



## Report of the Cabinet Member for Education & Learning

Cabinet - 18 July 2024

# Capital Programme Authorisation For The Commitment Of Funding To Support The Development And Completion Of The Remaining Works Required At Schools To Support The Roll Out Of Ufsm To All Primary Pupils.

<b>Purpose:</b>	To comply with Financial Procedure Rule No 7(Capital Programming and Appraisals) to commit and authorise the sum of £2,448,507 for the upgrade of school meal infrastructure to the capital programme.
<b>Policy Framework:</b>	Financial Procedure Rules
<b>Consultation:</b>	Education, Finance, Legal, Corporate Building Services, Corporate Property Services, Access to Services
<b>Recommendation(s):</b>	It is recommended that Cabinet:  1) Approves the capital grant award for the upgrade of school meal infrastructure in the sum of £2,448,507, resulting in a total commitment of £4,331,993 and it be included in the capital programme.
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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Welsh Government (WG) announced in December 2021 its intention to extend Universal Free School meals (uFSM) to all primary school pupils. The expectation was that the roll out would be completed by the end of the 2023/24 financial year.

- 1.2 To extend the roll out to all pupils was necessary to upgrade the majority of kitchen and dining facilities. To date WG has provided the authority with two capital grants totalling £4,331,993 to enable the authority to achieve this.
- 1.3 On 24 February 2022, WG awarded funding to the Council of £1,804,997 for capital expenditure on the school meal infrastructure during the period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022, which was paid in full in March 2022. This was offset against the local authority QEd/Sustainable Communities for Learning Band B spend in the same year, with the 2021-22 displaced funding applied to the 2022-23 programme for capital expenditure on the school meal infrastructure.
- 1.4 On the 21 July 2022 Cabinet resolved that the capital scheme in the sum of £1,804,997, as detailed in the report together with the financial implications be approved and included in the Capital Programme 2022/23.
- 1.5 On 30 August 2022, WG awarded a second tranche of funding to the Council of £2,526,996 for capital expenditure on the school meal infrastructure during the period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023, which was paid in full in September 2022.
- 1.6 This second grant had to be used in the 2022-23 financial year for eligible expenditure or displaced against other education capital expenditure. Any displaced funding must be used during the 2023-24 financial year for eligible expenditure.
- 1.7 The allocation of £2,526,996 capital expenditure provided in 2022-23 has therefore been offset against the local authority QEd/Sustainable Communities for Learning Band B spend in the same year, with the 2022-23 displaced funding applied to the 2023-24 programme for capital expenditure on the school meal infrastructure.
- 1.8 The second grant was required to be spent in full by the 31 March 2024, as any underspend in 2023/24 financial year end would need to be repaid to WG. Due to slippage in the major uFSM schemes, fully spending the grant allocation has not been possible, and an underspend of £1,940,073 was envisaged by year end.
- 1.9 To support the development and completion of the works required at schools in order to roll out uFSM to all primary pupils at the remaining sites a Business Justification Case was submitted to WG to request the retention of the underspent second grant and an increase in funding of £508,434 to cover the increase in the cost of the remaining schemes.

## 2. Description of programme

2.1 The current progress status is;

- Of 77 primary schools plus two 2 special schools and Maes Derw a total of 80 schools.
- Works to 73 schools have been completed (or there are no works required)
- Two remaining schools Hafod & Craigfelen are due to be completed summer 2024
- Five remaining major projects are due to be completed between October 2024 to March 2025 (except Townhill which is expected to be delivered by November 2025)

2.2 There are five primary schools requiring significant remodelling works. In the period since the original grant award requirements have been assessed, options appraised, site surveys undertaken, and designs progressed. These schools are listed below, together with their status.

- St Joseph's Cathedral Primary School – designed to Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) stage four, tendered between March – May 2024, with the evaluation period expected to be completed by the 14/06/2024, construction phase estimated to be July – October 2024.
- Mayals Primary School - designed to RIBA stage four, tender anticipated June - August 2024, construction phase estimated to be October – March 2025.
- Waun Wen Primary School - designed to RIBA stage four, tender anticipated July – September 2024, construction phase estimated to be October – February 2025.
- Brynhyfryd Primary School – former junior/east site - designed to RIBA stage four, tender anticipated June – August 2024, construction phase estimated to be September – December 2024.
- Townhill Community School - designed to RIBA stage four, tender anticipated December – February 2025, construction phase estimated to be March – November 2025

2.3 In addition to this the necessary electrical and canopy upgrading works to Hafod Primary School have had to be delayed, as the school currently caters for the pupils at St Joseph's Cathedral Primary School and so works cannot be undertaken until the completion of the scheme at St Joseph's Cathedral Primary School.

