysgol Iolo Morganwg	7,089	15,223	22,312
Sully Primary School	2,972	6,378	9,350
Total Envelope	19,725	79,464	99,189

Employment

- 5.6** There are no direct employment implications as a result of the revised programme. Individual projects would be subject to Cabinet approval and employment implications would be considered on a project-by-project basis.

Legal (Including Equalities)

- 5.7** Individual proposals would be subject to Equality Impact Assessment as part of the consultation exercise which is undertaken in line with the School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and the School Organisation Code (2018).

- 5.8** The programme would increase the opportunities for learning through the medium of Welsh and ensure accessibility of education through the medium of Welsh.
- 5.9** All new buildings would be fully accessible and compliant with the Equality Act 2010.
- 5.10** The Council must comply with the public sector equality duty (section 149) of the Equality Act 2010.

6. Background Papers

- 6.1** None.