2.4 Completion of all the works by the 31 March 2025 is at this time expected to be achievable, except for Townhill Community School which is due for completion in November 2025. The estimated timelines are subject to change dependent on risks and issues arising, although every effort will continue to be made to manage these.

2.5 The roll out of uFSM to all primary school pupils has been phased as follows;

- September 2022 – reception pupils
- February 2023 – year 1 pupils
- April 2023 – year 2 pupils
- September 2023 – year 3 pupils
- April 2024 – year 4 pupils
- June 2024 – year 5 pupils
- September 2024 – year 6 pupils

Where the major uFSM projects are not completed, meals will be delivered daily to each school and served within the existing dining space with the assistance of temporary servery and associated kitchen equipment. Townhill however will continue to utilise their existing dining hall and kitchen which will be removed when the new dining facility is completed.

- 2.6 Officers will continue to work closely with WG officers regarding the spend profile. WG has confirmed that we are able to reprofile the grant to cover this delay in spend profile for Townhill, and the other major projects should there be any slippage in the current spend profile.
- 2.7 It should be noted that both the equipment and infrastructure upgrades will consider the council's carbon reduction aims and provide a step change to reducing carbon emissions. The new build project at Townhill Primary School will be net zero operational carbon.

### **3. Integrated Assessment Implications**

The Council is subject to the Equality Act 2010 (Public Sector Equality Duty and the socio-economic duty), the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011, and must in the exercise of their functions, have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Acts.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Deliver better outcomes for those people who experience socio-economic disadvantage
- Consider opportunities for people to use the Welsh language
- Treat the Welsh language no less favourably than English.
- Ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

- 3.1 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act (WFGA) 2015 mandates that public bodies in Wales must carry out sustainable development. Sustainable development means 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.

- 3.2 Our Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) process ensures we have paid due regard to the above. It also takes into account other key issues and priorities, such as poverty and social exclusion, community cohesion, carers, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and Welsh language.
- 3.3 An IIA screening has been undertaken and it has been determined that the programme does not require a full IIA report.
- 3.4 The extension of free school meals to all primary school pupils is a WG commitment, and below is an extract from the written statement of Jeremy Miles, Minister for Education and Welsh Language on the policy:

*“Our ambitions are informed by our understanding that younger children are more likely to be living in relative income poverty and, in taking this action, an additional 196,000 children will become eligible to take up the offer of a Free School Meal in Wales. Our commitment, therefore, represents a transformational intervention and an important further step to reaching our shared ambitions of tackling child poverty and ensuring that no child goes hungry.”*

*“Evidence also points toward the wider benefits of Free School Meals, including raising the profile of healthy eating across the whole school, increasing the range of food pupils eat, improving social skills at mealtimes, as well as improvements to behaviour and attainment. More widely, in rolling out this commitment we will be working with partners to increase the supply of Welsh food onto the school plate. This will shorten supply chains and reduce carbon emissions, support local food producers and distributors, and strengthen the Foundational Economy.”*

- 3.5 This programme supports the delivery of that statement.
- 3.6 The programme supports in every respect the WFGA, including supporting a sustainable Swansea, and carbon reduction.
- 3.7 All key stakeholders will be communicated with throughout the programme's delivery.

#### **4. Financial Implications**

##### **Capital**

- 4.1 On 24 February 2022, WG awarded funding to the Council of £1,804,997 for capital expenditure on the school meal infrastructure during the period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022, which was paid in full in March 2022. This was offset against the local authority QEd/Sustainable Communities for Learning Band B spend in the same year, with the 2021-22 displaced

funding applied to the 2022-23 programme for capital expenditure on the school meal infrastructure.

- 4.2 On the 21 July 2022 Cabinet resolved that the capital scheme in the sum of £1,804,997, as detailed in the report together with the financial implications be approved and included in the Capital Programme 2022/23.
- 4.3 On 30 August 2022, WG awarded a second tranche of funding to the Council of £2,526,996 for capital expenditure on the school meal infrastructure during the period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023, which was paid in full in September 2022.
- 4.4 This second grant has to be used in the 2022-23 financial year for eligible expenditure or displaced against other education capital expenditure. Any displaced funding must be used during the 2023-24 financial year for eligible expenditure.
- 4.5 The allocation of £2,526,996 capital expenditure provided in 2022-23 has therefore been offset against the local authority QEd/Sustainable Communities for Learning Band B spend in the same year, with the 2022-23 displaced funding applied to the 2023-24 programme for capital expenditure on the school meal infrastructure.
- 4.6 The second grant was required to be spent in full by the 31 March 2024, as any underspend in 2023/24 financial year end would need to be repaid to WG. Due to slippage in the major uFSM schemes, fully spending the grant allocation has not been possible, and an underspend of £1,940,073 was envisaged by year end.
- 4.7 To support the development and completion of the works required at schools in order to roll out uFSM to all primary pupils at the remaining sites a Business Justification Case was submitted to WG to request the retention of the underspent second grant and an increase in funding of £508,434 to cover the increase in the cost of the remaining schemes, totalling £2,448,507.
- 4.8 This was approved, and a new grant award for the sum of £2,448,507 awarded on the 7 March 2024, and on the 7 March 2024 an invoice was raised by WG to recoup the previous underspend. This underspend has now been refunded to WG.
- 4.9 This report is seeking authorisation to commit the new uFSM grant of £2,448,507 to the capital programme, to support the development and completion of the remaining works required at schools in order to roll out uFSM to all primary pupils.
- 4.10 The total funding requested has been profiled as set out in Appendix A.

## **Revenue**

- 4.11 Where capital funding is used to add additional square meterage to the size of a school, this would lead to an increase in the rates bill for the school and also an increase in the delegated budget share, as premises funding is based on gross floor area. In both cases, the increased funding would be found from within the overall delegated schools' budget.

## **5. Legal Implications**

- 5.1 The Council will need to comply with the terms and conditions attached to any grant funding referred to in this report.
- 5.2 All contracts for works, goods and services necessary to deliver the programme must be procured in accordance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules and the relevant EU Regulations as appropriate. The contractual liabilities/obligations of the Council and any appointed contractors will be covered by the individual contracts entered into.
- 5.3 Delivering this programme will assist the Council in meeting its obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

## **Background Papers:**

- 17/03/2022 Delegated Powers Report Capital Programme Authorisation for the purchase and storage of equipment to support the rollout of universal primary free school meals.
- 21/07/2022 Report of the Cabinet Member for Education & Learning Capital programme authorisation for the commitment of funding to support the rollout of universal primary free school meals.
- 15/12/2022 Report of the Cabinet Member for Education & Learning. Capital Programme Authorisation for the Commitment of Funding to Support the Rollout of Universal Primary Free School Meals -
- 21/03/2024 Report of the Cabinet Member for Education & Learning Capital Programme Authorisation for the Commitment of Funding to Support the Rollout of Universal Primary Free School Meals - New dining facilities together with an all-weather pitch and community facilities for Townhill Community Primary School.

## **Appendices:**

Appendix A - Financial Implications Summary

## Appendix A

Financial Procedure Rule 7

### FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS: SUMMARY

Portfolio: EDUCATION  
 Service : PRIMARY PROVISION  
 Grant to Support the Rollout of Universal  
 Scheme : Primary Free School Meals

<u>1.1. CAPITAL COSTS</u>	2023/24 £'000	2024/25 £'000	TOTAL £'000
<u>Expenditure</u>		2,448,507	2,448,507
EXPENDITURE		2,448,507	2,448,507
<u>Financing</u>			
Welsh Government Capital Funding Grant to Support the Rollout of Universal Primary Free School Meals		2,448,507	2,448,507
FINANCING		2,448,507	2,448,507
<u>1.2. REVENUE COSTS</u>	2023/24 £'000	2024/25 £'000	FULL YEAR £'000
<u>Service Controlled - Expenditure</u>			
Employees )			0
Maintenance )			0
Vehicle running costs )			0
NET EXPENDITURE	0		0
<u>Financing</u>			
Unknown			
FINANCING	0		0